



# Job Description

**Research Assistant: Constitution Unit**

**Department: Political Science**

**Specific Unit: The Constitution Unit**

**Location: London – Bloomsbury**

**Grade: 6B/25**

**Salary: £17.90 per hour**

**Hours: 90% FTE/33 hours a week**

This is a fixed term post for three months running from January to March 2023. The successful candidate will be employed via the Unitemps employment agency.

---

## Reports to:

Professor Alan Renwick

---

## Context

University College London (UCL) is among the world's top universities. Its Department of Political Science, which was among the top-ranked departments in the UK in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), conducts teaching and research in all fields of politics, including British and comparative politics, international relations, political theory, human rights, public policy-making and administration.

[The Constitution Unit](#) is the Department's longest-established research centre. Created in 1995, it conducts timely, rigorous, independent research into constitutional change and the reform of political institutions. Its outputs include scholarly publications, policy reports, a popular blog, and a newsletter. It is led by [Professor Meg Russell FBA](#), a specialist on parliament. Its Deputy Director is [Professor Alan Renwick](#), an expert on electoral systems, referendums and deliberate democracy. Other areas of interest include the judiciary, monarchy, central government, political parties and devolution. Major recent projects have included research into parliament's role in the Brexit process, the hosting of a citizens' assembly on Brexit in 2017, and the organisation of a working group focusing on how any future referendums on Irish unification would best be conducted.

---

## Main purpose of the job

*Democracy in the UK after Brexit* is a two-year research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of its Governance after Brexit programme. The Principal Investigator (PI) is Professor Alan Renwick. The Co-Investigators are Professors Meg Russell and Ben Lauderdale (Professor of Political Science, and an expert on the measurement of political preferences from survey, voting, network and text data).

The project is examining attitudes to democracy in the UK today, focusing on three dimensions. First, *models of democracy*: How do citizens in the UK now conceive the core values of democracy? Second, *the culture of democracy*: How do people expect democracy to be practised, by politicians, political institutions, and their fellow citizens? Third, *institutions of democracy*: What do attitudes on models and cultures imply about citizens' preferred roles for the executive, legislature, judiciary, and general public in future UK democracy? The project is also examining what factors influence variation in these attitudes, and whether people's initial views change after they have been able to deliberate. The project is pursuing these objectives by running two large-scale surveys and holding a citizens' assembly.

Details of the project work completed to date are available on the [Democracy in the UK after Brexit website](#). The project has recently been extended, and a Research Assistant position is consequently available for a fixed term from the beginning of January 2023 to the end of March 2023.

The successful candidate will work with the PI and other members of the project team in assisting remaining parts of the research process, including reviewing relevant existing literatures, processing data already gathered, writing up findings, and preparing data for archiving.

---

### **Duties and responsibilities:**

The Research Assistant will be expected to undertake duties in connection with the project as directed by Professor Renwick, including the following:

- review scholarly literatures relevant to the project's research questions and prepare written reports on this
- assist in analysing materials already gathered from surveys and the Citizens' Assembly on Democracy in the UK
- assist in writing up the research for Constitution Unit reports and for submission to scholarly journals
- contribute to wider project dissemination through preparing materials for its webpages, blogposts, etc.
- prepare collected data for archiving
- assist in liaison with the project's advisory board
- contribute more widely to the work of the Constitution Unit, for example through attending team meetings and assisting in the planning of events, future research projects, and the Unit's blog and newsletter.

*Job descriptions cannot be exhaustive and so the post holder may be required to undertake other duties which are in line with the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager.*

*As duties and responsibilities change and develop the job description may be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with the post holder.*

# Person specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable
<b>Qualifications, experience and knowledge</b>	
A first-class Bachelor's degree in political science or a related field, or a high 2.1 (in which case please provide detail of grades).	Essential
A Master's degree in political science or a related field at Merit or Distinction.	Desirable
Clear and demonstrable understanding of the key institutions and policy actors in British politics.	Essential
Clear and demonstrable understanding of key issues and arguments concerning the constitution and democracy in the UK.	Essential
Clear and demonstrable understanding of the theory and/or institutions of deliberative democracy.	Desirable
Experience of conducting political research, using survey data, content analysis of texts, and/or research interviews.	Desirable
Experience of working in a academic research centre, think tank, or similar environment.	Desirable
<b>Skills and abilities</b>	
Well developed quantitative and qualitative research skills.	Essential
Ability to gather and systematically organise complex material from a range of sources.	Essential
Excellent organisational skills, including the ability to deal with competing priorities, meet tight deadlines, manage a varied workload and work with limited supervision.	Essential
Ability to work effectively as part of a team.	Essential
Excellent written communication skills, including in writing fluently and without errors for both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Essential
<b>Personal attributes</b>	
Integrity, honesty, and commitment to promoting high standards in research.	Essential
Ability to take an open mind to debates about democracy in the UK, and an ability to be seen to be doing so.	Essential
A good eye for detail.	Essential

# Apply

Closing date for applications:

**Midnight Sunday 13 November 2022**

To apply please send the following to [e.rowe@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.rowe@ucl.ac.uk):

- A CV, including details of your educational qualifications (with full details of grades) and your prior work experience.
- A covering letter (maximum two pages) setting out clearly why you are interested in the position and how you meet the essential (and, where relevant, desirable) criteria.

Please do **not** send other documents (e.g. samples of written work or degree certificates).

Successful applicants will be invited to the next stage of the process which will be the submission of a short piece of written work. The final stage will be an online interview.

Any queries regarding the vacancy or the application process should be directed to Alan Renwick at [a.renwick@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:a.renwick@ucl.ac.uk).

Information about the Constitution Unit can be found at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/>

Our department is proud to have received an Athena SWAN Bronze Award in August 2022, demonstrating its commitment to advancing gender equality.