



Job Description

Impact Researcher: Constitution Unit

Department: Political Science

Specific Unit: The Constitution Unit

Location: London – Bloomsbury

Grade: 6.25

Salary: £36,832 per annum including London allowance

Hours: Full time

Reports to:

Professor Meg Russell

Context

University College London (UCL) is among the world's top universities. Its Department of Political Science, which was one of 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 deliberative 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](#), extensive public opinion work on [attitudes to the post-Brexit constitution](#) (including the hosting of a citizens' assembly on UK democracy in 2021), and the organisation of a [working group](#) focusing on how any future referendums on Irish unification would best be conducted. The Unit's [Constitutional Principles and the Health of Democracy](#) project (with which this role is closely associated) is producing a series of briefings for policymakers and the wider public, and recently produced

the summary report [Rebuilding and Renewing the Constitution](#), jointly with the Institute for Government.

In addition to producing research outputs the Unit organises regular events (including an annual [summer conference](#)) and has a popular blog and newsletter. Its senior staff are frequently consulted by policymakers and appear in national and international news media. The Unit also has a well-established social media presence. We work closely with other research organisations in the field.

Main purpose of the job

The Constitution Unit already has substantial real-world 'impact'. This post will help us to maintain and build such impact, with current funding running to the end of July 2024 in the first instance.

The successful candidate will work with our small team of researchers, our office manager and part-time blog editor, the UCL Press Office and the Unit's external associates, to maintain communications about our work through a variety of channels. The post holder will work across all of our research topics, but particularly with the Constitutional Principles and the Health of Democracy project. They will have a particular focus on influencing real-world political developments as they occur, informing debates through publicising Unit outputs and research. They will help draft occasional outputs such as committee evidence, policy briefings, blog posts and media articles, and support shorter interventions through social media. They will work closely with all Unit staff, and support collaborations with other research organisations and academics on policy matters. The appointee will generally contribute to the Constitution Unit's strategy and plans, as a central member of the team.

Duties and responsibilities:

The Impact Researcher will be expected to undertake duties as directed by Professor Russell, including the following:

- Coordinating general dissemination and impact strategies for the Constitution Unit, in consultation with the senior team.
- Summarising Constitution Unit research and producing engaging and digestible written materials for a range of audiences.
- Monitoring political developments and identifying opportunities for dissemination of our research, for example through debates and committee inquiries in the UK parliament and the devolved legislatures.
- Identifying opportunities for policy interventions underpinned by high-quality research, and working with Unit researchers and other relevant experts to produce and disseminate clear and accessible briefing material.
- Managing the Unit's social media strategy and output.
- Managing the Unit's digital and video content (e.g. managing our YouTube channel, producing short video clips for social media) in consultation with the office manager.
- Assisting with production of the Unit's *Monitor* newsletter (produced three times annually), including creation of an HTML version followed by dissemination, working with the blog and newsletter editor.
- Developing and maintaining the impact-related parts of the website (e.g. news stories), in consultation with with the Unit's office manager.
- Providing insights using web analytics to support the development and maintenance of the website and the Unit's other online activity.
- Working with the Unit's part-time blog editor to maximise the impact of pieces published on the blog.
- Occasionally working with the UCL Press Office in disseminating our larger outputs, and communicating with our own network of specialist media contacts.
- Assisting in information gathering and drafting briefings to support Unit researchers when they appear on public platforms (e.g. in the media and at parliamentary committees).
- Liaising with external partners (e.g. other research organisations and funders) in pursuit of the above.
- Maintaining up-to-date records of Constitution Unit impact activity.
- Assisting with background research for, and preparation of, future funding proposals.

- Contributing more widely to the work of the Constitution Unit, for example through attending team meetings and assisting in the planning of events, 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	Assessed at Application or Interview
Qualifications, experience and knowledge		
A Bachelor's degree in politics, law or a closely related field, at at least a good 2.1 level (please provide full numeric details of grades on your CV).	Essential	Application
Clear and demonstrable knowledge of the key institutions and policy actors in British politics.	Essential	Application/Interview
Clear and demonstrable knowledge of current key issues and arguments concerning the constitution and democracy in the UK.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of working with websites and/or social media.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of writing briefings targeted at policy-makers and/or blog posts or journalistic pieces for a general audience.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Previous experience of working in a policy and/or communications role.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Experience of working with journalists and media.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Specialist knowledge in one or more of the Constitution Unit's current research areas: e.g. parliament, referendums, citizens' assemblies.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Experience of working in a political environment, academic research centre or think tank.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Skills and abilities		
The ability to gather and systematically organise complex material from a range of sources.	Essential	Application/Interview
Excellent written communication skills, including writing fluently and without errors for both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Essential	Application/Interview
Excellent organisational skills, including ability to deal with competing priorities, meet tight deadlines, manage a varied workload and work with limited supervision.	Essential	Application/Interview
Excellent interpersonal skills, including ability to develop strong and constructive working relationships with various staff at UCL, and those externally in the policy world.	Essential	Application/Interview
Sound judgement, and a well-developed ability to understand and balance political evidence.	Essential	Application/Interview

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessed at Application or Interview
Personal attributes		
A keen interest in communicating high-quality research on constitutional and political topics to a varied audience	Essential	Application/Interview
An ability and willingness to demonstrate professional political neutrality, both in partisan terms and on key topics such as Brexit.	Essential	Application/Interview

Apply

This process is not applicable to redeployees. Redeployees should follow the standard UCL redeployment process.

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

This appointment is subject to UCL Terms and Conditions of Service for Research and Support Staff.

Please use these links to find out more about [UCL working life](#) including the benefits we offer and [UCL Terms and Conditions](#) related to this job.

To apply for this position visit:

ucl.ac.uk/jobs

Please ensure that you do **all** of the following:

- Complete the required sections of the online form.
- Upload a CV, including details of your educational qualifications (with full details of grades) and your prior work experience.
- Upload 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** upload other documents (e.g. samples of written work or degree certificates).

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to the next stage of the process, which may involve the submission of a short piece of written work. The final stage will be an interview.

Any queries regarding the vacancy or the application process should be directed to the Constitution Unit Office Manager Edd Rowe at e.rowe@ucl.ac.uk

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