

Senior Research Assistant B – Programme to Enhance Digital Literacy [PEDL]

(Short term specified purpose contract with estimated duration of 1 year)

Access & Outreach

Reference: 62/2024

Technological University Dublin

Job Description

TU Dublin Access & Outreach is seeking to appoint a Senior Research Assistant B – Programme to Enhance Digital Literacy (PEDL) on a short-term specified purpose contract with estimated duration of 1 year, whole-time basis.

The aim of the Programme to Enhance Digital Literacy (PEDL) is to address digital transformation through developing the digital readiness, capacity and resilience of school communities.

Project Partners:

- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Dublin
- Technological University Dublin
- Workday

Project Background

In an era where the pervasive use of Digital Technologies (DT) is reshaping the landscape of education and society, a growing digital divide has emerged, exacerbating disparities in access, skills and benefits from effective use of DT. This divide is particularly pronounced among families at risk of digital exclusion, manifesting in limited access to digital technologies, lower levels of skills, reduced motivation and self-efficacy to fully engage with digital tools. The repercussions of this digital divide are keenly felt in the realm of Parental Involvement (PI) in home-based digital learning.

Recognising that PI stands as a pivotal predictor of student outcomes and engagement, the Programme to Enhance Digital Literacy (PEDL) intervention has been developed as a targeted initiative aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by parents at risk of digital exclusion. PEDL's primary objective is to enhance the digital skills and self-efficacy of parents, with a particular focus on bolstering both their competence and confidence in supporting their children with home-based digital learning. Beyond digital skills, PEDL envisions broadening parents' educational capital, fostering increased parental involvement that, in turn, contributes to improved student engagement and outcomes.

Project Objectives:

The objectives of PEDL are:

1. Develop and Implement the PEDL Intervention Programme:

To create and implement the PEDL intervention programme, enhancing parents' self-efficacy in navigating digital technologies for educational purposes within the context of digital transformation.

2. Promote Digital Inclusion and Empower Parents:

To foster digital inclusion and empower parents, particularly those at risk of digital exclusion, by supporting the development of their digital skills and self-efficacy, enabling meaningful engagement in their child's digital learning journey.

3. Establish a Meaningful Connection Between Parents and Learning:

To establish a meaningful connection between parents and their child's learning and how this translates into children's educational progression.

4. Forge Strong Partnerships with Partner Schools:

To build and nurture strong partnerships and relationships with partner schools, ensuring effective collaboration, communication, and the tailored implementation of the PEDL programme within the school community.

5. Engage in Research and Best Practice Exchange:

To actively engage in research and exchange best practices with partners on informing, engaging, and supporting the school community in the context of digital transformation.

Target Groups:

The main target groups of the project are parents of students in DEIS secondary schools linked to UCD, TCD and TU Dublin, and school personnel tasked with promoting parental involvement and engagement. By sharing project updates, research, resources, and outcomes, the partnership aims to engage with these groups and to empower them with the knowledge and tools necessary to support digital transformation in their school communities.

Project Deliverables:

1. Further development of a **digital literacy programme for parents and guardians** designed to support parents in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to help their children navigate the digital world of education effectively. The programme will focus on digital literacy skills development and exploring educational pathways.

2. Further development of a range of **resources** to support the implementation of the programme in schools, including a handbook for parents and guardians, and a training programme for educators to facilitate the delivery of the programme.
3. Further development of the **project website**, this will provide information about the project activities, research outputs, digital resources developed, and project partners. The website will serve as a platform for partners to share their experiences and best practices with the wider education community. The website will also contain resources for the schools to support dissemination of the project.
4. The project partners will host virtual and in-person **dissemination events** to share the key findings and recommendations from the programme. A range of stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and industry experts will be invited.
5. The project partners will also **produce project report, blogs, and articles** summarising the progress and learnings from the project.
6. The project partners will explore a number of avenues with regard to the **sustainability of the project** into the future.

Principal Accountabilities

Support PEDL project leadership team:

- Collaborate closely with the PEDL project team to ensure smooth implementation of the PEDL programme.
- Provide administrative support as needed

Recruitment of Schools:

- Work closely with the project team to identify and recruit schools for participation in the PEDL programme.
- Assist in establishing and maintaining relationships with PEDL school organiser.

Organising Dissemination Events:

- Support the planning and execution of dissemination events to promote the PEDL programme.
- Assist in coordinating logistics, venue selection, and participant engagement for events.

Programme Materials Development:

- Collaborate with the project team to develop and refine programme materials.
- Ensure that materials align with the specific needs of recruited schools and facilitate effective digital literacy training for parents.

Liaising with School Organisers:

- Act as a liaison between the project team and participating schools.

- Collaborate with school organizers to tailor the programme to each school's unique requirements and address any concerns.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Assist in implementing systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the PEDL programme.
- Support the collection of feedback from schools, parents, and stakeholders for continuous improvement.

Resource Management:

- Support the project team in managing budgetary aspects of the programme.
- Contribute to sourcing and securing funding opportunities to support the expansion and sustainability of the programme.

Collaboration and Networking:

- Collaborate with the project team to foster relationships with educational institutions, community organisations, and partners.
- Attend conferences, workshops, and meetings to stay informed about best practices in digital literacy and parental engagement.

Person Specification

The ideal candidate will demonstrate the appropriate mix of knowledge, experience, skills, talent and abilities as outlined below:

Experience

- Successful completion of Master's Degree in relevant discipline. **(essential)**
- 2 years post-graduation research experience in the public or private sectors. **(essential)**
- Experience of working with secondary school personnel including Home School Community Liaison teachers and parents with particular focus on DEIS schools. **(essential)**
- Experience of delivering/organising educational workshops/activities/training. **(essential)**
- Experience in the development of training materials and resources. **(desirable)**
- Experience in gathering, reviewing and analysing data on educational training activities and generating reports on both qualitative and quantitative data. **(desirable)**

- Experience of in designing, developing and maintaining a website **(desirable)**
- Experience in organizing dissemination events, coordinating event logistics, venue selection, and participant engagement. **(desirable)**

Knowledge

- Understanding of the Irish education system, in particular primary & post-primary education.
- Appreciation of the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and educational opportunity.
- Knowledge of research related to the digital divide, digital exclusion, and parental involvement in education.

Skills, talents & abilities

- Excellent facilitation, communication, training and presentation skills.
- Excellent digital skills and competences.
- Ability to map, manage and implement systems for evaluation.
- Ability to deliver high-quality work through teamwork and partnership.
- Ability to problem-solve effectively and efficiently.
- Initiative, persistence, flexibility and a high level of motivation and enthusiasm.
- Ability to plan, negotiate and implement effective educational initiatives/training.
- Excellent organisational skills, time management and ability to undertake duties assigned and meet deadlines required.

Salary

- **The successful candidate will be appointed at Point (01) of the Senior Research Assistant B salary scale i.e. €37,843 gross per annum.**

Interested parties should send a current CV and cover letter to riona.fitzgerald@tudublin.ie by 5 pm Friday 29th March with interviews taking place on the week of April 8th.