

Research Role Profile

Job Title:	Research Fellow A in Experimental Geotechnics
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Responsible to:	Head of research group, or principal investigator
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Responsible for:	Not applicable
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Job Summary and Purpose:
To undertake research in accordance with the specified research project(s) under the supervision of the principal investigator.

Main Responsibilities/Activities
To undertake a range of research activities within a specified research area, assuming responsibility for specific areas of projects and making use of new research techniques and methods, in consultation with the research award holder or supervisor. This may include fieldwork, interviews, laboratory experimentation, critical evaluation and interpretation, computer-based data analysis and evaluation or library research. Using initiative and creativity to identify areas for research develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio. Analysing and interpreting results of own research. Write up results and prepare papers for submission to appropriate journals and conferences, and other outputs as required and/or appropriate. Attend appropriate conferences for the purpose of disseminating research results of personal development. The post holder may also contribute to writing bids for research grants and will contribute to collaborative decision making with colleagues in areas of research. Continually to update knowledge and develop skills, and translate knowledge of advances in the area into research activity. To plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others. To carry out administrative tasks associated with specified research funding, for example risk assessment of research activities, organisation of project meetings and documentation. Implementation of procedures required to ensure accurate and timely formal reporting and financial control. To contribute to teaching in the Faculty by carrying out student supervision and/or demonstrating within the post holder's area of expertise and under the direct guidance of a member of departmental academic staff, as appropriate. The post holder may occasionally be required to supervise more junior research staff.

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Person Specification

The post holder must have:

A doctoral degree in a relevant discipline (although individuals who have almost completed a doctoral degree may be appointed). Consideration may also be given to individuals who do not hold a doctoral degree but have required skills based on a number of years experience in specified / relevant fields

The post holder will have authority over some aspects of project work and must be capable of providing academic judgement, offering original and creative thoughts and be able to interpret and analyse results.

Relationships and Contacts

Direct responsibility to the principal investigator or academic supervisor. The post holder may be asked to serve on a relevant Faculty committee. There may be additional reporting and liaison responsibilities to external funding bodies or sponsors. The post holder may work on original research tasks with colleagues in other institutions.

Special Requirements

To be available to participate in fieldwork as required by the specified research project

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities policy.
- Help maintain a safe working environment by:
 - Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand
 - Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.

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Addendum

This document provides additional information relating to both specific aspects of the post/faculty and any post specific person specification criteria. The information contained within this document should always be read in conjunction with the accompanying generic Job Purpose.

Job Title:

Research Associate in Experimental Geotechnics

Background Information/Relationships

The post-holder will lead the lab-scale experiments for the EPSRC-funded project "UKRI-Norway: Energy Micropile Retrofits for Climate Change Adaptation of Existing Buildings", a collaboration between the Universities of Surrey, Leeds and Cambridge and NTNU. Positioned at the University of Surrey and working with colleagues from all four organisations, the successful candidate will lead Work Package 1, focusing on laboratory physical modelling, constructing scaled energy micropiles, and characterising coupled thermo-mechanical soil-structure interactions under seasonal climatic fluctuations. The outputs will directly validate next-generation renewable thermal retrofit systems, contributing to building decarbonisation and increasing University research impact.

Duration: 24 months; 1.0 FTE

Earliest start date: 1 January 2027

Location: University of Surrey

Person Specification

This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role. This is in addition to the criteria contained within the accompanying generic Job Purpose.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships

**Essential/
Desirable**

A PhD (or nearing completion) in Geotechnical Engineering or a highly relevant discipline.

Essential

Hands-on experience building/instrumenting physical laboratory soil models or structural pile test rigs.

Essential

Practical knowledge of thermo-mechanical testing, soil mechanics, or thermal response tests (TRT).

Essential

Experience compiling, processing, and validating complex multi-sensor experimental datasets (strain, thermal).

Essential

Track record of publishing peer-reviewed research papers in high-quality engineering journals.

Essential

Key Responsibilities

This document is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but an outline record of any faculty/post specific responsibilities. This should be read in conjunction with those contained within the accompanying generic Job Purpose.

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1. Lead the physical development and instrumentation of scaled model energy micropiles within specialised soil chambers under the loading frames.
2. Conduct high-precision axial compression and lateral load testing to establish load-displacement parameters, shaft friction, and p-y curves across varying heat exchanger layouts.
3. Program and execute long-term cyclic thermal response tests (TRT) within insulated chambers.
4. Synthesise, test, and optimise novel thermally conductive cementitious grouts and graphite-based binders to maximise pile thermal transfer.
5. Analytically process experimental sensor arrays (strain, moisture, temperature) to construct cross-validation datasets directly feeding into consortium numerical modelling streams (WP3/WP4).
6. Publish in leading journals, present at international conferences, and contribute to project meetings, reporting, progress updates, industry engagement, and knowledge exchange with partners.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.