



**Harper Adams
University**

**Post Doctoral Research Assistant
[Full Time, Fixed Term until 31 July 2027]**

Candidate Information Pack



Harper Adams is a friendly, talented community of more than 600 employees, working to ensure that everyone on the planet has access to food, and that this is achieved sustainably. Our work contributes to planetary health, animal health and wellbeing, and ultimately how this contributes to human health. We are passionate about what we do, and are committed to making a difference.

Harper Adams University is committed to the wellbeing of our employees, and their personal and professional development. This is reflected in our annual employee survey - employees tell us they're proud to be a part of the university and that it is a good, safe place to work where they feel trusted to do their jobs and supported by their managers.

Whilst many of our teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities are delivered or coordinated from an attractive campus in rural Shropshire, our impact and reach is regional, national and international. We offer free staff parking, leisure facilities, and we are only a short drive from the busy market town of Newport.

Some of the benefits of working at Harper Adams University are:

- Beautiful rural location
- Generous holiday entitlement
- On campus retail, catering and gym facilities
- Corporate discount to 7 fitness suites in the Telford and Wrekin area
- Opportunity to purchase additional holiday
- Opportunities for agile working
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Disability Confident Employer
- Enhanced maternity benefits
- Enhanced sickness absence payments
- Cyclescheme supporter
- Workwear provided (*if applicable*)

Harper Adams University is the UK's premier educational institution serving the agri-food, animal wellbeing and connected industries, recognised as a world-leading specialist provider. Our focus is on food production and technology, animal health and wellbeing, management of land and property, and their contribution to sustainable living environments for our planet's population; we are equally committed to making the UK's food and farming competitive in a world where we will need to compete globally. Our education and research encompass food production and processing, animal sciences, environmental sustainability, mechanical engineering, land management and sustainable business management. We have strong relationships with companies in the UK and abroad, and with academic institutions across the world, collaborating in research and in the delivery of our courses. We are a University with regional, national and international reach and impact, repeatedly appearing in *The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide* as the UK's highest-ranked modern university.

The University began life in 1901 as Harper Adams Agricultural College and was granted University status in 2012. Our Chancellor is Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal; our current Vice-Chancellor is Professor Ken Sloan, who joined us in 2021. The University is based on a single campus in Shropshire, close to the old market town of Newport and within easy reach of the modern town of Telford, which offers a range of housing possibilities and has excellent rail and road links to the West Midlands conurbation and beyond. Investment of more than £50 million over the last decade has ensured that our campus boasts the most up-to-date teaching, research and conference facilities as well as

accommodation for around 800 students. Our most recent additions include contemporary laboratories and a purpose-built Veterinary Services Centre for teaching and research, swiftly followed by a £500,000 refurbishment of the veterinary nursing facilities. On-campus leisure facilities include a multi-gym, sports hall, dance and aerobics studio. And we are one of the very universities to have its own commercial farm: covering 494 hectares, its facilities include a £2 million leading-edge dairy unit with a robotic dairy.

For a virtual tour of main campus, visit <https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/university-life/our-university/virtual-tour/>

We are regarded as the UK's highest-ranked small specialist provider for the agri-food and animal wellbeing industries, consistently producing the largest cohort of graduates for the agri-food and animal wellbeing sectors, more than 99% of whom go immediately into employment. We currently have about 3,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students, studying both full-and part-time. Our courses cover not just every stage of the food chain – from developing the machinery used to prepare land through to how food is sold and the nutrients it delivers – but also broader subjects such as general business management, automotive engineering and veterinary professions, including, since the establishment of the Harper and Keele Veterinary School in 2020, Veterinary Medicine and Surgery. We have achieved the highest ratings in Quality Assurance Agency reviews. Our undergraduate curriculum is industry-aligned, work focused, co-developed and co-delivered with industry, rooted in partnerships with about 1,100 companies in the UK and abroad. At its heart is our mandatory Placement Year – a bespoke learning experience for our students, tailored to the real needs of employers. We offer a swathe of employer and philanthropically-funded scholarships channelled through our Development Trust. And we support employers by providing a large range of (often bespoke) CPD courses – we have about 2,000 learners here – and with our Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeship Programmes launched in 2017. These courses enable us to address directly the skills needs of the UK's agriculture and food industry. We reinforced this work in 2021, by establishing, with support from the NFU, Morrisons and McDonalds, our School of Sustainable Food and Farming, tasked with ensuring that the sector has the skills to enable it to deliver its 2040 Net Zero goal.

We have a strong research profile. Our work is esteemed nationally and internationally for its quality and impact, particularly in areas such as entomology, sustainable agriculture, crops, livestock nutrition, autonomous and precision farming. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, 60% of our research was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent. Our research is both strategic and applied. Our strategic research tackles the inter-related challenges of food security and sustainability, focusing on the need to achieve Net Zero in agriculture and food supply chains in concert with the requirements for sustainable agriculture. We focus particularly on smart agriculture; improving soil health; sustainable land use and rural communities; reducing the impact of ruminant livestock; sustainable food systems and the circular economy, and integrated pest and disease management. Our applied research, in collaboration with regional, national and international companies, addresses their particular needs and is an important part of our research portfolio. Student research also contributes significantly to our research output - a research project is part of all our degree courses, undergraduate and postgraduate. Our research is structured around two overarching research centres covering Crop and Environmental Science, and Animal Welfare, each containing a number of themed groups; we also have cross-cutting multidisciplinary research groups, and our Future Farm – our focus to realise a pathway to Net Zero within wider sustainability parameters.

Harper Adams is a young university, energetic and purposeful – one that says not just ‘can do’ but ‘will do’ – ambitious and forward-looking. We are an optimistic, pragmatic and collaborative community, facing challenges with confidence, ready to grasp new opportunities. We aim by 2030 to combine being regarded as the UK’s leading specialist institution with being an internationally recognised university for food production animal health and wellbeing and their contribution to sustainable living environments for the world’s population. Our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ken Sloan, has recently led a revision of our Strategy to take us up to 2030: this sets out how we can achieve this ambition by focusing on goals of inclusion, community, influence and sustainability. It charts a path that offers both opportunities and challenges – a pioneering journey that involves our whole Harper Adams’ community, one to which everyone working to make a difference belongs.

Facilities

Harper Adams has extensive, well-equipped facilities and is constantly investing in its campus. Facilities include a range of modern teaching facilities and an extensive library, a variety of IT suites including an engineering design centre, newly extended laboratory facilities, a field laboratory and a livestock project centre, a glasshouse complex, an agricultural engineering unit with a large, covered soil working area and a number of sustainable technology installations. New facilities opened since 2017 include new laboratories, an Agri-Tech Innovation Hub and SMART Dairy Unit. A Veterinary Education Centre opened 2021, in support of existing programmes and the new Harper & Keele Veterinary School. Capital funding to support the development of many of these facilities has been provided through the work of the Development Trust.

The University also provides a range of training and professional development opportunities via its staff development programme.

Catering and Sports Facilities

The University’s Students’ Union operates a membership fee paying gym that staff may join. The University has bowling green and tennis courts that are available for staff use during the summer period. A variety of university catering outlets provide access to lunch facilities on campus.

For further details about the University, please visit our website: <http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk>



**Harper Adams
University**



School of **Sustainable
Food and Farming**

powered by Harper Adams University

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title of the post: Post Doctoral Research Assistant
[Full Time, Fixed Term until 31 July 2027]

Department: School of Sustainable Food and Farming

Reporting to: Simon Thelwell

The School of Sustainable Food and Farming

The School of Sustainable Food and Farming (SSFF) at Harper Adams University (HAU) is supported by our steering partners Morrisons, McDonald's UK&I, and the NFU, and was established in 2021 to support and accelerate the industry on its journey towards a more sustainable future. SSFF has four key pillars of delivery: Next Generation, Upskilling the Current Workforce, Research and Policy & Influence. Through these pillars SSFF is able to support the sector and supply chain to educate, collaborate, influence and develop solutions to the challenges facing the agricultural supply chain. The School is in an exciting period of growth and development; the post holder will need to be flexible and forward thinking to help drive and enable this growth which will recognise the full potential of the SSFF and its steering, associate and delivery partner networks. The School draws on academic and practical expertise, as well as industry networks, to develop knowledge and skills for farmers and other businesses in the supply chain, who are committed to reducing the environmental impact of food production.

The SSFF through Harper Adams University has secured funding for a major 2.5 year multi institutional project that will develop and evaluate a scalable farm and food level greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting framework for use in the UK. Alongside Harper Adams University, the other academic partners are Cranfield University, the University of Gloucestershire, SRUC, and the University of Aberdeen. The commercial partners in the project are three of the main farm-level greenhouse gas calculators in the UK (Farm Carbon Toolkit, Agrecalc and the Cool Farm Tool Platform) alongside Land Agents Savills.

The project aim will be achieved through six work-packages (WP), each of which has an objective.

- WP1. To engage with one hundred farm managers and policy makers, processors, retailers, advisors and land agents in a Living Lab to co-design a scalable auditable farm-level GHG accounting framework for the UK food system.
- WP2. To assess the extent to which different ecosystems associated with three GHG accounting can help to build net zero literacies in UK agriculture.
- WP3. To determine and publicise the mean level of GHG emissions across eight stratified farm types and to identify opportunities to reduce emissions.
- WP4. To quantify the costs, benefits and trade-offs for different ways of verifying farm-level GHG accounts and the risks.
- WP5. To predict the social, economic, food production, and environmental impacts of scaling GHG accounting in the UK.

- WP6. To manage the project to maximise impact.

The PDRA will mainly be working on Work Package 5 with work including but not limited to:-

- 5.1 Mapping the vision of UK processors and retailers of wider use of GHG accounting on decisions in their choice of domestic or imported food.
- 5.2 Working with industry collaborators, investigate the economic, social and food production impacts of GHG accounting on landlord-tenant relationships, by initiating high-level discussions with landlord and tenant organisations
- 5.3 will examine the different experiences of GHG accounting between farmers already supported by a processor and those not, through online and in-person interviews (up to 10) with selected Living Lab farmers and stakeholders.
- 5.4 will be an online co-design policy workshop including policy makers from Defra and devolved governments, and principal players in the food sector to identify the main governance principles for successful GHG accounting in the UK agri-food system.

Working with Harper Adams Professor David Christian Rose, Elizabeth Creak Chair in Sustainable Agricultural Change, and Strategic Director Simon Thelwell, the successful PDRA will also work with a cohort of four other researchers working on the same project at the universities of Gloucestershire, Aberdeen, Cranfield University, and SRUC.

Specific Duties and responsibilities of the post

The successful candidate may come from an inter-disciplinary background but will be able to demonstrate a track record of academic publication related to sustainable agriculture using social science methodologies, including qualitative methods, evaluation and reporting. Experience of working with farming stakeholders and an interest in climate change and net zero (or sustainable agriculture in general) would be welcomed, as would experience of using co-design methodologies. The post provides for an exciting opportunity for interaction with industry stakeholders including farmers, processors and retailers, industry stakeholders and policy makers, therefore the role requires a candidate with excellent written and oral communication skills and an ability to interact and facilitate meetings with key stakeholders as part of the Living Lab.

The researcher at this level will be:

- An experienced and professional researcher and will be a subject specialist in sustainable agriculture, drawing upon knowledge gained from postgraduate research.
- Associated with a particular project (or projects) and will contribute ideas, and/or enhancement of techniques or methodologies and be expected to take significant initiatives in their work and consult with the Principal Investigator over the details of the project.
- They will work under supervision and receive academic, pastoral support and guidance which may include specific training, career opportunities and mentoring.
- They may contribute to the Department's teaching or knowledge transfer activities, through supervision of projects, overseeing practical classes, or taking small group tutorial classes.
- The main focus of the work will involve conducting individual and collaborative research projects under the general guidance of a senior academic or Principal Investigator using established research techniques and methods, analysing and interpreting data and writing up research for publication.

Main Duties of the Role

1. Conduct individual and collaborative research projects to include:
 - Using expertise to carry out projects they are working on.
 - Analyse and interpret complex and technical research data.
 - Write up research work of the project and ensure its dissemination through seminar and conferences presentations and publications.
 - Present complex information and findings in a way that is easily understood.

2. Responsible for the management of projects to include:
 - Plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others.
 - Manage administrative activities with guidance if required.
 - Plan and monitor the work of the project or projects if applicable.
 - Escalate issues and challenges with the project to Supervisor or line manager.
 - Communicate project progress and outcomes to internal and external stakeholders.

3. Develop and initiate collaborative working internally and externally to include:
 - Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks for exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration and to progress their research.
 - Develop links and join external networks to share information and identify future potential sources of funding.
 - Work with colleagues on joint projects as required.
 - Attend and contribute to relevant meetings.
 - Liaise with internal and external academic staff, industry and policy stakeholders.

4. Demonstrate evidence of own personal and professional development to include:
 - Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism.
 - Appraisal, induction and performance reviews.
 - Participate in training and development activity.
 - Maintain links with professional institutions and other related bodies.
 - Collaborate with academic colleagues on areas of shared research interest.

5. Supervision and support of colleagues within project teams to include:
 - Managing workload of self and others within the team
 - Delegating project and research tasks based on team members skills and current workload.
 - Act as subject matter expert in area of research to project and departmental colleagues.
 - Deputising for project / research lead if required at internal and external meetings with stakeholders.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	A PhD in a relevant discipline, with evidence of using social science methodologies (e.g. Environmental Management, Environmental Science, Geography, Economics, Agriculture, Climate Change and GHG Accounting, Land and Property Management etc.).	
Experience	<p>A track record in authoring quality peer reviewed papers. at least some of which will report on the application of social science methodologies.</p> <p>Experience of working with computer software packages such as Microsoft office suite and NVivo.</p>	
Knowledge/Skills	Excellent Presentation skills alongside excellent written and oral communication skills.	<p>Practical understanding of UK Agriculture, particularly of greenhouse gas accounting methodology and reporting.</p> <p>Experience of managing or collaborating on multi-stakeholder projects.</p>
Personal Qualities	<p>Show evidence of collaborative working, particularly on interdisciplinary activities</p> <p>Evidence of working in an open and transparent way, providing information and communicating effectively with colleagues</p> <p>Evidence of Continuous Professional Development</p>	Ability to travel in the UK

Conditions of Service

The national recommendations which have arisen from the negotiations between UCEA and the unions recognised at national level, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES), directly affect the terms and conditions insofar as they have been adopted by the Board of Governors.

Salary	The commencing salary will be within the range £34,866 to £37,999 per annum. The point of entry will be dependent upon relevant qualifications and experience. Salaries are paid monthly, in arrears, by credit transfer on the 28 th day of the month.
Contract Term	This is a full time, fixed term contract. Employment may be terminated during the course of the contract by either party giving one months' notice in writing
Hours of Work	The routine working week is 37 hours over Monday to Friday, inclusive. There may be a requirement for overtime working from time to time and time off in lieu may be allowed for agreed hours worked in excess of 37 per week.
Holidays	<p>The annual holiday entitlement is 22 working days, plus statutory bank holidays. In addition to this there are 8 University closure days during the full annual leave year. The holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July and in the holiday year in which the employment commences or terminates the holiday entitlement will accrue on a pro-rata basis for each complete week of service. The timing of holidays is subject to the agreement of the Line Manager.</p> <p>All annual holiday entitlement (including bank holidays and University closure days) is pro-rata for part-time employees. Further details will be confirmed on appointment.</p>
Sick Leave	During periods of certified sickness, the post-holder will be eligible to receive sick pay in accordance with the University Sick Pay Policy. The payment of sick pay is subject to compliance with the University rules for the notification and verification of sickness absence, details of which will be provided to the successful applicant upon commencement of employment.
Pension	The post-holder will be entitled to join the Harper Adams Group Pension Scheme and details will be provided to the successful applicant upon commencement of employment.
Exclusivity of Service	You are required to devote your full-time attention and abilities to your duties during working hours and to act in the best interests of the University at all times. Accordingly, you must not, without written consent of the University, undertake employment or engagement including external consultancy, which might interfere with the performance of your duties or conflict with the interests of the University.

It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or part-time contract, you are required to notify your line manager of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the University (including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment under this contract). Your line manager will then notify you within 10 working days whether such employment or engagement is prohibited.

Criminal Convictions

The post involves the opportunity for access to children and young persons under the age of 18. For this reason, the University is entitled to consider any criminal convictions, cautions or impending case(s) that it considers to be relevant to this post.

The post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are “spent” under the provisions of the Act.

Applicants must therefore complete the part of the application form declaring any criminal convictions and cautions from any court or police authority. The successful applicant will have to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service Check before an appointment can be made.

References

Candidates should ensure that they provide full details of the name and postal address of their referees. Please include e-mail addresses and telephone numbers wherever possible. Referees should include your present, or most recent, employer.

Application Procedure:

All applications should be completed and submitted using the Harper Adams e-Recruitment programme at <http://jobs.harper-adams.ac.uk>

To be submitted no later than midnight **on 26 February 2025.**