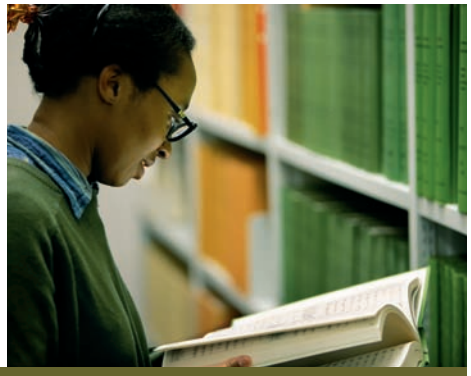
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Closing date: 5 May 2013
Job reference: 38178



Chair in Spatial Planning

The University

The University of Birmingham is a thriving and progressive institution that combines over a century of heritage with one of the most compelling and ambitious agendas in higher education. Ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions and a member of the prestigious Russell Group of leading research institutions, the University is well placed to succeed in the increasingly competitive global higher education sector. We have a clear vision for the future, ambitious leadership, world-leading academic strength, and a secure financial base.

Our five-year strategic plan 'Shaping Our Future: Birmingham 2015' was published in 2010 and the University is already demonstrating significant progress against this plan that will lift us into the international elite. In 2011/12, research grant income increased by close to 50%; we recruited an undergraduate cohort with the finest academic credentials in our history; appointed an elite of 36 young, international academic researchers to the institution, the Birmingham Fellows; opened a new representative office in Guangzhou, China; and developed a £175m investment plan for our other major asset, the University's green and leafy parkland campus in Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Inevitably, these are just a few of our achievements from the past 12 months, as the University community works together to enhance further our research achievements and educational provision. We are long established as leaders in the field of Medicine, with strengths in the research and treatment of cancer, heart, and liver disease as well as infections with a global significance including TB. In the Physical Sciences we boast outstanding academic and research credentials, including Chemical Engineering where we were recognised with a Queen's Anniversary Prize in the Jubilee year.

The University's cultural profile has been enhanced this year with the opening of the beautiful Bramall Music Building, which houses the Elgar Concert Hall, named after our first Professor of Music, Sir Edward Elgar. This outstanding venue reflects the quality of our Music department, ranked second in the UK, and the importance of music as a part of the social and cultural life of the institution.

The Bramall Music Building is one amongst a number of cultural assets that include the Shakespeare Institute located in the heart of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon, the Ironbridge Institute at the centre of this world heritage location in Shropshire, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, a small art gallery with a European reputation, located on campus. Our Edgbaston campus also includes Winterbourne House and Garden, a unique Edwardian heritage attraction that is home to over 6,000 plant species from around the world.

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The University continued…

Sport is also integral to life at Birmingham and we are ranked second in the UK for the quality of student sport. We have capital plans for a major new sports development, which will include the city of Birmingham's first 50m swimming pool that will not only provide facilities for our performance sportsmen and women but also offer a new resource to the local community. It was perhaps this combination of performance in, and commitment to, sport that attracted the fastest man in the world, Usain Bolt and the 2012 Jamaican track and field team to our campus for their pre-Olympic training camp. After winning his second gold medal at the Games, Usain Bolt and his colleague Yohan Blake saluted, to a worldwide television audience, the facilities, support and warm welcome that he and his team mates had received from the University.

This recognition supports the University's long-term plans to extend its international profile. In addition to the China office, which opened in 2011; the University also operates offices in India and Brussels. Through these offices, we are developing research partnerships with institutions around the world. In Brazil, the Universities of Birmingham and Nottingham are working together in a unique collaboration to develop a network of strategic partnerships with Brazilian universities, as well as the oil and gas industry. These initiatives have been central to the UK Government's outreach into Brazil, and this year will bring in the region of 20 doctoral researchers to the University as part of a prestigious scholarship programme.

We receive over 80,000 applications each year from students wishing to study here and welcome 28,000 successful students to the campus from 150 countries. A £5m investment in employability services has seen the numbers of graduates who find work within the first six months of graduation increase significantly for the second year in a row, and in a time of recession. A long-term project improving the academic support available to students and plans for the development of a state-of-the-art student services hub have led to satisfaction rankings in the National Student Survey rising faster than the national average, with overall satisfaction now standing at 88% which is 3% higher than the sector average.

Not only does Birmingham have serious ambition but we also have financial resources to realise those ambitions, and our plans for the future are underpinned by long established financial probity. We are a large scale business, worth over £780m to our region and are currently forecasting a turnover of £480 million for the financial year 2012/13. Our cash surpluses are re-invested into the academic and capital fabric of the institution, enabling us to plan with confidence for the future and to continue to invest in the facilities and services that are required for high-quality research, and an outstanding student learning experience.

Led by Vice-Chancellor Professor David Eastwood, the University is structured for swift decision making, enabling us to capitalise on our academic range, financial strength and opportunities that emerge in the fast changing global HE environment.

The city of Birmingham

Birmingham is a major European centre and the second city of the United Kingdom. It is a city of business and ballet, canals and world-class concerts, jewellery and jazz, historical interest and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Birmingham is also the ideal base for exploring one of Britain's most fascinating regions for tourism, being within an hour's drive of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, the Potteries, and the Cotswolds.

The new heart of Birmingham is symbolised by Symphony Hall, considered one of the greatest concert venues in the world and a fitting home for the globally respected City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). Symphony Hall forms part of the impressive International Convention Centre, which overlooks attractive canals at the hub of the UK's canal network. At the magnificent Hippodrome Theatre is the internationally renowned Birmingham Royal Ballet, adding further cultural depth to the city. Apart from London's West End, Birmingham boasts the highest concentration of live theatre in the UK, including regular tours by major opera companies.

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The city of Birmingham continued…

The City Museum and Art Gallery houses the world's finest collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings, alongside a major collection of Old Masters, Modern and Contemporary pictures. The Barber Institute of Fine Arts (based on our own campus) houses one of the best UK university collections of Impressionist and Renaissance art. The restored Gas Hall Gallery has international touring exhibitions, while the Halcyon and Ikon galleries feature innovative contemporary works. National landmark sites abound, including the National Indoor Arena, the National Exhibition Centre, National Motorcycle Museum, National Car Heritage Museum, and the National Sealife Centre. The iconic Bullring is one of the largest dedicated shopping facilities in Europe. Sports and recreation are also well served; the city offers international Test cricket, top-flight football, International Championship golf and top-class rugby. The International Convention Centre and National Indoor Arena have spawned a whole new development at the centre of the city. The National Exhibition Centre, on the outskirts of the city, remains one of the largest exhibition facilities in Europe.

Birmingham is at the crossroads of the UK's motorways. From Birmingham International Airport, more than a dozen different airlines operate scheduled services to 60 destinations worldwide. The University is the only mainland UK university to have its own railway station, while 50 million passengers a year use Birmingham New Street Station, which will be at the centre of the proposed high speed rail network. London is 90 minutes away by shuttle service, with trains every 20 minutes until the evening. There is a high standard of all types of private accommodation, with high-quality affordable family housing in several attractive residential suburbs. Public parks and large domestic gardens are an integral part of this green city. Quality public and private schools are widely available, with several consistently rated in the top 10 on examination performance in annual league tables for England and Wales.

College of Life and Environmental Sciences

The College of Life and Environmental Sciences is comprised of four Schools: Biosciences; Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES); Sport and Exercise Sciences; and Psychology.

We span an enormous breadth of disciplines, from the biomedical to the social sciences, and our expertise aligns strongly with key international challenges, including lifelong health and well being, food security, energy security, and living with environmental change. We have a faculty of 210 academics, each with their own research group, and a total staff complement of around 600. The College is home to around 4000 full-time students studying a range of undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes. Our numbers swelled over the last year by the addition of the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (moving from the Business School to GEES) and the Department of Sport Pedagogy (moving from the School of Education to the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences).

Dedicated to exploring and learning about the diversity and evolutionary challenges of life in all its forms, Life and Environmental Sciences has internationally-recognised strength in teaching and research, exciting initiatives in new fields of study, effective collaboration between schools and excellent research facilities.

The College uses training, fieldwork and excellent facilities to enable students to learn generic and discipline-specific skills while studying exciting topics – ranging from ecology through to cancer research and forensic psychology.

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School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Details of the School can be found online at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/index.aspx

The School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) is a research and teaching division of the University, building on the long-standing foundations of our subjects at Birmingham – geology in 1881 and geography in 1924. GEES is now a large interdisciplinary school with around 65 academic staff, 30 technical and support staff, 30 research staff, 100 doctoral researchers and around 900 undergraduate and 140 taught postgraduate students. Together with the schools of Psychology, Biosciences and Sport and Exercise Sciences, it lies within the College of Life and Environmental Sciences. Staff have active and diverse links with other schools on campus, particularly Biosciences, Civil Engineering and the Business School, and with research organizations worldwide. The School has been proactive in responding to the Shaping Our Future agenda of the University, including an expansion of its research links, range of postgraduate courses, and international postgraduate student population.

Research in the School centres on six research groupings whose multidisciplinary nature responds to the current international research agenda. These groups are Society, Economy and Environment, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Geosystems, Environmental Health Sciences and Water Sciences. Together, they embrace a wide range of social, natural and applied science, with substantive links across the College of Life and Environmental Sciences and to other colleges in the University. A particular strength is urban research and sustainability, which cuts across our research groupings. New research awards are currently running at around £4m per year, supported by a diverse and well-managed equipment and laboratory base.

Society, Economy and Environment research group
The SEE Research Group conducts theoretically and empirically informed research aimed at understanding how social practices and relations are conditioned by space and place. Within the group we maintain an internationally-leading profile in three principal research areas, organised around shared conceptual issues and empirical challenges. These research themes are:

Political and social transitions: this theme brings together colleagues working on the geographies of lived experiences and the everyday (particularly in post Soviet Russia), carceral geographies, political geography and critical geopolitics, political economic transitions (including lifestyle, employment, coping with unemployment), and issues of competitiveness, innovation and resilience arising from continuing economic turbulence. Colleagues have good external collaborations (international and national policy makers, regional community and civil society groups) and this theme has established an excellent public engagement profile.

Critical urbanism: this interdisciplinary theme brings together research across cultural geography, the work of CURS and physical geography/environmental science. The main strands relate to creative economy (including the role of the cultural sector), regeneration (including brownfield redevelopment), shrinking cities, urban climate, everyday life, urban governance, education and resilience. There is an excellent track record of grant capture and collaboration across government and the third sector.

Environmental and energy inequalities is concerned with research questions spanning the boundary between the physical and the social sciences including adaptation to climate change, environmental justice, energy efficiency and conservation and its associated scientific, social and spatial practices. Wider theoretical and empirical work explores environmental and techno-scientific discourses. This theme has strong links with applied science in GEES on water governance and natural resource allocation using complex quantitative and qualitative datasets to inform resource allocation and policy.

The three themes anchor SEE's lively Tabula rasa seminar series, held weekly, which also showcases the work of leading geographers from Schools and Departments in the UK, Europe and from leading overseas Universities and research institutes.

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We also have particular strength in theoretically informed empirical research on the European Union, post-Soviet Russia and the near East region. Our research has been funded by the UK's Research Councils, the EU's Framework Programmes, the Nuffield Foundation, the European Science Foundation, and a range of government bodies and charitable organisations from across the world. We strongly engage with policy, especially with regard to urban regeneration, renewable energy, nuclear waste management, fuel poverty, community resilience and climate change mitigation strategies. Further details can be found at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/see

Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS)

CURS was established in 1966, initially as a research institution in urban and regional studies, but has expanded its activities over the past 25 years. The group's work has an international perspective, drawing on extensive links with research and policy networks and aims to understand the dynamics of places in order to provide a constructive input to the development of policies to deliver more sustainable outcomes for cities and regions. A full merger of the planning component of CURS with the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) occurred in 2011 and has been supplemented by several new appointments in the area of resilience and urban living as part of a major University investment.

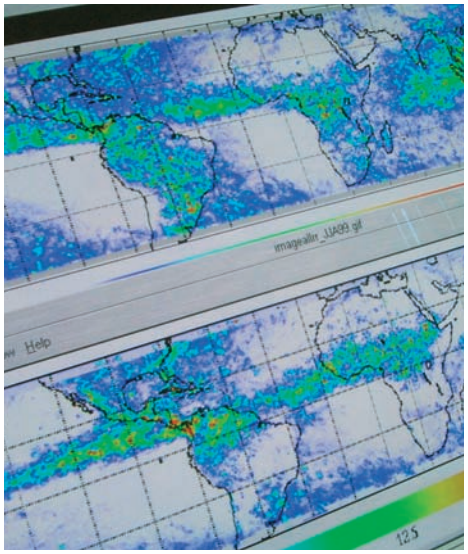
Economic development activities associated with CURS are predominantly located in the Business School and focus on understanding of the development and re-organisation economic activity at different spatial scales. GEES research encompasses:

- Spatial planning and sustainable urban development
- Urban regeneration and resilience
- Social inclusion and social cohesion
- Neighbourhood change and responsiveness to communities
- Governance and management of places and institutions

It is envisaged that there will be the opportunity to develop and restructure the social science research groupings in the School following the raft of new appointments in 2013.

Geosystems research group

The Geosystems research group tackles a range of scientific questions concerned with the dynamic behaviour of our planet and its complex history. The group as a whole contains scientists with diverse backgrounds and skills, including strong expertise in palaeobiology, geophysical and palaeoclimatic modelling, and geochemical and physical sedimentological approaches to understanding past environments. Our research is strongly grounded in geological field relationships on the continents and extends to the understanding of the structure of continental margins and contemporary processes thereon. A distinctive feature of this group is the broad range of timescales over which we work, which crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries. Hence we are concerned both with processes that occurred deep in geological history and those that happened on archaeological timescales, in addition to conducting experiments and field observations related to contemporary environments. Our research is funded from a range of sources including the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the European Community, the petroleum industry and charities. We work with a wide range of collaborators in other institutions in the UK and overseas, particularly in western Europe, the USA and Australia. Joint activity with colleagues in the School's Water Sciences and Environmental Health Sciences groups are also flourishing. The School and the University have a wide range of equipment and facilities to support this work, including recent investments in computing, geochemical, petrological and palaeomagnetic areas. A new molecular biomarker laboratory is being established in 2013.



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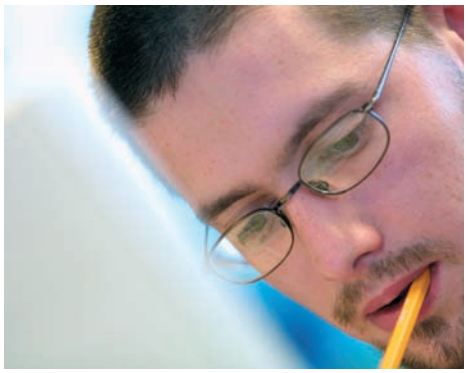

Environmental Health Sciences research group

The Environmental Health Sciences research group represents a major grouping with exceptional expertise in aspects of applied atmospheric science and environmental nanoscience. Research in air pollution is nationally leading and in several aspects, internationally leading. Major strengths include both expertise in atmospheric physics and numerical modelling, atmospheric chemistry and links into studies of personal exposure and effects on human health. Studies of the physical, chemical and toxicological properties of airborne particulate matter are a particular strength. The EHS research group has two postdoctoral positions funded by the NERC National Centre for Atmospheric Science who are playing a major role in the NERC Urban Atmospheric Science Initiative and also have a leading position in single particle aerosol mass spectrometry. Complementing the work on air pollution, our studies of urban climatology are advancing both measurement and modelling of urban heat island processes with collaboration in University initiatives in Urban Resilience. Work on climate is also focussed on enhancing the climate resilience of transport systems, including an improved means of forecasting road surface temperatures for winter maintenance which is now widely applied within the UK. Another aspect of our pollution studies is work on persistent organic pollutants which involves studies both of 'legacy' pollutants such as PCB and more recent contaminants such as brominated and organophosphorus flame retardants, as well as perfluoroalkyl compounds, an area in which the group has an internationally leading position. Work on environmental nanoscience is in many aspects world-leading and has attracted major funding from NERC, including the Facility for Environmental Nanoparticle Analysis and Characterisation (FENAC). Work is focussed on nanoparticle characterisation and studies of the environmental pathways and impacts of nanomaterials in the environment. The group has modern and highly equipped facilities both for laboratory and field research and undertakes numerous international collaborative campaigns.

Water Sciences research group

Water is a cross-cutting research issue driving national and international research agenda, and the Water Sciences group at the University of Birmingham undertakes pure and applied research within this dynamic and fast-changing area, to address questions of immediate concern to society and environment. This research reflects the acceleration of environmental stresses, transformation of national/international agendas and ecological and environmental degradation which require new understanding of the key processes governing all aspects of water environments. Measures of the environmental and societal value of water and new paradigms and policies for the integrated management of water to meet future needs are also required.

In this context the Water Sciences Research Group at Birmingham, is advancing our fundamental understanding of surface and ground water processes by undertaking research at multiple scales, which encompasses hydrology, hydroclimatology, biogeochemistry, geomorphology, ecology and modelling. The activities of the Group embrace the work of two long established research teams in Hydroecology and Hydrogeology, which were recognised as internationally excellent by the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise. The core of our research in surface- and ground-water systems aims to i) quantify the physical, chemical and biological processes governing the quantity and quality of water, and the cycling and transfer of nutrients and contaminants and; ii) model the effects of changing water sources and these nutrient fluxes and contamination on aquatic biota.

The scale of the research ranges from pore-scale, through small-scale field sites and drainage basins to continental systems. Our field studies encompass a wide range of climatic conditions, from Arctic to alpine and tropical and a large spectrum of anthropogenic pressures from pristine to urban conditions. Research by the group is funded by national (eg, NERC, EPSRC, EA, SEPA) and international agencies (eg, IAEA, ESF) as well as industry and charities. The group works with a wide range of collaborators in other institutions in the UK and overseas, particularly in Europe, Asia and the USA.

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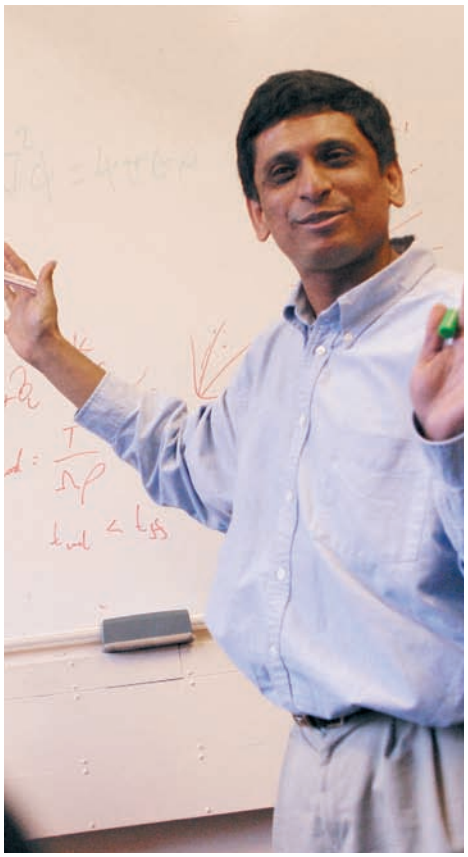
Job outline

Full time
Duration of post: Open
Post is open to internal and external candidates
Grade: 10
Salary: Competitive package for an outstanding candidate
Informal Enquiries: Contact Professor Ian Fairchild (Head of School) at i.j.fairchild@bham.ac.uk
or in CURS: Peter Lee/Simon Pemberton (Research) 0121 4143645/ 4142680 or
Austin Barber/Mike Beazley (Teaching) ext. 0121 4142984/ 4143278

The appointment



The University of Birmingham seeks to appoint a Chair in Spatial Planning as part of a significant staffing initiative which the new appointee could help shape. Applications are encouraged from planners and urban geographers who are interested in providing leadership to the well-established Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS). CURS contributes significantly to the research and teaching portfolio of the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES). It has an established track-record in a number of key areas including urban regeneration and renewal, community planning and neighbourhood change, housing renewal, European spatial planning, creative cities and communities and superdiversity and migration. CURS is also embedded within current social science research in GEES including groundbreaking projects in urban resilience, energy justice and landscapes, political and socio-technical transitions, international migration, connected communities and diverse creative economies. CURS benefits from an exciting interdisciplinary environment favouring cross-disciplinary initiatives augmented by the newly launched Institute for Advanced Studies. In addition to undergraduate teaching in Planning/Geography, Planning/Social Policy, Planning/Economics and Planning/Business Management, CURS runs a suite of Masters courses including the flagship Urban and Regional Planning which is accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). The new Chair will lead on the continuing development of CURS as a School of Planning at the University of Birmingham by working closely with existing staff, contributing to the development of research and related teaching in planning (especially at the interface with human geography) and the supervision of postgraduate students within our thriving doctoral research community.

Female and BME staff are under-represented in the School and so we would particular value applications from such candidates. Professor Eva Valsami-Jones is available to discuss the School's equal opportunities policies (valsamie@adf.bham.ac.uk, 01214145537).

Candidates interested in a Readership appointment in this area should contact Ian Fairchild in the first instance.

Person specification

The successful candidate will have an outstanding international reputation and a track record of internationally leading research (evidenced for example by a track record of high impact journal publications and invitations to give keynote talks at leading conferences and attracting external research funding). S/he will also possess a clear research vision, with a strong interdisciplinary component, excellent leadership and management skills and the ability to attract and inspire researchers of the highest calibre. The appointee will be an inspiring teacher, able to communicate with researchers, undergraduates and the general public. In order to further develop CURS as a School of Planning, applicants should have membership of the RTPI or be eligible for membership.

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Main responsibilities

- To provide leadership for the management and development of the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies within the school of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) and interfacing with schools in the College of Social Sciences and the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
- To continue raising the profile of the School of Planning in Birmingham
- To attract research students and postdoctoral research fellows of the highest calibre, in the individual's own area of expertise, and to engage in joint supervision to enable the development of new lines of interdisciplinary research
- To lead the delivery of research in their own area of expertise, including attracting external research funding
- To provide leadership of the research activities, including the development of funding proposals within and across academic units, career development and mentoring of researchers, and links with the public sector and industry
- To contribute to the planning, design and development of innovative degree programmes
- To provide leadership in developing the provision and quality of teaching
- To set, mark and assess work at postgraduate and undergraduate levels in GEES
- To design and deliver excellent teaching and assessment within GEES, through lectures, seminars and tutorials
- To contribute to the management of teaching and research in GEES, the College of Life and Environmental Sciences, and the University generally
- To contribute to leadership, decision-making and management in GEES and the College of Life and Environmental Sciences.
- To facilitate closer academic collaboration across the University
- To represent the field of study as required in the University and externally

The candidate profile

The successful applicant will have an internationally leading research profile including strong evidence of international esteem and an outstanding record of high impact publications. S/he should demonstrate a strong record of supervising doctoral students to successful completion. Evidence of the ability to attract significant external research funding is essential. Candidates should also demonstrate evidence of academic leadership in the development and delivery of teaching programmes. RTPI membership, or a profile that can enable membership, is essential.

How to apply

Applicants are invited to submit their application online to us, via www.hr.bham.ac.uk/jobs