



JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title:	Assistant Research Officer
Division:	Economic, Social and Sustainable Development Division
Job Grade:	Y (Young Professionals Programme)
Reports to:	Head of Youth Research & Policy
Location:	London, UK

General Information

The Commonwealth Secretariat is the principal intergovernmental body of the Commonwealth, responsible for progressing and achieving the shared goals of the association's 52 member governments in advancing democracy, development and respect for diversity.

Young People in the Commonwealth

More than 60% of the population of the Commonwealth is aged under 30 years, and the wellbeing and development of these 1.2 billion children and young people are essential to the success of the Commonwealth and its 52 member states.

The Commonwealth sees young people (aged 15-29 years) as assets to their societies, with a proven capability to contribute to and lead change. It is vital to ensure that they are developed and empowered to realise their individual potential, and to contribute to their countries' development and the success of the Commonwealth.

Accordingly, the Commonwealth Secretariat reserves a number of positions for Young Professionals.

Commonwealth Youth Programme

The Commonwealth Secretariat delivers the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), working with Commonwealth member governments, youth leaders and youth work professionals to develop and implement policy and programmes for the empowerment of young people. The CYP focuses on areas of major political, economic and social importance to young people, based on mandates received from Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings and the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan. This includes a focus on Sport for Development and Peace.

The CYP aims to support member governments, youth leaders and youth professionals to create optimal enabling environments for young people to participate as equal partners in development and democracy. The CYP also facilitates and supports representative youth leaders to build national, regional and pan-Commonwealth networks, drive youth-led action, and have a voice in decision making. As well as stand-alone initiatives, The CYP includes collaboration with other Commonwealth Secretariat Divisions to integrate a youth perspective across all key facets of the Commonwealth (eg economic, political, human rights).

Job Summary

The Assistant Research Officer is responsible for providing technical and administrative support for the thought leadership aspect of YTH's work, including pan-Commonwealth youth research and policy development. He/she will work under the supervision of the CYP Head of Research & Policy, and in collaboration with the CYP Youth Programmes Section and Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) Section.

Key Accountabilities

1. Contributes to CYP strategic direction and operational planning, especially with respect to research and policy work, and thereby the Commonwealth Secretariat 4-year Strategic Plan.
2. Supports the positioning of the Commonwealth as a thought leader in youth development, and ensures the relevance and impact of CYP work, by:
 - Undertaking ground-breaking policy-oriented research on opportunities and challenges faced by young people and disseminating findings to key stakeholders
 - Contributing to the development of context-specific research papers, toolkits, resources, guidelines and training programmes, for use by / with member governments, youth leaders and youth professionals;
 - Supporting the commissioning and oversight of research projects by external consultants by:
 - Developing research proposals, conducting literature reviews and negotiating technical and operational aspects of the agreements.
 - Liaising with partners, and monitoring quality, budget and timely delivery of research outputs.
 - Contributing to the building and nurturing of relationships with current and potential partner organisations to enable cutting edge research and service delivery partnerships and mobilisation of resources.
3. Supports the Research & Policy team by:
 - Providing administrative support, including correspondence, procurement and payments.
 - Supporting the coordination of meetings, groups, networks, communities and on-line content, and providing administrative support to programme activity such as events, meetings and workshops.
 - Contributing to development of papers, speeches, presentations and talking points for senior staff.
 - Representing the Commonwealth Secretariat in research and policy networks, forums and meetings as delegated by the Head of Research & Policy.
4. Carries out any other appropriate duties as required for the efficient operation of the organisation in a continually evolving environment.
5. Adheres to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy.

The Assistant Research Officer role is for a two-year term, as a Commonwealth Young Professional. The position may involve some international travel.

Person Specification

This position is reserved for Young Professionals, so, to be considered, candidates must be 27 years or younger at the date of close of applications.

Candidates must also be a citizen of a Commonwealth country.

Education

- A strong bachelor degree or equivalent, with a significant research component, in a relevant discipline such as sociology, public policy, international development or the broad social sciences and other related disciplines.
- A relevant Masters level qualification is highly desirable.

Experience - Essential

- At least one year of demonstrated work experience in contributing to the design and delivery of research projects. The work experience may be gained through a combination of paid employment, volunteer, placement or internship positions.
- Sound and demonstrated knowledge of youth and/or social development.
- Demonstrated experience in stakeholder engagement.

Experience - Desirable

- Cutting edge youth development research and/or policy work.
- Leadership level involvement in a youth-led social change initiative or representative organisation.
- Working in a developing country.
- Working in a Government, intergovernmental or international NGO organisation.

Skills

- High personal standards of excellence.
- Demonstrated commitment to Commonwealth values.
- Strong knowledge of research methodologies / institutions / environments.
- Excellent:
 - Verbal and written communication skills in English.
 - Interpersonal skills.
 - Creative thinking and solution building abilities.
 - Analysis and synthesis skills
 - Strategic thinking and operational planning capabilities.
 - Administrative and organisational abilities, including an eye for detail.
- Numerically literate & technologically savvy.
- Ability to work autonomously and in teams, and in a multi-cultural work environment.
- Demonstrated drive and initiative, a self-starter with a can-do attitude.

Competencies

Working with Others
<p>Regularly shares information of value with colleagues</p> <p>Shows commitment to delivering on key agreements made to colleagues</p> <p>Makes an effort to view a situation from the other party's perspective as well</p> <p>Demonstrates awareness and sensitivity to colleagues' pressures</p> <p>Develops a wide network, including senior level contacts to facilitate activities and further own knowledge</p> <p>Develops long term relationships across cultures and/or geographical boundaries</p> <p>Uses relationships to identify the best people to help in the completion of tasks</p> <p>Tactfully deals with difficult people to gain buy-in and manage their expectations</p>
Communication
<p>Interacts and communicates effectively with internal/external contacts</p> <p>Ensures information is communicated to all the appropriate people</p> <p>Provides feedback to more senior colleagues effectively, providing justification where necessary</p> <p>Uses the correct method of communication, depending on the message and the audience</p> <p>Anticipates objections in dialogues and prepares convincing responses</p> <p>Writes reports and papers that are succinct accounts of key information</p>
Developing & Applying Professional Expertise
<p>Proactively identifies how to develop specialist knowledge</p> <p>Takes learning from previous experience and applies it appropriately</p> <p>Demonstrates willingness to learn new skills and/or approaches</p>
Respect for Diversity
<p>Works effectively with people from all backgrounds</p> <p>Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally</p> <p>Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making</p> <p>Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group</p> <p>Identifies biases in systems & processes</p>
Adhering to Principles and Values
<p>Adapts professional style to suit different situations with different individuals where appropriate</p> <p>Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines</p> <p>Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters</p>
Adapting and Innovating

Recognises opportunities for improvement and proposes change with impact and effect
Drives forward improvements and innovations within own area of responsibility, adding value where appropriate
Quickly grasps new concepts and how to apply them
Demonstrates flexibility e.g. by working beyond own remit in order to achieve an objective
Will effectively reorganise activities when faced with changing contexts and demands
Promotes new ideas that are picked up by senior colleagues
Adapts personal style to meet the needs of others