

Research Scientist for E-TRIALs - Educational Research Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Posted Jul. 29, 2024, set to expire Nov. 23, 2024

Job Title	Research Scientist for E-TRIALs - Educational Research
Department	Computer Science
Institution	Worcester Polytechnic Institute Worcester, Massachusetts
Date Posted	Jul. 29, 2024
Application Deadline	Open until filled
Position Start Date	Available immediately
Job Categories	Research Scientist/Associate
Academic Field(s)	Computer/Information Sciences
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JOB TITLE

Research Scientist for E-TRIALs - Educational Research

LOCATION

Worcester

DEPARTMENT NAME

Computer Science - NFR JM

DIVISION NAME

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Worcester Polytechnic Institute - WPI

JOB DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Thanks to several new funding sources from the Institute of Education Sciences, National Science Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education, the E-TRIALS Project (<https://www.etrialstestbed.org/>) at WPI is able to fund a full-time post-doctoral position. The position will support and advance research across dozens of funded projects with Dr. Neil Heffernan (<https://www.neilheffernan.net/>).

In addition to research, the position will be expected to actively learn and assist in grant writing. Because WPI's policy restricts postdocs from serving as Co-PIs, Dr. Heffernan hires postdocs with the "Research Scientist" title so he can list these individuals as Co-PIs for NSF proposals. This experience will give you a competitive advantage on the job market; the last three postdocs in this role had one or more funded NSF proposals on their CV when they moved on from WPI.

If you have questions, please send them to akao@wpi.edu. Formal applications must be submitted via WPI and will be reviewed on a rolling basis until filled.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The **E-TRIALS Project**: E-TRIALS (Ed-Tech Research Infrastructure To Advance Learning Science) is a joint project between the Worcester Polytechnic Institute and The ASSISTments Foundation (TAF). E-TRIALS leverages ASSISTments, a free online math platform, to support researchers creating randomized controlled trials to strengthen the science of learning. New infrastructure (i.e., software features), funded by IES, NSF, the U.S. DOE, and various philanthropy, is also being developed to reduce the cost of- and increase the volume of studies conducted by educational researchers using ASSISTments.

This role will also work in close collaboration with The **ASSISTments Foundation (TAF)** a non-profit with a staff dedicated to improving student learning through ASSISTments, a responsive online learning platform that is teacher-paced and evidence-based. Co-founded by Neil & Cristina Heffernan, ASSISTments experienced tremendous growth in 2020 and is now used by more than 20,000 teachers and their students. It is a unique platform that supports teachers and students while also supporting researchers who seek to understand pedagogy and learning. The system is one of few available K-12 math tools proven effective through rigorous randomized controlled research.

Professor Heffernan at WPI has several grants that involve him overseeing research and AI work that happens inside of the ASSISTments product, and as such, TAF does the software engineering work to

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allow those projects to happen.

Are you looking for a Postdoctoral Fellowship? Applicants for this position must have a Ph.D. by the start of the position in education, psychology, computer science, data science or a related field. Similar to the role of post-doc, the initial appointment is for one year, renewable based on mutual interest and continued funding. However, this role enables junior scientists to serve as PI or Co-PIs on NSF projects, thereby enabling young scholars to quickly build their CV with an impressive list of funding and projects related to education and technology.

The primary responsibilities of this role will include the following:

1. Vet, coordinate, and advise external research teams as they set up projects within the E-TRIALS infrastructure in accordance to the tenets of Open Science;
2. Recruit and support subsequent research cohorts as well as help us design new ASSISTments features that will excite more researchers to use our platform;
3. Onboard new researchers by conducting informational webinars and walk new users through the process;
4. Learn and hone your grant-writing skills with Dr. Neil Heffernan as he endeavors to increase funding for the E-TRIALS and related projects;
5. Work with Dr. Heffernan's PhD students and their masters and undergraduate teams in building out E-TRIALS infrastructure;
6. Manage the communications and messaging between E-TRIALS and the national community of researchers, funders, and policy-makers.

Requirements

- A PhD in fields of education, psychology, computer science, data sciences, information sciences or a related field.
- Driven to work with small teams in a start-up environment, experience in such environments preferred.
- Strong written and oral communication skills and the ability to target communication to various audiences, including university academics, industry professionals, and teacher users of ASSISTments.
- Experience coordinating cross-team projects, managing timelines and stakeholders, and strategizing creative solutions towards clear goals with exceptional attention to detail.
- Proactive, thoughtful, and entrepreneurial work style on both highly independent and team projects.
- Experience with the Google suite of office products.
- Experience with databases such as AirTable or GoogleSheets (spreadsheets).



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Preferred

Experience in K-12 education organizations preferred.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. We expect to get a one year long contract, renewable on excellent performance. If you have any questions, please contact Angela Kao at akao@wpi.edu.

FLSA STATUS

United States of America (Exempt)

WPI is an Equal Opportunity Employer that actively seeks to increase the diversity of its workplace. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, or disability. It seeks individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences who will contribute to a culture of creativity, collaboration, inclusion, problem solving, innovation, high performance, and change making. It is committed to maintaining a campus environment free of harassment and discrimination.

To apply, visit: https://wpi.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/WPI_External_Career_Site/job/Worcester/Research-Scientist-for-E-TRIALs---Educational-Research_R0002891

About WPI

WPI is a vibrant, active, and diverse community of extraordinary students, world-renowned faculty, and state of the art research facilities. At WPI, we have competitive and comprehensive benefits, including health insurance, long-term care, retirement, tuition assistance, flexible spending accounts, work-life balance and much more.

Diversity & Inclusion at WPI

WPI is committed to creating an inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and respected; a place where every student, faculty and staff member can be themselves, so that they can study, live, and work comfortably, to reach their full potential, and make meaningful contributions in order to meet departmental and institutional goals. WPI thrives on innovative practice and welcomes diverse perspectives, insight, and people from diverse lived experiences, to enhance the community environment and propel the institution to the next level in a competitive, global marketplace.

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Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

Contact

N/A

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