



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Melbourne Law School

Postdoctoral Research Fellow (Machines, Humans, and Decision Responsibility)

POSITION NO	0058076
CLASSIFICATION	Level A
SALARY	\$97,588.00
SUPERANNUATION	Employer contribution of 17%
WORKING HOURS	Full-time (1.0 FTE) however part-time may be considered
BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT	Fixed term for 3 years
OTHER BENEFITS	https://about.unimelb.edu.au/careers/staff-benefits
HOW TO APPLY	Online applications are preferred. Go to http://about.unimelb.edu.au/careers , select the relevant option ('Current Opportunities' or 'Jobs available to current staff'), then find the position by title or number.
CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES ONLY	Dr Jake Goldenfein Tel +61 3 8344 1330 Email jakeg@unimelb.edu.au <i>Please do not send your application to this contact</i>

For information about working for the University of Melbourne, visit our website:
about.unimelb.edu.au/careers

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

The Project: Machines, Humans and Decision Responsibility

Automated decision-making systems provoke a range of anxieties about inconsistency with rule of law principles. A substantial body of literature has identified the ways that automation challenges transparency, equality, and accountability, as well as processes and practices long understood as fundamental to law. Frequently these diagnoses end with an appeal to *re-humanise* automated decisions to preserve their alignment with rule of law prerogatives. A human decision-maker in control of an automated system is believed capable of defending human values from mindless technocracy. And a number of regulatory tools have been developed to ensure human centrality in decision automation – the most important of these include a ‘human in the loop’, and ‘AI explanations’.

Both human in the loop and AI explanations have great intuitive appeal as regulatory strategies for governing automated decisions. But research has revealed their limitations and complexities. Humans in the loop often fail to address the problems of decision automation, and risk becoming rubber stamps for automated decisions; AI explanations often provide nothing meaningful or useful to decision subjects or decision makers, and risk distracting from more meaningful interrogation of why decisions are made. This is arguably due to assumptions and biases embedded in these regulatory strategies about the nature and function of a human, and the degree to which humans can satisfy the legitimising role of moral agent in control of an automated system.

This project seeks to better understand, on one hand, the functions, capacities, and normative role of the human, and on the other hand, the ways in which automated systems ought to explain or be explained to humans. The goal is to move past conceptual blockages hindering effective governance of automated decisions. The actual processes of automated and data-driven decision-making are highly complex, involve a distribution of authority and cognition between human and machines, and are embedded in institutions. Better insights into the concept of the human, AI explanations, and their combined institutional contexts are intended to help take those complexities into account to improve mechanisms and regimes of institutional responsibility for the use and deployment of automated systems.

Position Summary

The University of Melbourne node of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S Centre) seeks a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to work on the Humans, Machines, and Decision Responsibility project. The project will involve individual and collaborative work by the Fellow and ADM+S Centre Investigators.

The Machines, Humans, and Decision Responsibility project is distributed across the Institutions and Machines research programs in the ADM+S Centre, and will involve collaborations with researchers Centre-wide.

The Fellow is expected to devote approximately 50% of their time working on the Humans, Machines, and Decision Responsibility project, with the other 50% dedicated to an independent research agenda that aligns with other ADM+S research projects and priorities.

The Fellow will be based at Melbourne Law School and will collaborate actively with the ADM+S Centre's national and international network of participants. The Fellow will also have access to the ADM+S Centre's research training and professional development opportunities, international visiting fellowships, and exchanges (travel arrangements permitting), and the ADM+S Centre's network of industry partners.

The Fellowship is for 3 years.

This Fellowship is intended as a full-time research position, but a part-time appointment may be possible. In any event, the Fellow may not hold additional appointments or remuneration that impose commitments that conflict with the commitment of the Fellowship.

The Fellow will be employed at Level A.6 in the University Salary Band (currently \$97,588.00 p.a. plus 17% superannuation) and will have access to some additional funding over the Fellowship term for approved travel, accommodation and associated expenses related to the project.

We will begin reviewing applications from 13 February 2023.

1. Key Responsibilities

- ▶ Conducting high-quality research relevant to the project outlined above and the Fellow's own research agenda, both independently and collaboratively under the direction of ADM+S Centre investigators.
- ▶ Preparing and publishing research outcomes in relevant high-quality refereed journals, reports, books, and/or online publications.
- ▶ Presenting research outcomes at seminars, conferences, and industry meetings, and engaging with external stakeholders.
- ▶ Contributing to public understanding and debate through media, industry, and/or policy engagement.
- ▶ Contributing actively to the ADM+S Centre and Melbourne Law School's research culture, including participation in research collaboration and community-building within the ADM+S Centre's research programs and focus areas, including participation in joint research projects under the auspices of the ADM+S Centre as directed by the Centre Investigators.
- ▶ Responsibility for project administration and organisation including coordination across Investigators, conference, and workshop organisation as directed by the Centre Investigators.

- ▶ Conforming to University and ADM+S Centre requirements with respect to research ethics and integrity and data management.
- ▶ Compliance with health and safety policies, procedures, hazard reporting, and safe work practices.

2. Selection Criteria

2.1 ESSENTIAL

- ▶ Completion of a PhD in Law or another field relevant to the project such as Media Studies, Critical Data Studies, Cultural Studies, Science and Technology Studies, Anthropology, Political Science, Computer Science, or Public Policy / Administration.
- ▶ Demonstrated scholarly interest and ability in issues related to the project outlined above.
- ▶ A strong academic record at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- ▶ Strong evidence of outstanding analytic ability and academic writing skills, including the capacity to produce very high quality peer-reviewed academic publications.
- ▶ High level of fluency in English.
- ▶ Experience or demonstrated interest in contributing to relevant policy debates.
- ▶ Ability and willingness to work independently to generate distinctive contributions to scholarly knowledge.
- ▶ Ability and willingness to work collaboratively with fellow researchers on joint projects and publications.

2.2 DESIRABLE

- ▶ Where the PhD is in a field other than Law, preference may be given to applicants who also have tertiary qualification(s) in Law.
- ▶ Where the PhD is in Law, preference may be given to applicants who also have tertiary qualifications in another field relevant to the project outlined above.
- ▶ Excellent organisational and project management skills.
- ▶ Well-developed oral and interpersonal skills with demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders and research collaborators, including presentations at seminars, conferences, and industry events.
- ▶ Experience in editing and formatting material for scholarly publication and for websites.

3. Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing a workplace free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, and victimisation. The University makes decisions on employment, promotion, and reward on the basis of merit.

The University is committed to all aspects of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and to providing all staff, students, contractors, honorary appointees, volunteers and visitors with a safe, respectful and rewarding environment free from all

forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation. This commitment is set out in the University's People Strategy 2015-2020 and policies that address diversity and inclusion, equal employment opportunity, discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and appropriate workplace behaviour. All staff are required to comply with all University policies.

The University values diversity because we recognise that the differences in our people's age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, physical ability, and background bring richness to our work environment. Consequently, the People Strategy sets out the strategic aim to drive diversity and inclusion across the University to create an environment where the compounding benefits of a diverse workforce are recognised as vital in our continuous desire to strive for excellence and reach the targets of Growing Esteem.

4. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

All staff are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other personnel who may be affected by their conduct.

OHS responsibilities applicable to positions are published at:

<https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/people/community/responsibilities-of-personnel>

These include general staff responsibilities and those additional responsibilities that apply for Managers and Supervisors and other Personnel.

5. Other Information

5.1 ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR AUTOMATED DECISION-MAKING + SOCIETY

The rapid expansion of data-driven automated decision-making enabled by technologies from machine learning to blockchain has great potential benefits, while it also creates serious new risks, both tangible and intangible. Potential harms include discrimination and other forms of unfair treatment against individuals, disadvantaged communities, and the spread of disinformation for political and commercial ends. Increasing inequality and diminished economic security have been noted as risks in the coming decade.

The **ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S Centre)** is a cross-disciplinary, national research centre, which aims to create the knowledge and strategies necessary for responsible, ethical, and inclusive automated decision-making. Funded by the Australian Research Council from 2020 to 2026, ADM+S is hosted at RMIT in Melbourne, Australia, with nodes in eight other Australian universities, including the University of Melbourne. The ADM+S Centre brings together leading researchers in the humanities, law, social and technological sciences in an international research, industry, and civil society network. Its research is structured into four programs—Institutions, Data, People and Machines—and four priority domains for public engagement—news and media, transport, social services, and health.

5.2 ORGANISATION UNIT

www.law.unimelb.edu.au

Melbourne Law School is Australia's first all-graduate law faculty. Melbourne Law School was the first faculty in Australia to teach law, and awarded this country's first law degrees. The Law School is now fully graduate with its Juris Doctor for admission to practice recognised as a high level qualification in Australia and beyond. Coupled with the unrivalled excellence of the Melbourne Law Masters and its excellent Research Higher Degree programs, the Law School offers a unique opportunity for the integration of scholarship and teaching.

Its faculty is a vibrant community of creative scholars, committed to a highly collegial, research-intensive institutional life. The Law School has particular strengths in comparative analysis. It aims to integrate teaching with research and engagement activities and to engage with local, national and global communities. The Law School is deeply committed to Indigenous recognition and the embedding of Indigenous perspectives in its teaching and learning, its research, and engagement with public life.

The Law School is a single department faculty located in a custom designed building in University Square. The Law School has approximately 2,200 graduate students (including JD, Melbourne Law Masters and Research High Degrees).

Research

The international reputation of the School is closely linked to the range and quality of its research programs.

The School has several research Institutes, Centres, Networks and Groups which provide a focus for scholarly interaction.

5.3 THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Established in 1853, the University of Melbourne is a leading international university with a tradition of excellence in teaching and research. The main campus in Parkville is recognised as the hub of Australia's premier knowledge precinct comprising eight hospitals, many leading research institutes, and a wide-range of knowledge-based industries. With outstanding performance in international rankings, the University is at the forefront of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

The University employs people of outstanding calibre and offers a unique environment where staff are valued and rewarded.

Further information about working at The University of Melbourne is available at <http://about.unimelb.edu.au/careers>

5.4 ADVANCING MELBOURNE

The University's strategic direction is grounded in its purpose. While its expression may change, our purpose is enduring: to benefit society through the transformative impact of education and research. Together, the vision and purpose inform the focus and scale of our aspirations for the coming decade.

Advancing Melbourne reflects the University's commitment to its people, its place, and its partners. Our aspiration for 2030 is to be known as a world-leading and globally connected Australian university, with our students at the heart of everything we do.

We will offer students a distinctive and outstanding education and experience, preparing them for success as leaders, change agents and global citizens.

We will be recognised locally and globally for our leadership on matters of national and global importance, through outstanding research and scholarship and a commitment to collaboration.

We will be empowered by our sense of place and connections with communities. We will take opportunities to advance both the University and the City of Melbourne in close collaboration and synergy.

We will deliver this through building a brilliant, diverse and vibrant University community, with strong connections to those we serve.

The means for achieving these goals include the development of the University of Melbourne's academic and professional staff and the capabilities needed to support a modern, world-class university. Those means require a commitment to ongoing financial sustainability and an ambitious infrastructure program which will reshape the campus and our contribution to the communities we engage with. This strategy, and the priorities proposed, is centred around five intersecting themes; place, community, education, discovery and global.

5.5 GOVERNANCE

The Vice Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer of the University and responsible to Council for the good management of the University.

Comprehensive information about the University of Melbourne and its governance structure is available at <https://about.unimelb.edu.au/strategy/governance>