

Job Description

Pre-Award Officer

Salary:	Grade 6
Contract:	Part time, ongoing
Location:	Canterbury Campus
Responsible to:	Senior Pre-Award Officer
Job family:	Administrative, professional and managerial

Job purpose

A member of the Research & Innovation Operations team, the Pre-Award Officer helps to stimulate and support the school's research and innovation culture. Increasing research and innovation income and the number of high-quality outputs is central to the University's strategy; the role holder is responsible for linking the expertise of academic colleagues with suitable funding opportunities and will provide support to maximise grant applications.

The role holder will work in close collaboration with the other teams within the Business Development, Research & Innovation (BDRI) directorate as well as staff within schools to ensure compliance with set policies and procedures and relevant regulatory requirements.

The role holder will be assigned to specific schools but will be expected to work across others as necessary as well as supporting cross-school initiatives such as the University's Institutes.

Key accountabilities

The following are the main duties for the job. Other duties, commensurate with the grading of the job, may also be assigned from time to time.

- Identify research and innovation funding opportunities from a variety of sources (commercial, charity and government funding) from online sources, contacts, and funder events, to increase academic knowledge of alternate sources of funding and drive-up income and societal impact.
- Develop strong, supportive relationships with academic colleagues within the school(s) to enable the matching of funding opportunities and maximise the impact of the promotion of potential funding opportunities for research and innovation in line with the University's ambitions and KPIs.
- Provide pre-award support with the aim of improving the success rate of applications. This will include the provision of accurate project costings which adhere to university guidelines, advice and guidance to academic colleagues with respect to draft applications and support for the acceptance of research and innovation awards (liaising with other areas of BDRI and the wider University as necessary).
- Engage directly with research funders and businesses (commercial and public sector) in a proactive way, to grow the University's external profile and to increase income generation or engagement opportunities.
- Develop an in-depth knowledge of and keep abreast of updates within the assigned school areas of expertise (and across the wider University) and options for funding and collaboration, to provide correct and current information to partners and increase engagement.
- Build and maintain key relationships across the University and externally, to ensure the efficient operation of research activity.
- Maintain an awareness of sector developments and share any learnings internally through active participation in a Community of Practice. The postholder will also be expected to provide cover for staff absence and peak workloads of other Pre-Award Officers.

- Support the creation of a culture that is highly performance and contribution focused, built on a foundation of equality, diversity, belonging and inclusivity and that inspires people to bring their best every day.

Key challenges and decisions

The following provide an overview of the most challenging or complex parts of the role and the degree of autonomy that exists.

- The role holder plays a key role in supporting the development of improved research & innovation income generation in an extremely challenging economic environment. This will include providing support to increase the quality of applications, so that they have the greatest chance of success with external funders.
- Deals with a range of issues and often unforeseen problems, needing to exercise judgement about referring queries to the next level.
- Deals with sensitive situations and confidential data and information. Need for tact and confidentiality when dealing with the different people involved (PhD students, academic/professional services, external partners) and for interpersonal skills that encourage staff and students to approach the post holder for advice.
- Works on own initiative with minimum supervision for immediate work priorities, planning own workload within agreed quality standards or to a specification. Will be expected to resolve day to day operational difficulties within own team using own judgement and experience.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: All staff within the BDRI directorate, Directors of Research and Innovation, Heads of Academic Operations, Academic staff within and across the schools, Professional Services staff.

External: Representatives of funding bodies (including the Research Councils, the European Commission, Government departments, charities and industry), research administrators and academic staff at collaborating institutions, academic visitors.

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

This job involves undertaking duties which include the following health, safety and wellbeing considerations:

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Conflict resolution
- Ability to occasionally travel in a timely and efficient manner between campuses

Person specification

The person specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Applications will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in an application, or cover letter (where applicable), which back-up any assertions made in relation to each criterion.

Essential Criteria:

- GCSE Maths and English (grade C/4 or above) or equivalent (A)
- Educated to A level or equivalent (A)
- An understanding and empathy with the research environment of a University, and the significance of research for the University, the division, the researcher, students and community (A,I)

- Experience in supporting research and/or innovation grant administration in a HE institution or research body, including experience in advising on or writing research bids and supporting/working with academics (A,I)
- Excellent IT skills including use of databases, with excellent proficiency in use of MS Office (particularly Excel) (A,I,T)
- A demonstratable understanding of the funding system for research within the UK (I)
- Excellent organisational and time management skills, including the ability to prioritise workloads, to work accurately under pressure and to meet deadlines (I)
- Proven ability to work independently and exercise initiative (I)
- Willingness to learn and apply new systems and processes (I)
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, able to communicate effectively with staff at all levels and with external contacts (I)
- Strong interpersonal skills including motivational negotiating, influencing and relationship-building, professional and customer-focussed with the ability to deal professionally with people from a diverse range of backgrounds (I)
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision as well as co-operatively as part of a team with experience of supervising others (I)
- A firm commitment to fostering a working and learning environment that is respectful, inclusive and values diversity, including diversity of thought, and which enables staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds to thrive (I)

Desirable Criteria:

- Relevant first degree or equivalent qualification or significant equivalent professional experience (A)
- An understanding of the enterprise agenda within HE (I)

Assessment stage: A - Application; I - Interview; T - Test/presentation at interview stage