Job Description

Project Manager

Salary: Grade 7
Contract: Full time, fixed term (42 months)
Location: Canterbury Campus
Responsible to: Dr Jonathan Nixon, Reader in Engineering and Project Coordinator
Job family: Administrative, professional and managerial

Job purpose

Join OptimICE, an international Horizon Europe project working to reduce the impact of icing on wind energy in cold climates. Over 42 months, 14 organisations will bring together research and industry expertise to improve how wind turbines are monitored, operated and maintained in icy conditions.

The Project Manager is responsible for managing assigned project activities, ensuring their successful and timely delivery against project objectives. This includes mapping out activities, having a clear understanding of competing priorities and ensuring work is delivered on time.

The role holder will play a key role in shaping project delivery – including supporting the Project Coordinator's oversight, clarifying ownership and roles, ensuring activities remain aligned with project deliverables, and consulting effectively with key stakeholders.

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.

- Effectively manage assigned project activities, maintaining integrated project plans, ensuring a consistent approach in line with University procedures and guidelines, and monitoring each stage against the project plan to ensure timely delivery within time, cost and quality constraints.
- Support the Project Coordinator in steering project activities in order to deliver planned objectives and deliverables in a timely manner within available resources.
- Establish and maintain appropriate project-level governance through the application of project control methods and tools, such as document management, change control, financial tracking, data analysis and resource planning. Produce regular project updates to identify progress, risks and issues and support effective decision-making.
- Act as a point of contact for partners, providing advice and accurate, up-to-date information so that all partners are kept informed. Support meetings of the Steering Committee, General Assembly and Advisory Board, facilitating the resolution of project-level issues and risks, escalating matters in a timely fashion and making recommendations as appropriate.
- Support the Project Coordinator in managing stakeholder engagement, ensuring appropriate involvement and consultation, effective communications and clear expectations.
- Monitor the project's budget to ensure it remains within its agreed allocation. Ensure those who require it have access to accurate, up-to-date financial information, and provide regular internal updates on the budget position.
- Identify and make recommendations for improvements to contribute to the continuous improvement of project processes.

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.

- List ideally no more than three to four key challenges/decisions – level of autonomy to act
- Support the successful delivery of a large international project, taking responsibility for assigned project activities under the oversight of the Project Coordinator and escalating matters that require a project-level decision.
- Manage a range of conflicting priorities and demands on time and resources, deciding how best to plan and manage their own workload while keeping sight of project milestones and partner contributions.
- Work independently and flexibly, while consulting with others to achieve results. The role holder will need to follow up actions and influence people delivering different elements of the project without formal line management authority.
- Apply project management principles and relevant University procedures to maintain effective project processes and provide accurate advice to colleagues and partners.

Facts & figures

- OptimICE is a 42-month project with a total budget of approximately €5.2 million.
- The University of Kent project allocation to be managed is approximately €910,000.
- The consortium has 14 beneficiaries working across eight work packages.
- The role reports to the Project Coordinator and has no direct line-management responsibility.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Academics, professional services staff, students

External: Relevant external bodies – public, private and third sector organisations, specialist consultants, other HEIs

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
- Pressure to meet important deadlines such as might be inherent in high profile projects
- There may be a requirement to work evenings and weekends
- Ability to occasionally travel in a timely and efficient manner between campuses
- Overseas travel is a requirement of the role (typically around one short trip per year)

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:

- Educated to A level or equivalent (A)
- Recognised Project Management qualification (eg PRINCE 2, APM) OR part qualified OR significant project management experience in a similar role (A)

- Significant experience in the successful oversight and hands-on delivery of assigned project activities from initiation to completion (A, I)
- Experience of key project delivery activities such as risk management, stakeholder management, planning, budget management, change management, etc (A, I)
- Excellent organisational skills including planning & resourcing, project budgeting, progress reporting, running meetings with stakeholders with varying skills and communication styles (A, I)
- Excellent facilitation skills, with the ability to support project meetings involving partners and help achieve agreed outcomes. (A, I)
- Proven ability to write complex project documentation including terms of references, project briefs, financial reports, business cases and update reports (A, I)
- Excellent IT skills, particularly in the use of MS Office packages, databases and project planning tools (I)
- Knowledge and experience of different project delivery approaches and methodologies (I)
- Experience of analysing, interpreting and presenting data (I, T)
- Excellent and effective negotiation, influencing and communication skills, particularly the ability to persuade and inspire colleagues to work collaboratively to ensure project objectives are met (I)
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to facilitate critical decision making (I)
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and the ability to develop excellent working relationships both internal to and external to the University (I)
- Good budget management experience (I)
- Proven ability to work independently without close supervision, and of working effectively as part of a wider, multi-disciplinary team (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:

- Educated to degree level or equivalent (A)
- Experience of working on externally funded or international research projects, particularly Horizon Europe projects (A, I)
- CLAIT/ECDL or equivalent IT qualification (A)
- Experience of delivering complex/sensitive projects (A, I)
- Familiarity with the wind-energy industry, renewable energy or energy research (A, I)
- Knowledge and understanding of the challenges and strategic issues facing Higher Education (I)

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