

# JOB DESCRIPTION / RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICER

## Academic Divisions/ Divisional Operations: Research & Innovation

The University of Kent is a leading UK institution with an excellent reputation for outstanding teaching, strong research and international links. There are many new initiatives underway to build on existing strengths, such as Signature Research Themes, the Institute for Cultural and Creative Industries and the Kent and Medway Medical School.

The University is continuing to look to the future whilst responding to sector-wide challenges. Kent has set out a vision and strategy that builds upon strong foundations in education, student experience and research, embracing flexibility and growth to ensure a sustainable future for our community, and to enable the University to further its position and navigate these challenges successfully.

As part of this, we're reshaping our operating model to ensure our directorates and academic divisions are effective, efficient and focused sharply on delivering the University's ambition to be a leading civic university; delivering an outstanding student experience, outcomes, and world-leading research.

**Reference:**

AHUM-114-21

**Salary:**

Grade 6

**Contract:**

Ongoing

Full time

**Location:**

Canterbury campus

**Responsible to:**

Research & Innovation Manager

**Responsible for:**

Activities: Support divisional research & enterprise culture; support partnerships to generate income and collaborations

**Job family:**

Administration, Professional & Managerial

## Job purpose

A member of the divisional Research & Innovation team, the Research and Innovation Officer helps to stimulate and support the Division's research and enterprise 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 Division has significant links with business and/or public sector bodies and the role holder is expected to support the development of meaningful partnerships to generate research income and collaborations. Part of a team that is required to meet KPIs which are set at divisional level and are aligned with University expectations in this area, they will help provide greater opportunity, agility and autonomy for the Division to meet University KPIs in this strategic area.

The role holder will work in close collaboration with the other Divisions and central Research & Innovation Services to ensure compliance with set policies and procedures and relevant regulatory requirements.

## Key accountabilities

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

1. Develop strong, supportive relationships with academic colleagues within the Division to enable the matching of funding opportunities and maximise the impact of the promotion of potential funding opportunities for research and business collaboration in line with the Division's ambitions and KPIs.
2. Provide pre- and post-award support with the aim of improving the success rate of applications and maximising outputs. 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 key post-award processes such as liaison with funders and appointment of project-funded staff.
3. Engage directly with research funders and businesses (commercial and public sector) in a proactive way, in order to grow the Division's and University's external profile and engagement opportunities for the Division and to increase income generation or engagement opportunities.
4. Undertake a range of duties to maintain and develop the Division's public profile, thereby ensuring that its reputation grows and that stakeholders' and potential stakeholders' perception of the Division as a research and enterprise centre of excellence is enhanced.
5. Develop an in-depth knowledge of and keep abreast of updates within the Division's areas of expertise and options for funding and collaboration, in order to provide correct and current information to partners and increase engagement.
6. Build and maintain key relationships across the University and externally, including with Research & Innovation Services and collaborative partners at other UK centres, to ensure the efficient operation of research activity.

## 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.

1. The role holder plays a key role in supporting the Division to improve grant income generation and manage outputs 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.
2. Deals with a range of issues and often unforeseen problems, needing to exercise judgement about referring queries to the next level. Advice is routinely sought from central University departments, where issues are unusual or have wider implications.
3. 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 staff, external partners) and for interpersonal skills that encourage staff and students to approach the post holder for advice.
4. 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.

## Facts & figures

This role will directly support members of academic staff who undertake research and other income-generating activity. The role will support the submission of over x research applications each year, with a potential value to the University of over £x amount. These numbers will need to grow by x% year-on-year to enable the University to deliver its goal.

## Internal & external relationships

**Internal:** Directors of Operation, PhD students, academics and professional services staff within the Division and across Divisions, central professional services departments

**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.

The role holder is expected to demonstrate a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; promoting collaboration and positive partnerships, working harmoniously with colleagues, students and other stakeholders of all cultures and backgrounds.

## Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

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

- Repetitive limb movements
- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Conflict resolution
- Pressure to meet important deadlines such as might be inherent in high profile projects
- Ability to travel in a timely and efficient manner regularly 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.

You will have excellent administrative and organisational skills and an interest in supporting research activities in the Division. You will be proactive and not be phased by meeting changing priorities and working under tight deadlines.

You'll be able to demonstrate the following skills, experience, abilities and personal interests:

| Essential                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Assessed via |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| • GCSE Maths & 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 grant administration and/or impact in a higher education institution or research body. including experience in advising on or writing research bids and supporting/working with academics                 | A,I          |
| • A demonstrable understanding of the funding system for research within the UK                                                                                                                                                               | A,I          |
| • Good understanding of REF, research impact and other research quality measures                                                                                                                                                              | A,I          |
| • Excellent organisational and time management skills, including the ability to prioritise workloads, to work accurately under pressure and to meet deadlines                                                                                 | A,I          |
| • Proven ability to work independently and exercise initiative                                                                                                                                                                                | I            |
| • Proven analytical and problem solving capability                                                                                                                                                                                            | I,T          |
| • An ability to read and assimilate complex funder terms and conditions                                                                                                                                                                       | I,T          |
| • Excellent IT skills including use of databases, with excellent proficiency in use of MS Office (particularly Excel)                                                                                                                         | A,I,T        |
| • 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, and with the ability to write reports and to actively support on the writing of research bids/grants | A,I          |
| • Strong interpersonal skills including motivational negotiating, influencing and relationship building, professional and customer focussed with the ability to deal professional 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                                                                                                    | A,I          |
| • Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for a transformative student experience and multidisciplinary, impactful research                                                                           | I            |
| • Commitment to deliver and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day to day work of the role                                                                                                                                    | I            |
| Desirable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Assessed via |
| • Relevant first degree or equivalent qualification or significant equivalent professional experience                                                                                                                                         | A            |
| • An understanding of the enterprise agenda within HE                                                                                                                                                                                         | A,I          |

\* A - Application; I - Interview; T - Test/presentation at interview stage