Forging Ahead Network Manager
Job Ref: REQ250626

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Forging Ahead is the first stage of a large multi-university project led by Loughborough University focussing on research commercialisation across the Midlands. A mature commercialisation ecosystem relies on access to knowledge, investment, and talent. The Midlands boasts a strong knowledge base. Work is ongoing to enhance the investment ecosystem. There is, however, significant opportunity to better connect talent, expertise and skills in the Midlands to improve commercialisation intensity for the region. The Forging Ahead/Forging Beyond project is a collaboration of 15 Universities, backed by Research England, to address this gap through the implementation of an holistic portfolio of interventions including: creation and management of a Talent Pool; scale up of our best-practice accelerators across the region; creation of inward investment champions and colocation/innovation export networks; plus tailored interventions in priority sectors: Health & Med Tech, Advanced Manufacturing, Net Zero, and Creative & Digital. The Project will grow entrepreneurial capacity across the universities creating a step change in spinout creation. It will boost innovation and investment in critical midlands sectors by creating pathways for Intellectual Property, reinforcing supply chains and networks and promoting broader skills transfer across businesses and universities.

This is a unique and exciting opportunity to build the networks of founders, professionals, experts and investors which will help to power the Midlands-wide Forging Ahead Project; which will become instrumental in driving forward the future innovation landscape in the Midlands. Based at Loughborough University and working closely with colleagues from the Research Innovation Office, the post-holder will apply good organisational and stakeholder management skills to support the Project. They will connect and curate networks spanning the 15 Partner Universities, alongside a dedicated team, to jointly realise the aims and ambitions of this important initiative.

The Project partners include: Aston University, Birmingham City University, University of Birmingham, Coventry University, Cranfield University, De Montfort University, Derby University, University of Keele, Lincoln University, University of Leicester, Loughborough University, Nottingham Trent University, University of Nottingham, University of Warwick, Wolverhampton University.

Job Description

Job Grade: Management and Specialist Grade 6

Job Purpose:

This role provides an exciting opportunity to establish, manage and maintain a high-quality professional network to support University spinouts and commercialisation across the Midlands, comprising:

- University Technology Transfer Offices
- Professional Services providers e.g. Lawyers, Accountants and Patent Agents
- Funders and Investors

- Business support organisations
- Entrepreneurial founders, industry experts and mentors
- Entrepreneurial academics developing technology and commercial opportunities.

Job Duties:

Network coordination and activities

- Design, develop and implement engagement strategies to connect startup and spinout teams with relevant innovation partners, funders, and government agencies, ensuring effective collaboration and pathways to support.

- Engage in events and knowledge exchange activities across the Midlands, involving professional services, investors, business support professionals, entrepreneurial founders, and other external stakeholders.

- Work with the Central Services Team and project partners to plan, organise and deliver a series of events and activities to foster networking and professional development for participants of the Forging Ahead Project.

- Working with colleagues, identify and leverage opportunities for profile raising for individual spinouts, programmes, and the Project as a whole.

- Develop high quality virtual learning resources for project participants, make these resources available and suitable for distribution across Project Partners.

Information Collection, Distribution, Maintenance and Compliance

- Implement and manage a curated directory of founders, startup and spinout teams, business experts & mentors, professional services, funders and investors, Technology Transfer professionals etc. This may include identifying, interviewing, referencing, inducting, match-making, gathering of essential data and monitoring engagements.

- Manage databases and CRM systems to coordinate information and ensure compliance with data management standards. Supporting colleagues to adopt consistent information management practices.

- Pro-actively gather, curate and distribute information about the offers, resources and opportunities available from institutional and organisational partners, ensuring project participants remain engaged, well-informed and are able to access the very vest support available.

- Develop effective methods for the tracking and monitoring of progress and the capturing of impact of network activities, providing clear and regular updates and reports to the Project Manager and Management Board.

Management responsibilities

- Plan and execute regular regional network engagement events and activities to strengthen relationships and collaboration within the ecosystem.

- Plan and coordinate regional engagement activities, such as meetings, workshops, and events, to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange within the network.

- Support the Project Manager and Central Services colleagues to fulfil the objectives of the Project including working with Project Partners.

Budget

- Develop outline budget forecasts for activity plan, feeding into annual budget planning by the Project Manager.

Related activities

- To engage in training and continuing professional development.

- Identify, encourage, and promote good practice in the area of equity and diversity.

- Contribute to the development of EDI strategies and action plans and support activities to deliver the action plan.

- To stay up to date with developments in innovation and business policy from the National and Regional Government, Innovation funders and professional bodies.

- Remain aware of developments and collaboration opportunities with the other regional projects and initiatives.

- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation e.g. GDPR.

- To carry out these and any other duties commensurate with the grade and purpose of the post, in line with objectives agreed in the staff review process.

Points To Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

The post-holder is expected to be based primarily at Loughborough University's East Midlands Campus but with regular travel to Project Partner locations in the Midlands. The role will require flexibility in working hours and off-campus working. Out of Hours/Evening work may be required

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equity & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equity & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Belonging & Inclusion and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to the Project Manager.

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed against the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

1 – Application
2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Experience in network management or a related role, preferably within an innovation or commercialisation ecosystem.	1,3
	A working knowledge with the innovation landscape and ecosystem partners.	1,3
	Experience of working with stakeholders at various levels of seniority.	1,3
	Experience of planning, coordinating and delivering events.	1,3
Skills and abilities	Strong project management and organisational skills.	1,3
	Excellent communication and interpersonal abilities.	1,2,3
	Ability to analyse and identify knowledge gaps and needs.	1,3
	Proficiency in coordinating and managing engagement activities.	1,3
	Evidence of skills of persuasion and diplomacy.	1,3
	Excellent practical IT skills including Microsoft Office and Outlook diary management	1,2,3
	Able to work under pressure and meet competing deadlines.	1,3
	Able to plan, prioritise and work independently and to deal with unforeseen problems and circumstances effectively	1,3
	Ability to identify and leverage opportunities for profile raising.	1.3
Training	A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate, and to adopt new procedures as and when required	1,3
Qualifications	First degree or equivalent.	1,3
Other	A commitment to equity and diversity with the ability to role model, adhere to and advocate Equity and Diversity policies	1,3
	Willingness to work flexibly and to work occasional out of hours where required.	1,3
	Ability to travel in the UK, including overnight stays away from home	1,3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Experience working with startups, spinouts, or in a higher education environment.	1,3
	Knowledge of funding and investment processes for businesses. [OBJ]	1,3
	Experience gained by studying and/or working in Higher Education.	1,3

Skills and abilities	Ability to present complex information effectively to a range of audiences.	1,3
	Ability to use modern and advanced technology solutions to manage data effectively.	1,3
Qualifications	Coaching or mentoring qualification, or significant equivalent experience.	1,3

Conditions of Service

The position is Full Time and Fixed Term, ending on the 1st of May 2028. Salary will be on Management and Specialist Grade 6, £35,116 - £45,413 per annum, a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment. The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment for staff grades 6 and above, details of which can be found here.

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which can be found here.

The University offers a wide range of employee benefits which can be found here.

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements.
We also strive to create a culture that supports equity and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/