

Head of Partnership Development and Knowledge Exchange

Job Ref: REQ260032

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Department summary

The Research & Innovation Office (RIO) plays a leading role in shaping and delivering the University's research and innovation activities and provides a high quality, added value and seamless service to researchers across the research development pipeline. The Office incorporates a number of different teams that provide support for nurturing partnerships and collaborations; identifying and applying for funding; managing research projects and assuring compliance with policy; improving the visibility of research outputs; fostering the impact, intellectual property and commercialisation of research; and the nurturing of research leadership skills through training and skills development programmes. The RIO also works closely with other Professional Services across the University, notably Legal Services, Registry, Student Services, Finance and HR.

Job Description

Job Grade: Management and Specialist Grade 8

Job Purpose

To provide strategic leadership of the Partnership Development Team, driving the proactive identification, development and commercial management of high-value external partnerships that accelerate business growth, diversify and increase sustainable income streams, and maximise the commercial impact of the University's research, innovation, and expertise.

The role will work closely with academic and professional services colleagues to deliver a coordinated, market-led approach to partner engagement, ensuring Schools are effectively supported to develop commercially viable collaborations that meet partner needs, enhance competitiveness, and generate measurable financial and reputational returns.

Job Duties

- Lead the development and implementation of the University's partnership framework aligned to key performance indicators of the University's Core Plans.
- Provide strategic leadership and line management to the Partnership Development team, including recruitment, induction, performance management, and professional development.
- Foster a high-performance, collaborative, commercial and innovation led team culture.
- Provide strategic leadership for the Partnership Development function within the RIO, actively contributing to the direction, decision-making, and operational oversight as a member of the RIO Senior Management Team, while championing cross-functional collaboration and external engagement across the University.

- Develop and implement strategies to identify, secure, and manage external funding opportunities, driving growth in contract research, collaborative research and consultancy income through strategic partnerships and knowledge exchange initiatives.
- Ensure alignment and seamless delivery of cross-functional initiatives with particular emphasis on Partnership Development and Research Development and embedding the tiered service model of delivery.
- Develop and maintain specialist partnership and commercial knowledge and expertise providing leadership and guidance to others as appropriate.
- Promote and facilitate interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaborations that maximise the commercial impact of the University's research and innovation activities.
- Develop and maintain extensive professional network of collaborators and relationships with funders.
- Monitor, evaluate, and report on the effectiveness and impact of partnership initiatives to senior leadership, producing management and stakeholder reports as required, including impact assessments.
- To work in an agile and flexible manner to facilitate high quality service delivery which can both anticipate and respond to stakeholder needs.
- Responsible for building productive working relationships with relevant academic leaders, including Associate Deans for Research & Innovation and Institutional Sectoral Leads to design and implement strategies that strengthen external engagement and drive funding opportunities.
- Maintain a detailed understanding of all legal, ethical, political, and commercial issues relevant to the role.
- Oversee the effective use of team resources to deliver high-quality services to academic Schools and collaborators.

Additional Responsibilities

- Represent the University on internal and external committees, project teams and working groups as required.
- Undertake any other responsibilities as reasonably required by the Deputy Director of the RIO, commensurate with the role.
- Engage in relevant training and development activities aligned with personal and team objectives.
- Demonstrate flexibility in working hours to meet the demands of the role.

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.

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 Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to the Deputy Director of Research & Innovation Office

Responsible for the Partnership Development Team

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	Significant experience in a university innovation, partnership, or business development environment, with a strong commercial understanding of collaborative research, consultancy and knowledge exchange and routes to commercialisation	1, 3
	Proven experience of operating strategically, translating Research and Innovation service objectives and institutional strategy into commercially viable partnership opportunities within a competitive and evolving external market.	1, 3
	A strong track record of leading, managing and developing high performing teams to deliver revenue, generating services, complex projects and measurable commercial outcomes, role modelling a results-driven and collaborative culture.	1, 2, 3
	Significant experience originating, negotiating, and managing relationships with external corporate partners to develop high-value partnerships and long-term commercial collaborations.	1, 3
	Proven experience of influencing and negotiating at Director or Executive level externally, securing commitment, investment, and strategic alignment.	1, 3
	Demonstrated experience and ability to diagnose partner needs, broker solutions, and create effective internal/external matches, managing a wide and complex stakeholder network to convert opportunities into funding collaborations.	1, 3
	Experience of designing, securing approval for, and delivering large-scale, multi-stakeholder strategic programmes with clear commercial, reputational and impact objectives.	1, 3
	Experience of developing innovative, market responsive and commercially creative approaches to problem solving and opportunity generation.	1, 3
Skills and abilities	Proven ability to secure significant external funding and commercial income through competitive bids, contracts, partnerships and negotiated agreements.	1, 3
	Commercial resilience and confidence operating in complex, fast-paced environments, managing multiple priorities and delivery timelines simultaneously.	1, 3
	Highly effective communication and influencing skills; written, with the ability to present compelling commercial propositions and business cases to senior internal and external audiences	1, 2, 3
	Strong financial acumen, including budgeting, forecasting, pricing, and financial modelling, supported by confident use of digital tools and systems.	1, 2, 3

	Excellent analytical skills with the ability to assess market intelligence, policy, and strategic documents to convert insight into actionable commercial opportunities.	1, 3
	Strong negotiation, persuasion, and stakeholder management skills, balancing institutional priorities with partner value and commercial risk.	1, 3
	Proven capacity to work flexibly, independently and as part of a team.	1, 3
	Demonstrated ability to work flexibly and autonomously while leading teams to deliver targets and drive commercial performance.	1, 3
Knowledge	Extensive knowledge of the UK Higher Education environment, including national policy for the research and innovation and the associated funding landscape with reference to knowledge exchange.	1, 3
Training	Willingness to undertake appropriate further training	1, 3
Qualification	A strong educational profile including a graduate qualification (Master's or PhD) or equivalent by experience.	1, 3
Other	Commitment to observing and promoting Equity, Belonging and Inclusion at all times.	1, 3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Experience of in collaborating effectively with senior university leadership to implement institution wide initiatives	1, 3
	Experience of leading multi-stakeholder submissions for externally funded projects	1, 3
Skills and abilities	Good knowledge of relevant funding bodies, e.g. EPSRC, Innovate UK. General awareness of public sector policies and initiatives with regard to HE	1, 3

Conditions of Service

This is a full-time, open-ended position. Salary will be on Management & Specialist Grade 8, £59,966 - £67,468 per annum, at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's normal Terms and Conditions of Employment for Academic and Related staff/Operational and Administrative staff, 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 are available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/family-leave-policy-and-procedure---page.html>.

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/>