

Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (APVC) and Director, Loughborough University Flagship Research Institutes

Job Ref: REQ260291

The purpose of this role description is to provide an overview of the University's Flagship Research Institutes and to outline the general duties and responsibilities associated with the Institute APVC/Director role. While the duties may evolve, and vary from time to time, the overall level of leadership and accountability will remain consistent. Candidates should demonstrate substantial experience within the relevant thematic area, alongside a strong record of leadership and strategic delivery in research and innovation, and the ability to drive progress and achieve results.

About the Flagship Research Institutes

The University's six new Flagship Research Institutes represent major, branded structures designed to strengthen and extend our internationally leading research and innovation (R&I) activity. They are central to achieving the University's R&I KPIs under the 2030 strategy and are intended to be ambitious, outward-looking, and aligned with Loughborough's established strengths. Each Institute will foster fluid, interdisciplinary collaboration within the University and engage with external partners.

The Institutes will bring together researchers from multiple disciplines around shared thematic challenges to generate world-class research and impact. They will add value to existing strengths across the University and provide a dynamic space for developing, testing, and accelerating new ideas, collaborations, and programmes of work. In doing so, the Institutes support high-quality research, strengthen strategic focus on global and industrial challenges, and align activity with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Institutes play a key role in cultivating a thriving research culture and environment, and in contributing to institutional ambitions relating to the REF and QS200. They do this by:

- Establishing a visible mission and ambitious strategy for collective R&I activity, with a particular emphasis on enhancing the University's capacity and ability to apply for, secure and lead large-scale research awards.
- Engaging industry and external partners to strengthen diversity, authenticity, connectivity and impact.
- Coordinating responses to global and industrial challenges, aligning outcomes with the UN SDGs.
- Inspiring, developing, and recognising R&I leadership across our communities.
- Driving a sustained focus on R&I quality across a specific thematic area.
- Supporting, and where appropriate reimagining, enabling activity across the broader R&I ecosystem.

Each Institute will be led by an Institute APVC/Director and supported by Professional Services staff in the R&I Institutes Team within the Research and Innovation Office (RIO), working closely with colleagues in Marketing and Advancement (M&A). Institutes will also operate a cohort model comprising Associate Fellows: two per Institute, typically appointed for one year (reviewed and renewable), with workload allocation to drive thematic activity, and Affiliate Fellows: researchers who contribute intellectually to the Institute without formal workload allocation. The six Institutes are supported by a total annual recurring non-pay provision, enabling interdisciplinary development, stakeholder engagement, proof-of-concept work, and visibility and outreach activities.

Six opportunities are now available for exceptional leaders to shape, develop, and champion R&I across the University in the following thematic areas: Clean Energy, Culture and Society, Digital Futures, Healthy Living, Responsible Manufacturing and Women in Sport. As an Institute APVC/Director, you will demonstrate strong institutional citizenship and work collaboratively with colleagues across the University, as well as with external partners and organisations. You will lead the development, performance, reputation, and impact of your Institute, while contributing to the delivery of the University Strategy and its R&I ambitions.

Role Purpose

The Institute APVC/Directors (0.6 FTE) will play a critical role in sustaining and enhancing the national and international reputation of the University by leading major innovations and programmes in R&I within their Institute. Each Institute APVC/Director will hold responsibility for the leadership, management and development of their Institute, working with guidance and support from the Pro Vice Chancellor for R&I (PVC-RI) and others.

As these are new internal leadership roles, an early priority will be to establish an Institute Working Group and develop the vision and the operational plan that will include and drive delivery of the Institute's objectives.

Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Define and articulate the Institute's vision through the development of an operational plan in collaboration with the Institute's Working Group.
- Extend the reach and influence of the Institute by engaging colleagues across the wider University, enabling the growth of expertise, capacity and cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- Provide strategic oversight and leadership of major R&I funding applications, including platform and capital bids. Actively horizon-scan to identify opportunities, drive activity, secure external income, and promote interdisciplinary partnerships aligned to funder themes and priorities.

Research Excellence and Culture

- Lead by example through a strong personal research profile; mentor academic colleagues at all career stages to nurture talent and enhance research culture within the Institute's domain.
- Maintain and develop an independent, world-leading research portfolio, contributing to high-quality outputs and potential impact case studies (0.4 FTE, alongside 0.6 FTE Institute APVC/Director duties to total 1.0 FTE).
- Champion an inclusive, high-performance research culture across the Institute, working collaboratively with the PVC-RI, Associate Deans for R&I (ADRs) and the Loughborough University Research Academy (LURA) to support staff development and collaboration.

Partnership, Engagement and Impact

- Facilitate and support strategic partnerships, where appropriate, at regional, national, and international levels, enabling effective collaboration to deliver high-quality research and meaningful societal impact.
- Drive policy engagement and, where appropriate, influence decision-making to maximise the Institute's reach and contribution.
- Lead high profile engagement activities, including public and policy engagement, to enhance the Institute's visibility, networks, and reputation internally and externally, and to support the continued strengthening of R&I quality.

Representation and Governance

- Represent the University on relevant committees, Sectoral Groups, networks and consortia.
- Play an active role in the Institutes Leadership Group, contributing to collective development and sharing best practice.
- Establish and chair the Institute Working Group, drawing on existing centres and centres of excellence aligned to the Institute's domain.

Resource and Programme Management

- Plan, manage and monitor the use of the Institute's financial and physical resources, including the proportion of non-pay budget that supports Institute activity, interdisciplinary development, and promotion.
- Work closely with Professional Services to develop and manage a programme for the recruitment of Associate Fellows, including negotiation of release arrangements with Schools.
- Work collaboratively with Professional Services to ensure that effective systems, processes and administrative support underpin Institute activities.

Monitoring, Reporting and Communication

- Lead the Institute's monitoring and reporting processes, providing assurance to the Research and Innovation Committee that the Institute strategic operational plan is being effectively delivered.

- Cascade information to Associate and Affiliate Fellows through briefings and regular seminars or events, ensuring a well-connected and informed community.
- Work collaboratively with the R&I Institutes Team and Marketing & Advancement (M&A) to develop and deliver high quality communications, articles and promotional materials for internal and external audiences, enhancing the visibility, reach and impact of the Institute.

Person Specification

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the responsibilities above and essential criteria listed below. Candidates are strongly encouraged to state clearly and provide evidence for how they meet each criterion.

With a strong track record of research in a relevant discipline, Institute APVC/Directors will provide both strategic and operational leadership for their Institute, shaping its direction, enabling colleagues to excel, and fostering an inclusive, high-performing research culture.

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Significant experience within the relevant Institute's thematic area, with a strong track record of high-quality research.	Internationally recognised research and innovation profile, with evidence of high-quality outputs and impact.
Experience leading large-scale and/or interdisciplinary research programmes, including securing major external funding.	Ability to convene colleagues around time-bound task and finish activities, including responding effectively to emerging opportunities.
Experience building strategic partnerships across sectors, with evidence of delivering translational or real-world impact.	High levels of personal motivation, resilience and drive, with the ability to support and lead change.
Substantial leadership experience, with the ability to influence, motivate and engage colleagues across the University.	Strong programme, change and stakeholder management skills, including experience of governance, monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks.
Strong interpersonal, communication and team-working skills, including the ability to work effectively with senior colleagues, academic teams and Professional Services staff.	Experience of working across Schools and with Professional Services at a senior level, including supporting staff managing research projects.
Proven ability to inspire, empower and coordinate diverse research communities, underpinned by a strong personal commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).	Understanding of the wider UK higher education and research environment, including policy and funder landscapes.
A vision for the Institute, aligned to the University strategy and R&I Core Plan, demonstrating an understanding of interdisciplinarity and its opportunities.	Experience representing the University externally, including public engagement, policy engagement or sector-level leadership.

Points to Note

These roles are offered as an initial three-year appointment, with the possibility of renewal. We actively encourage expressions of interest from across our community, reflecting our ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Special Conditions

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

All staff also have a duty and commitment to observing the University's equity, diversity and inclusion related policies and procedures, and all duties must be carried out in accordance with these policies and procedures.

Organisational Responsibility

Report to: PVC-RI, the Research and Innovation Committee and the R&I Core Plan Board.

Responsible for: Associate Fellows and Affiliate Fellows

Time allocation: 0.6 FTE (alongside 0.4 FTE independent research portfolio to total 1.0 FTE)

Base location: Loughborough, with activity across the Loughborough and London campuses, as well as external partner sites.

Postholders will be members of the University Leadership Group (ULG) and the Institutes Leadership Group, and will work closely with their Institute's Working Group, Associate and Affiliate Fellows, and Professional Services staff in the R&I Institutes Team within the Research and Innovation Office (RIO) and Marketing and Advancement (M&A).

How to Apply

Candidates are invited to submit a 2-page CV and complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form. The EOI should outline the Institute you wish to lead, how you meet the responsibilities and essential criteria set out in the role description and person specification and your vision for how the Institute will add value to R&I activity.

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is **Friday 22 May 2026**. Completed forms and CVs should be sent to **RIO HR** at rio.hr@mailbox.lboro.ac.uk. Candidates must secure the support of their line manager and Dean prior to submission and confirm this in their covering email.

Interviews will be held on:

5 June – Institute for Clean Energy and Institute for Responsible Manufacturing

18 June – Institute for Women in Sport

25 June – Institute for Healthy Living

29 June – Institute for Culture and Society

30 June – Institute for Digital Futures

For questions about the role, please contact Prof Dan Parsons (PVC-RI) D.Parsons@lboro.ac.uk, who will be pleased to discuss the opportunity informally. For queries about the application process, please contact the Institutes Research Manager, Natalie Savage n.a.savage@lboro.ac.uk