Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute for Digital Futures

Job Ref: REQ260808

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 Deputy 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 thematic area, alongside a strong record of leadership, programme delivery and stakeholder engagement, 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.

Each Institute is led by an 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: twelve across all six Institutes, typically appointed for one year (reviewed and renewable), with workload allocation to drive thematic activity. The Institutes are supported by an annual recurring non-pay provision, enabling interdisciplinary development, stakeholder engagement, proof-of-concept work, and visibility and outreach activities.

The Deputy Director will work in partnership with the APVC/Director to ensure the successful delivery of the Institute's objectives:

1. **Generate internationally excellent transdisciplinary research and innovation:** Catalyse ambitious research across the Institute's challenge areas, develop major cross-School funding proposals, secure external investment, and deliver high-quality outputs and open, reusable methods, data and tools where appropriate.
2. **Build a connected, inclusive and sustainable research community: Connect** expertise across Schools, build critical mass, develop future research leaders, share capabilities and resources, and create a supportive culture in which interdisciplinary ideas and collaborations can flourish and endure.
3. **Develop strategic partnerships, influence and impact:** Build sustained partnerships with communities, practitioners, government, industry and leading international institutions to co-create research, translate outputs into practice, influence policy and enhance Loughborough's reputation and global visibility.

The Institute for Digital Futures will initially focus on four interconnected areas in which Loughborough has established depth and the potential for international leadership:

- **Climate hazards and societal resilience** – using digital innovation to anticipate, monitor and manage climate-related and other hazards, strengthening the resilience of communities, infrastructure and essential systems.
- **Healthy, resilient and equitable places** – applying integrated data and simulation approaches to understand how people, places and infrastructure respond to environmental change, disruption and policy intervention, and the consequences for health and inequality.
- **Future manufacturing and resilient supply chains** – advancing digital technologies to improve productivity, adaptability, resilience and sustainability across manufacturing systems and supply networks.

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- **The digitally enabled built environment** – transforming the design, construction, operation and renewal of buildings and infrastructure through responsible digital innovation.

As Deputy 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 performance, reputation, and impact of the Institute for Digital Futures, while contributing to the delivery of the University Strategy and its R&I ambitions.

Role Purpose

The Deputy Director (0.4-0.5 FTE) will provide executive leadership for the Institute, translating strategic ambition into coordinated activity across thematic areas, programmes and delivery plans. Working closely with the APVC/Director, and with guidance and support from the Pro Vice Chancellor for R&I (PVC-RI), the Deputy Director will lead the day-to-day operation of the Institute, oversee delivery against the operational plan, and ensure effective coordination of Associate Fellows, Working group members and thematic leads.

The Deputy Director will act as the primary operational lead for the Institute, representing it at key management and governance forums, driving progress across agreed priorities, building reputation globally, and ensuring that opportunities, resources and activities are effectively aligned to deliver impact.

Responsibilities

Strategic Delivery and Operational Leadership

- Work closely with the APVC/Director to implement the Institute's vision, strategy and operational plan.
- Lead the day-to-day management and delivery of Institute activities, ensuring progress against agreed objectives, milestones and KPIs.
- Coordinate and align activity across Institute themes, programmes and projects, ensuring coherence and effective collaboration.
- Identify and resolve delivery challenges, risks and dependencies, escalating strategic matters to the APVC/Director where appropriate.
- Support the development of major funding opportunities, programmes and initiatives that contribute to the Institute's strategic ambitions.

Programme and Community Leadership

- Maintain and develop an independent, world-leading research portfolio, contributing to high-quality outputs and potential impact case studies (0.5-0.6 FTE, alongside 0.4-0.5 FTE Deputy Director duties to total 1.0 FTE).
- Coordinate the activities of the Institute Working Group, Associate Fellows and theme leads, ensuring effective communication and shared ownership of objectives.
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive research culture that encourages interdisciplinary working and engagement across the Institutes, Schools and professional services.
- Support the development of new research initiatives, networks and partnerships that strengthen the Institute's community and thematic reach.

Partnership, Engagement and Impact

- Work with the APVC/Director to develop and maintain productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- In collaboration with the Sectoral Groups, facilitate and support strategic partnerships 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 Institute at relevant management, planning and operational meetings across the University.
- Deputise for the APVC/Director, where appropriate, at university committees, working groups and other forums.
- Support the preparation of papers, reports and presentations required for Institute governance and decision-making processes.

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- Contribute actively to cross-Institute initiatives, sharing good practice and supporting collective development.

Resource and Programme Management

- Oversee the effective coordination of Institute activities and non-pay budget in collaboration with the APVC/Director and Professional Services colleagues.
- Work with Professional Services to plan and deliver Institute programmes, events, communications and engagement activities.
- Support the recruitment, induction and coordination of Associate Fellows and other Institute contributors.
- Ensure effective systems, processes and operational arrangements are in place to support Institute delivery.

Monitoring, Reporting and Communication

- Lead the monitoring of progress against the Institute operational plan and associated KPIs.
- Coordinate reporting, evaluation and performance updates for the Director, PVC-RI and relevant committees.
- Ensure Institute stakeholders are kept informed through regular briefings, updates and engagement activities.
- Work collaboratively with the R&I Institutes Team and Marketing & Advancement (M&A) to support communications, promotional activities and stakeholder engagement.

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.

The Deputy Director will combine strong operational leadership with an understanding of the research and innovation environment, enabling the successful delivery of the Institute's activities and ambitions.

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Significant experience within the Institute's thematic area, with a strong understanding of the R&I landscape.	Experience of supporting or managing large-scale research and innovation programmes or strategic initiatives.
Experience leading complex programmes, projects or initiatives involving multiple stakeholders and competing priorities.	Understanding of the UK higher education, research funding and policy environment.
Strong operational leadership skills, with a proven ability to translate strategy into delivery and measurable outcomes.	Experience of developing partnerships across industry, government, public sector or third-sector organisations.
Experience coordinating and influencing colleagues across organisational boundaries without direct line management responsibility.	Experience representing an organisation at institutional, sector or external stakeholder forums.
Excellent stakeholder management, communication and relationship-building skills.	A clear understanding of the role of interdisciplinary research in addressing complex societal and industrial challenges.
Strong organisational, planning and problem-solving abilities, including the management of risk, dependencies and resources.	Experience of working at the interface between academic leadership and operational delivery.
Ability to work effectively with senior academic leaders, professional services colleagues and external partners.	Evidence of supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and fostering inclusive, high-performing teams and communities.
High levels of personal motivation, resilience and adaptability, with the ability to lead and deliver change.	Experience of governance, monitoring, reporting and performance management processes.

Points to Note

This role is offered as a three-year appointment. 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. The postholder is therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy and Procedures at all times.

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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 and the Research and Innovation Committee.
Responsible for: Associate Fellows
Time allocation: 0.4-0.5 FTE (alongside 0.5-0.6 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.

The postholder will be a member of the R&I Flagship Institutes (RIFI) Leadership Group, and will work closely with the Institute's Working Group, Associate 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 how you meet the responsibilities and essential criteria set out in the role description and person specification and describe how you would enable delivery of the Institute's vision and ambitions.

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is **Friday 20 November 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 take place during the week commencing 30 November.

For questions about the role, please contact Prof Dan Parsons (PVC-RI) D.Parsons@lboro.ac.uk or Prof Qiuhua Liang (APVC/Director, Institute for Digital Futures) who will be pleased to discuss the opportunity informally. For queries about the application process, please contact the R&I Institutes Team flagship.research.institutes@mailbox.lboro.ac.uk

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