

Candidate Information

Position: Research Development Manager - (EPS)
School/Department: Research Development
Reference: 23/110603
Closing Date: Monday 13 February 2023
Salary: £43,414 - £53,353 per annum.
Anticipated Interview Date: Friday 3 March 2023

JOB PURPOSE:

The successful candidate will play an integral role in supporting the growth of the University's research portfolio and increasing engagement with international research funding schemes. This includes international funders (such as European Union Horizon Europe – whether as a fully associated participant or a third country) and UK funders with a strong international focus (for example, UK Research & Innovation, British Council, Peace Plus or other All-Island initiatives). The post holder will operate individually and as part of team across the University and will be responsible for developing and leading a strategic approach to research funding. The focus of this role will primarily be to proactively encourage and support the submission of proposals to a range of funding bodies, with a focus on EU schemes, but also to include All-island and international funding opportunities for research from the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS).

The post holder will achieve this by:

- Strategically identifying opportunities and providing coordination for applications, professional support and expert advice as required.
- Developing strong networks internationally, across Europe and Ireland and within Northern Ireland and the UK.
- Establishing a strategic overview of European and international funding including undertaking horizon scanning activities, investigation of the research policy landscape and analysis of technology and industry trends.
- Delivering against key targets for research income through optimising the funding profile for the University and Northern Ireland from European and international research funders.

The post holder will become a European thematic expert for engineering in Northern Ireland, and will be a key part of the network of EU regional Contact Points.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Proactively encourage and support the growth of external funding, both within the University and in a regional context, with a particular focus on engineering and the European funding schemes.
2. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of the research funding landscape, including horizon scanning in order to identify where developments in government and funder policy have the potential to result in research funding opportunities. Keep up-to-date with external international research funding schemes, particularly from the European Union Horizon Europe Programme (and/or its UK based alternative), and other sources such as UK Research & Innovation, British Council and All-Island (North-South; Peace Plus).
3. Promote participation in key funding calls including briefing senior staff regarding strategically significant funding opportunities and recommending appropriate actions to support the bid process.
4. Encourage and provide support to academics in their research ambitions through expert funding advice, strategic planning and developing high-quality funding proposals, as required.
5. Establish key relationships with senior staff including the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise, Pro-Vice-Chancellor EPS, Deans of Research, Heads of Schools, and Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and, in delivery of the University's Research & Innovation Strategy for 2030 and the Faculty Research Strategy. Actively develop and pursue new opportunities to enhance the performance of research in these areas.

6. Manage major European and international research bids (typically bids exceed £1m). Manage the development of proposals to be submitted to European (and other) schemes including identifying appropriate academic leadership, potential partners and providing professional guidance in major bid preparation.
7. Utilise specialist knowledge of current and future policy developments to inform the development of new or revised University policies and processes. Design and implement such policies and processes in consultation with the relevant University Committees and users.
8. Represent the University and regional strategic interests with regional, national and international funding bodies, including identifying and managing high-level visits in order to influence and align future European and international funding opportunities with the strengths of the University.
9. Establish and maintain communications within the European and international networks/ strategic advisory boards and with senior colleagues in other Institutions in order to further increase knowledge and awareness of forthcoming funding opportunities. This includes, liaison with the NI EU Office, UNICA, EUA and the EU Commission.
10. Review research strengths in the light of anticipated European and international funding opportunities to target specific calls and to identify priorities for strengthening and bringing together research capability. Engage with senior staff across the University to set priorities in thematic areas for European and international funding development.
11. Promote and manage activities (such as thematic workshops and networking events) to build capacity and consortia in the areas identified. Where there is potential, follow this through to preparation of research bids.
12. Identify best practice relating to winning European and international funding through consultation with successful applicants, funding bodies and members of peer review panels and committees within the University. Disseminate this knowledge, in a targeted fashion to improve the success rates for future bids.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. Primary or postgraduate degree in a relevant subject area (Engineering, Physical Sciences or related subject).
2. Minimum of three years' recent (within the last 5 years) experience of working within a relevant research (academic, public-sector or commercial research environment) or research funding environment together with detailed, current knowledge of the research funding landscape.
3. Proven track record of assisting the initiation and development of successful large-scale collaborative research funding applications, including experience of providing support to the development of European and/or international projects.
4. Evidence of project management experience with a demonstrated ability to respond to changing priorities and deadlines in high volume environments.
5. Understanding of the context that the University is operating within and an awareness of current issues facing Higher Education.
6. Evidence of strong interpersonal skills and ability to build links with key internal and external stakeholders.
7. Experience of using IT at an appropriate level (e.g. Microsoft Office suite and presentation tools).
8. Strong verbal communication and presentation skills, including evidence of drafting clear and grammatically correct documentation on complex issues.
9. Proven track record of developing strong relationships and effective interactions with senior researchers.
10. Ability to assess, organise and prioritise in a complex and busy working environment.
11. Ability to exercise discretion when working with highly sensitive information.
12. Willingness to travel nationally/ internationally as required.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Educated to PhD level in a relevant discipline.
2. Demonstrable experience with and understanding of the priorities under Horizon Europe work programmes.
3. Demonstrable evidence of building effective relationships with research funding organisations.
4. Clear evidence of facilitating multi-disciplinary research workshops and seminars.
5. Experience of contributing and driving outcomes from committees or working groups.