

Candidate Information

Position: Co-Centre Programme and Operations Manager
School/Department: School of Biological Sciences
Reference: 25/113052
Closing Date: Monday 12 January 2026
Salary: £51,016 per annum
Anticipated Interview Date: Monday 26 January 2026
Duration: Available for 48 Months or to 31 December 2029, whichever is soonest.

JOB PURPOSE:

The 35m EUR Co-Centre for Sustainable Food Systems encompasses a research programme of oriented basic and applied research in the areas of science, technology, engineering and social sciences across three jurisdictions – the Republic of Ireland (ROI), Northern Ireland (NI) and Great Britain (GB) - with the aim of directly assisting the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment. The Co-Centre will build on the shared objectives of nine leading agri-food educational and research institutions to develop a robust, resilient and sustainable food system that meets changing consumer demands. The Co-Centre will foster R&I to accelerate radical transitions towards a more environmentally and economically sustainable and transparent agri-food sector.

Reporting to the Co-Director at QUB and working closely with the Co-Centre Manager based at UCD, this postholder will provide specialist project management expertise and administrative oversight to a team that will efficiently manage all functions of the Co-Centre across the three jurisdictions (ROI, NI, GB), including budgetary management, funder reporting to DAERA, SFI and UKRI, human resources, grants management, and overall progress monitoring of a portfolio of projects. The Co-Centre Programme Manager will work closely with the Co-Centre Manager, the Co-Directors and Executive Management Committee and will be responsible for managing the implementation of the Co-Centre strategy, developing the structures and supports to ensure that it meets its core objectives. The Co-Centre Programme Manager will work closely with the Business Development Manager, and Research Funding Manager based at UCD to develop/co-develop new industry partnerships and research opportunities. The Co-Centre Programme Manager will be the point of contact for funding agencies, and responsible for developing and maintaining excellent relationships with the other partner institutions.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Work with the Co-Centre Manager to develop and implement the overall operational strategy for the Co-Centre, translating strategic goals into clear outcome-focused objectives, project management processes and procedures for the Co-Centre.
2. Plan, organise and lead the day-to-day operations of the Co-Centre, ensuring smooth running and optimal usage of Co-Centre resources including staff, space and equipment.
3. Devise and develop a best-practice framework that can be applied across a range of Co-Centre projects to consistently record project outputs and achievements, progress against milestones, deliverables, and budgets. Produce high quality reports for all funders in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding grants.
4. Provide financial and analytical reports on the Co-Centres financial position to the Co-Directors and Co-Centre Manager. Take responsibility for the day-to-day financial administration and monitoring of the QUB accounts associated with the Co-Centre, in line with QUB procedures and assist the Co-Director to ensure that all reporting and financial requirements, including those of external funders, are met to the required standard and on time.
5. Prepare and present appropriately detailed, timely and accurate progress reports on the programme performance for the funders (SFI, DAERA, UKRI) and other internal and external stakeholders.
6. Develop and maintain positive, constructive and collaborative working relationships and ensure effective partnerships, and communication systems, structures and processes are in place with and between all key stakeholders within the Co-Centre.
7. Support the research teams in adjusting to new situations and opportunities through established change management or budgeting adjustment processes.
8. Work closely with the leadership team to facilitate full engagement of industry with Co-Centres research programme.

9. Work in close collaboration with the platform and spoke leads within the Co-Centre Partners organisations to ensure that project resources are correctly allocated and efficiently utilised to achieve agreed project deliverables and support the Co-Centre's strategy.
10. Strengthen and develop the Co-Centre's qualitative and quantitative reporting to support dissemination of its work with a view to access additional commercial funding.
11. Work closely with the Co-Centres Finance Officer to establish procedures and processes that will allow for the timely and accurate reporting of all aspects of the Co-Centres research programme to SFI, DAERA and UKRI. Support the Co-Directors in managing appropriate information for reports and audits, including capturing, analysing and reporting of risk, and developing mitigation actions as required.
12. Work closely with the Business Development Manager, Research Programme & Grants Manager and EPE Manager to develop/co-develop new industry partnerships and research/EPE opportunities.
13. Act as the key point of contact for funding agencies, particularly DAERA and UKRI and responsible for developing and maintaining excellent relationships with the other partner institutions.
14. Oversee staff planning and recruitment for the Co-Centre and ensure that the Co-Centre is appropriately resourced at all times to deliver on its research and impact programme.
15. Take a lead role in managing the local physical infrastructure and facilities, including ensuring all QUB policies are always adhered to and leading in the procurement and management of assets/consumables. Liaise with the Procurement teams across the Co-Centre institutions to undertake required procurement in accordance with legislation.
16. Any other duties as may be assigned. This is an evolving and dynamic role whose duties will change over time. The postholder will be required to exhibit flexibility with regard to assigned duties and activities, and changes therein, as required to attain the Co-Centre's objectives.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. Honours Degree and/or postgraduate or professional qualification in a scientific, technical or business subject area.
2. Significant experience in a Senior Operations Management Role in complex projects and/or large teams in a dynamic research environment.
3. Project Management experience gained on complex funded research projects of a similar scale.
4. Substantial experience in managing large-scale, interdisciplinary consortia with a particular emphasis on multi-site collaboration including:
 - Experience in research operations including financial and operational reporting, Centre governance and advisory meeting support, human resource management, IP/commercial management, infrastructure access, industry and research administration.
 - Experience in preparation of funding bids, publications, and board level papers and presentations.
 - Experience in management of and reporting on KPIs and project deliverables.
 - Experience of networking and building collaborative relationships with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including industry and commerce, government departments and agencies and business and public bodies, to deliver, influence and impact organisational strategy.
 - Ability to manage and prioritise time in a dynamic environment.
5. Well-developed analytical skills and an ability to analyse complex information to inform decision making.
6. Ability to communicate both orally and in writing and relate to others at all levels both internally and externally.
7. Excellent report writing and presentation skills with a well-developed critical and analytical approach to reviewing documentation.
8. Experience in preparing high quality materials for publication and presentation.
9. Good inter-personal skills & demonstrable intellectual ability.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Relevant post graduate qualification.
2. Substantial experience of working at a senior level in businesses or academia; and experience in the successful management of large-scale government funded projects.
3. A working knowledge and experience within a university, or a research environment.
4. Driving Licence.
5. Willingness to travel.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Informal enquiries may be directed to: Claire McLoughlin at c.mcloughlin@qub.ac.uk.