

Candidate Information

Position: Rare Disease Project Manager (Maternity cover)
School/Department: School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences
Reference: 26/113493
Closing Date: Monday 17 August 2026
Salary: £52,802 - £59,402 per annum
Anticipated Interview Date: Tuesday 1 September 2026
Duration: 50 weeks

JOB PURPOSE:

This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced, highly motivated individual to join our vibrant, multidisciplinary rare disease research team. The Project Manager will provide project management expertise to ensure the successful, strategic development of high-quality rare disease research. This role provides an opportunity to work in partnership with academic and clinical colleagues, professional support teams, community groups, policy makers, and industrial collaborators. In collaboration with senior colleagues, you will help develop, manage, monitor, and report on the implementation of strategic projects within a diverse portfolio across a range of rare diseases. You will provide support for a collaborative research environment that fosters a culture of trust and mutual respect. The role requires excellent interpersonal skills alongside scientific and technical understanding relevant for rare diseases.

Although individually rare, which means affecting less than 1 in 2,000 people, all rare diseases together affect ~475 million people globally, with more than 110,000 people affected by rare diseases across Northern Ireland. Recent rare disease initiatives by our team include the development of an online support tool for carers of people living with a rare disease Caring with Rare (<https://caringwithrare.org/>), appraisals of the impact of socioeconomic factors, novel approaches for molecular diagnostics, building digital infrastructure to support diagnosis and care pathways, and the recently funded £12 million LifeArc Centre for the Acceleration of Rare Disease Trials (<https://rarediseasetrials.org.uk/>).

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Contribute to the continued success of complex milestone driven, multi-site and cross-disciplinary research into rare diseases by providing project management leadership.
2. Use professional knowledge to identify issues, trends, and problems, and to suggest options and innovative solutions as required.
3. Develop and implement revisions within appropriately detailed project plans, identifying key milestones, dependencies and resources required to ensure successful delivery.
4. Lead, monitor and drive progress against the project plan milestones to ensure timely delivery of key targets and objectives, within budget and of the standard and quality required.
5. Evaluate progress against the project plan, identify and, where appropriate, escalate emerging risks associated with the project and develop and implement strategies to manage these. Assess and manage the impact of change requests or modifications to agreed deliverables.
6. Manage sub-project or workstream activities and dependent sub-groups to ensure that the project deliverables are successfully realised, also ensuring effective communication between stakeholders and the Group Lead.
7. Prepare and present appropriately detailed, accessible reports for relevant workstreams, with regard to overall project performance and progress. Deliver briefings for internal and external stakeholders.
8. Build relationships with Project Leads, internal contributors, and external partners to ensure effective communication and progress between meetings, visits, etc. Manage and co-ordinate relevant internal and external project communication including production and presentation of reports and management information for managers, committees, funders, and appropriate publications.

9. Manage budgets, including monitoring, controlling and reprofiling expenditure against the project budget overall and allocation of resources to various workstreams. Provide financial reports as required.
10. Assist in the recruitment of key members of project teams.
11. Support a team of professional staff to ensure successful delivery of rare disease research, in line with an agreed strategy and operational plan.
12. Assist the Project Leads in their delivery of key objectives.
13. Mentor and coach colleagues, which may include training staff, supporting and developing their professional effectiveness.
14. Service governance structures and core meetings for the projects.
15. Ensure the timely production of reports on progress and metrics required by the funder.
16. Undertake any other project tasks associated with the development of rare disease research in Queen's University Belfast.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. *A University Degree or equivalent; OR Substantial relevant Project Management experience and a professional project management qualification at practitioner level.
2. *Substantial relevant experience that will demonstrate:
 - Ability to project manage a complex project from inception to completion.
 - Planning and delivering projects on time and within budget.
 - Stakeholder/partner management and programme reporting.
 - Leading multi-disciplinary teams and managing people.
 - Using formal project management techniques to deliver successful projects.
 - Evidence of managing, forecasting, re-profiling and controlling budgets and resources and an understanding of financial management procedures.
 - Evidence of good negotiation and influencing skills.
3. Ability to organise and direct self and others.
4. Logical and methodical approach to work; detail orientated.
5. Experience of line management
6. Ability to be a productive member of a multi-disciplinary team.
7. Ability to bring a positive, creative and flexible approach to resolving problems.
8. Computer literate with knowledge of systems supporting complex projects.
9. Good oral and written communication skills, including the production of high quality reports and documentation for senior management and external stakeholders.
10. Evidence of writing reports, preparing and giving talks and presentations in a variety of contexts.
11. Ability to understand and present complex information to a range of audiences.
12. Team leadership skills, with the ability to communicate goals, and engage, motivate colleagues and achieve buy-in to deliver common objectives.
13. Willing to work flexibly to meet the requirements of the post.
14. A valid driving licence or otherwise able to meet the mobility requirements of the job.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. *A professional project/programme management qualification at Practitioner level.
2. Experience producing standard operating procedures and or job specifications.
3. Relevant working experience within a research setting.
4. Professional or lived experience with rare disease(s).
5. Experience of working with statutory agencies.
6. Experience developing formal business cases.
7. Experience in the effective use of project management software.
8. Evidence of being able to use databases/bespoke systems.
9. Experience servicing meetings

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Informal enquiries may be directed to: Jill Kilner at j.kilner@qub.ac.uk.