Research Grants & Contracts Operations Manager
Research & Enterprise

Closing date: 21 January 2019
Interview date: 7 February 2019
Vacancy reference: 7237
INTRODUCTION

A vacancy has arisen within the Research and Enterprise Directorate for an experienced leader to head the Research Grants & Contracts (RGC) office. The Directorate supports academic staff and departments to undertake world-leading research and to disseminate the knowledge created to external stakeholders for the benefit of society. RGC is the largest of eight teams within the Directorate, and the post holder will be responsible for the leadership and development of its 30 staff, administering £70M of research income per year.

A member of the Directorate Management Team, you will report to Associate Director of Research & Enterprise (Research) and will work with the heads of other teams within the Directorate including the Research Development Team, Research Strategy & Policy Office and IP & Legal Team, and with colleagues across the University's Professional Services teams including Finance, IT Services, Research Systems Support Hub and HR, to provide a comprehensive service. You will liaise closely with Associate Deans for Research, Heads of Departments, Chairs of Departmental Research Committees, research leaders and research managers, facilitators and administrators across the University to support the University’s research portfolio, to monitor and report on grant activity and to review and continuously improve the service provided by RGC.

This is a key post within the Directorate and we are seeking an experienced manager with commitment and enthusiasm to lead, motivate and develop the team and adapt the service to best meet the changing needs of the University and wider stakeholders.
Main purpose of the role

The RGC Operations Manager provides overall leadership of the Research Grants & Contracts office (RGC) and plays a leading role in the planning, implementation and maintenance of an effective and efficient support service for the management of research funding. This involves helping academic departments obtain and manage funds, and ensuring compliance and accountability, including responsibility for audit. As Manager, you are directly responsible for operational management of RGC and therefore will ensure that staff are managed, trained and deployed effectively and that systems and processes are monitored, managed and improved for maximum efficiency. You will work with other Directorates and colleagues within academic departments to ensure that appropriate policies, processes and procedures are taken forward, including dissemination of information and providing training where appropriate.

As RGC Operations Manager, you will work closely with specialist IP & Legal colleagues within Research and Enterprise who review, draft and negotiate contractual arrangements. You will have responsibility for authorising the majority of research contracts and for ensuring that University policies and procedures have been adhered to.

RGC staff provide expert advice and guidance on the application and submission process, checking applications against the funder and University requirements, and liaising closely with the IP & Legal team for checking terms and conditions and for contracts and agreements. Using University and funder systems, RGC staff record and submit all research grant applications. The team also accept the award and manage the grant finances on behalf of the University, principal investigator and funder, to ensure compliance with contract terms and conditions, through to end of grant closure.

You will attend, sit on or Chair a number of committees and working groups, and manipulate and analyse data, draft reports and, in collaboration with the Associate Director (Research), provide management information and make recommendations, including to the University Research Committee. You are also required to monitor the external environment, to keep abreast of relevant developments in the policy and funding landscape, and recommend, plan and implement changes where required.

Key responsibilities

Strategic Development

- Maintain an awareness of the external environment, including government policy and wider international issues of relevance to the University’s research funding portfolio. In response to external changes, provide advice to Associate Director (Research) and by extension the PVC Research and Associate Deans for Research, which may involve recommending the formation of working groups. Where appropriate, you will Chair the group to assess, consult on and implement strategies and internal changes in response to external drivers.

- Monitor stakeholder needs and service provision, and work with the Associate Director (Research) and RGC Team Leaders as appropriate, to identify, plan, recommend and implement system, process, policy and structural changes.

- Working closely with the Associate Director (Research), analyse data to create management information. This will involve the access, manipulation and presentation of data for a range of uses, including drafting regular reports for the University Research Committee on research grant applications, awards and income, funder portfolios and cost recovery.

- Coordinate with all teams in the Directorate to ensure that a comprehensive service is provided over the very broad remit of research and enterprise within its remit, joining working groups and providing assistance where appropriate.

- Play a major role in building and maintaining relationships and communications with academic departments and colleagues across the professional services, including coordinating, presenting and
facilitating at a range of research-related meetings, events and training.

- Take a key role in the development of the research support service across the Faculties and in coordinating research administration across the University.
- Contribute to, and where appropriate lead, multidisciplinary project teams, providing vision and strategic direction.
- As part of the Professional Services’ continuous improvement culture, seek and analyse feedback on service provision, and manage resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

**Operational Delivery**

- Responsible for overall contractual and financial compliance issues relating to externally sponsored research and liaise with other support services that have direct responsibility for policies and/or implementation in certain areas – for example Research Strategy and Policy regarding ethics and integrity.
- Authorise research contracts, ensuring that University policies and procedures have been adhered to.
- Liaise with colleagues in Finance as appropriate, including relating to audits, cash-flow and debt recovery, budgets and forecasting, statutory accounting changes etc.
- Maintain a thorough working knowledge of funder terms and conditions and the University’s financial regulations and policies to ensure systems and processes are fit for purpose and meet compliance requirements.
- Troubleshoot and resolve a wide variety of project and contractual issues, liaising with academic departments, funders and other support staff as necessary and advise staff on ‘novel’ research funding situations.
- Responsible for operational management and coordination of funder and institutional audits, including coordination and preparation of reports and other documentation, and initiation of subsequent actions.
- Put in place procedures and processes to ensure the robustness of all application and grant-related data and contribute to the preparation of management reports in the grants and contracts portfolio.
- Responsible for the data integrity of the University’s research grant income returns to government (HE-CBI, HESA etc.).
- Contribute to the Medium Term Planning process as appropriate, for example, reviewing the plans and other forecasts of specified departments, and assess implications for the RGC service.
- Develop, monitor and report on a range of KPIs to assess operational delivery, identify trends and potential resource implications and seek continuous improvements in service, efficiency and effectiveness.

**Management Responsibilities**

- Provide leadership and direction within the Research Grants and Contracts (RGC) team, including motivating, supporting and developing team members.
- Encourage and champion staff development and wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Oversee a programme of ongoing staff training, skills and knowledge development.
- Work with the team leaders to ensure consistency of workload and working methods across RGC teams; to ensure staff are managed, developed and supported; oversee staff to achieve excellent service standards, ensuring that staff are trained on and follow sponsor and University policies and regulations.
- Identify gaps in training provision for department-based staff, and work with other support services to develop materials and courses (i) to ensure that departmental research administrators and Department Research Committee chairs are able to facilitate and manage externally sponsored research activities in line with University, sponsor and government regulations and (ii) to help increase and improve the overall participation and performance in sponsored research activity by academic staff.
- Work with teams across the Directorate, wider Professional Services and department based colleagues to ensure that the various aspects of pre-award support are handled by the relevant individuals or team at the appropriate point and that the service offering for academic departments is clear, consistent and joined-up.
JOB DESCRIPTION

- Maintain own professional development and networks to keep the University informed of current sector knowledge and initiatives.

- Monitor and coordinate demand management measures.

- Work with the Research Systems Support Hub in relation to optimising and updating research systems, including the costing and pricing tool system (Worktribe) and funding opportunities systems. Responsible for coordination of the annual outputs reporting in funder systems (such as ResearchFish) and optimise the role and interoperability of systems, such as PURE.

- Develop and maintain good working knowledge of all research funders. Monitor and identify new funding sources beyond those that traditionally support research activities at the University. Assess any novel implications for the University and for the RGC service and propose appropriate developments.

- Lead and/or contribute to new initiatives and projects e.g. to improve service, success rates, cost recovery, etc.

- In conjunction with the Associate Director (Research), provide appropriate advice and support to the faculty Associate Deans.

The above list of duties is not exhaustive and is subject to change. The post holder may be required to undertake others duties within the scope and grading of the post.
# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate or post-graduate degree</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional qualification in finance/management/law</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Evidence of Continuing Professional Development</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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**Knowledge**

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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the Higher Education research funding environment, administrative systems, funding arrangements and contractual issues</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>An understanding of change management and process improvement principles</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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**Skills, abilities and competencies**

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<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strong leadership and people skills, with the ability to influence, gain trust and inspire</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Financial literacy and strong familiarity with the principles of accounting</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to identify strategic objectives and their implications, taking into account the wider context, and translate into meaningful targets</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Excellent Project Management and forward planning expertise, including the ability to identify key issues, ask pertinent questions and problem solve</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>High level IT skills including significant spreadsheet/database skills</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Excellent written and verbal communication skills</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to analyse data to identify patterns, trends and inconsistencies, and report pertinent observations succinctly, adding informed commentary to create management information</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to work collaboratively and interact effectively with colleagues across the university</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Innovative and creative in managing resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness</td>
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**Experience**

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<tr>
<td>Significant recent experience of leading, motivating and managing a team</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Experience of building effective working relationships with stakeholders at all levels and in delivering results</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Experience of handling data and systems integrity issues</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Managerial experience gained working with or in a University Research Grants Office</td>
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**Personal attributes**

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<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Positive, pro-active and can-do attitude</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to prioritise work where there are conflicting deadlines and demands, to deliver a good service level</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Commitment to efficiency and effectiveness, and continuous improvements in service</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Service oriented with a strong customer focus</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong ethos of team-working, skills development and training</td>
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The Research Grants and Contracts (RGC) section provides administrative support and financial control for all research grants and contracts. RGC overall comprises 30 staff organised into three teams each aligned to a portfolio of academic departments. RGC currently handles around 950 applications per annum and over 950 live research projects from over 170 different funders.

Based in the Research and Enterprise Directorate, RGC staff work closely with colleagues in academic departments and in other support areas and liaise with funders and partner organisations on a regular basis. Problem solving, interpreting complex rules and conveying them in easily understood language are a regular part of all RGC roles.
THE UNIVERSITY

Founded on principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, the University of York opened in 1963 with just 230 students. In 2018 it is the home of more than 17,000 students across more than 30 academic departments and research centres. Since opening over fifty years ago, we have become one of the world’s leading universities and a member of the prestigious Russell Group.

We are consistently recognised as one of the leading Higher Education Institutes and are ranked 16th in the Times & Sunday Times league table (2017). The University of York has won six Times Higher Education (THE) Awards and five Queen’s Anniversary Prizes.

The University is proud of its association with Athena SWAN, holding 12 awards in support of gender equality, representation and success for all, with gold awards for Chemistry and Biology and a University-wide bronze award.

Of 154 universities that took part in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, The University of York ranked 14th overall and 10th for the impact of our research. The University is consistently in the top ten UK research universities and attracts over £60m a year of funding from research alone.

Our vision is to make the University of York a world leader in the creation of knowledge through fundamental and applied research, the sharing of knowledge by teaching students from varied backgrounds and the application of knowledge for the health, prosperity and well-being of people and society.
Attractive workplace

Centred around the picturesque village of Heslington on the edge of the city of York, our colleges are set in an attractive landscaped campus. York enjoys a safe, friendly atmosphere with facilities including bars, shops, theatres and concert halls all within easy walking distance.

The University has undergone an unprecedented period of expansion and renewal since 2000. We have invested in twenty new buildings on the original campus and have completed the first and second phases of a £750m campus expansion. Our investment in new colleges, teaching and learning spaces, laboratories, research facilities and a new sports village mean there has never been a better time to join us.

During this period of change we’ve worked hard to retain our friendly, informal and collegiate atmosphere, which is important to our core values of inclusivity and interdisciplinarity.

We have a thriving international community and are committed to providing staff moving to York with as much support as possible through our Relocation Package and Welcome Officers.

The University is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive community - a place where we can all be ourselves and succeed on merit. We offer a range of family friendly, inclusive employment policies, flexible working arrangements, staff engagement forums, campus facilities and services to support staff from different backgrounds.

For further information please visit our employee benefit pages.
THE CITY AND THE REGION

**The City of York**

Internationally acclaimed for its rich heritage and historic architecture, York's bustling streets are filled with visitors from all over the world. Within its medieval walls you will find the iconic gothic Minster, Clifford's Tower and the Shambles - just a few of the many attractions.

But York isn't just a great place to visit - it's also a great place to live and work. While nourishing a vibrant cosmopolitan atmosphere, York still maintains the friendly sense of community unique to a small city.

Visit [www.visityork.org](http://www.visityork.org) for more information on the city of York.

**Shopping, culture and entertainment**

York boasts specialist and unique boutiques but also all the high street stores on its busy shopping streets. Alongside them you will find cinemas, theatres, an opera house, art galleries, a vast range of restaurants, live music venues and clubs. York is particularly renowned for its multitude of pubs and bars, from the modern to the medieval.

**Housing and schools**

Whether you choose to live close to the city, in one of the surrounding villages or further afield, you will find a wide range of housing within comfortable distance of York and the University. For families, the area has a range of excellent schools both in the state and independent sector.

**Great location**

York is one of Britain’s best-connected cities. Halfway between London and Edinburgh on the East Coast mainline, on intercity trains you can reach London King's Cross in less than two hours and Edinburgh in two and a half hours. York is also well served by road links, and it is easily accessible from the A1, M1 and the M62.

For those travelling from overseas, Manchester Airport is two hours away and Heathrow Airport just three and a half. Flights from nearby Leeds Bradford Airport provide easy access to mainland Europe. By Eurostar from London St Pancras, Paris is just over six hours away.

**Yorkshire**

The Lonely Planet guide recently declared Yorkshire the third best region in the world to visit. There is something to cater to every taste, whether it be the rugged landscapes of the Moors or the Dales, the picturesque seaside towns of Scarborough and Robin Hoods Bay, the gothic architecture of Whitby or the vibrancy of cosmopolitan Leeds.
Apply online
- Go to https://jobs.york.ac.uk
- Find this job using reference 7237
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (local UK time) on 21 January 2019

What will I need?
We will ask you for details of:
- your employment history
- relevant qualifications
- two referees

You need to be ready to show us how you meet the requirements of the job, either in a written statement and/or by answering questions.

Help and assistance
Direct any informal queries to jeniffer.gilmartin@york.ac.uk

If you have any questions about your application, contact the HR Services team:
recruitment@york.ac.uk
+44 (0)1904 324835