Centre Manager - The Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity

Department of Biology

Closing date: 31 March 2019

Interview date: To be confirmed

Vacancy reference: 7412
INTRODUCTION

We are looking for an inspirational Centre Manager to lead the operations of the newly awarded Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity at the University of York. This is a major new centre funded by The Leverhulme Trust, and directed by Professor Chris Thomas. The Centre will run for 10 years from September 2019, with this position available from 1 August 2019 onwards.

This role is an exciting opportunity to work with staff and postgraduate students across the University of York’s Faculties of Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities, and with collaborators at the University of Sherbrooke (Canada), the Australian National University and the University of St Andrews, to increase knowledge of how the relationship between humanity and the natural world is changing, and how we might move forwards to maintain and develop a sustainable Earth.

Human-caused changes to the world’s physical and biological processes are so great that we increasingly think of the Earth as having entered a new geological epoch, the ‘Anthropocene’. This disruption has already resulted in the extermination of many species and could eventually lead to the “Big Sixth” mass extinction event of our planet’s history. However, the Anthropocene is also a time of biological gains. Transformation of our planet is enabling many species to thrive in parts of the world that they would not otherwise have reached. The rate of evolution has increased to such an extent that the human epoch may eventually be seen as one of the greatest boosts to biological diversity in the history of life on Earth. These gains are often ignored and disliked, and are more typically seen as evidence that the Earth system has moved away from a more desirable state of nature, located somewhere in the historical past.

The Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity will redress this imbalance, recognising biological gains as well as losses, and changes that are beneficial to humans as well as ones that are harmful. It will bring together world-leading researchers to understand the neglected societal and biological processes that underpin biodiversity gains, and the consequences of those gains, and thus inform and influence society’s response to these changes.

The Centre Manager will lead the operational development and management of the Centre and will be responsible for co-designing, implementing and maintaining a robust management infrastructure. They will join the Research Strategy Group, chaired by the Director Professor Chris Thomas and supported by Associate Directors Dr Mark Jenner and Professor Kate Pickett, which will oversee the development of the research programme, including monitoring overall progress. The Centre Manager will provide leadership in facilitating transdisciplinary work and support the Directorate to maintain internal and external communications. They will also chair the Operational Management Group, ensuring smooth administrative operations.
Main purpose of the role

The Centre Manager will play a key leadership role in setting up, developing and ensuring the success of the Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity. As the senior operational manager, you will support the Centre Director and Associate Directors with high-level assistance in all aspects of programme development, management and delivery. The Centre Manager will be an effective leader able to work successfully with a range of international senior and early career academics, as well as public and private sector partners.

Key responsibilities

(Role holders will be required to undertake some or all of the duties below)

- Be responsible for operational delivery of the Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity
- Be responsible for high-level professional support, and reporting to, the Centre Directorate to ensure robust and responsive top-level management
- Be responsible for project scoping, planning, initiation, development, review and completion processes
- Support strategic thinking and development of new Centre activities, including the facilitation of interdisciplinary research
- Develop and maintain agreed project plans, defining criteria for control and management of projects and assessment of risk
- Be responsible for managing project finances and associated issues/risks alongside colleagues in finance
- Work with HR and departmental support staff to coordinate recruitment of Centre staff, post-doctoral research fellows and PhDs
- Support management and coordination of Centre staff and post-doctoral research fellows
- Work with and line-manage the Centre Administrative Officer
- Play a key role in the governance of the Centre, including co-ordination of the independent Advisory Group, membership of the Research Strategy Group, and chairing the Operational Management Group
- Act as a representative and ambassador for the Centre in relationships with key stakeholders, departments participating in the Centre and external bodies
- Ensure effective internal and external communications (supported by the Centre Administrative Officer)
- Co-ordinate programmes for Centre workshops / meetings (with logistics supported by the Centre Administrative Officer)
- Support the development of high quality funding proposals
- Monitor compliance with all grant funding terms and conditions
- Build and maintain a broad personal interest and knowledge across the sciences, social sciences, arts & humanities relevant to the Centre’s research
# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Educated to degree level, or significant equivalent experience</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project management qualification or equivalent experience</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Postgraduate degree in a relevant discipline or equivalent professional experience</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<th>Knowledge</th>
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<td>Detailed knowledge of managing a budget, authorising and reporting on expenditure against the budget</td>
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<td>Thorough understanding of the principles of project and people management</td>
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<td>Understanding of governance, confidentiality, ethics, equality and diversity issues</td>
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<td>Personal interest in and / or knowledge of relevant academic disciplines</td>
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<td>Broad understanding of the HE sector including, funding for research</td>
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<th>Skills, abilities and competencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Able to line manage and provide leadership, support, motivation and direction</td>
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<td>Able to create and review strategic operational procedures and processes, ensure they are fit for purpose and maximise efficiency, make recommendations for improvements and implement agreed changes</td>
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<td>Ability to write clearly, concisely and persuasively for reports and publications</td>
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<td>Strong IT skills including word processing, e-mail, spreadsheets and Google applications</td>
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<td>Well-developed oral and written communication skills, with the ability to provide detailed advice and guidance on specialist defined processes and procedures to internal and external contacts</td>
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<td>A high degree of attention to detail</td>
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<td>Able to work to tight deadlines; able to manage multiple projects and operational duties simultaneously; able to prioritise workload within these and manage the expectations of stakeholders; able to work on own initiative and under pressure</td>
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<td>Ability to liaise at all levels both internally and externally and to build good working relationships</td>
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<td>Experience</td>
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<td>Experience of managing complex, collaborative projects with a range of stakeholders</td>
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<td>Experience of managing project teams and line-managing staff</td>
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<td>Experience of working in a senior role in a complex organisation</td>
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<td>Experience of setting up new projects and instigating appropriate procedures and systems</td>
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<td>Experience of managing complex project finances</td>
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<td>Experience of managing grant-funded research</td>
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<td>Experience of supporting collaborative networks</td>
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<th>Personal attributes</th>
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<td>Motivated and self-reliant; comfortable working independently and within large, trans-disciplinary teams</td>
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<td>A creative, adaptable and energetic approach to developing and delivering projects</td>
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<td>Pragmatic, results-driven and resilient</td>
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<td>Committed to personal development and updating of knowledge and skills</td>
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<td>High interpersonal skills, able to use negotiation and diplomacy</td>
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The Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity is a major new research centre funded by The Leverhulme Trust, and directed by Professor Chris Thomas. It will run for 10 years from September 2019.

The Centre represents a collaboration between a dozen University of York Departments, across the Faculties of Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities, and with researchers at the University of Sherbrooke (Canada), the Australian National University and the University of St Andrews. We aim to increase knowledge of how the relationship between humanity and the natural world is changing, and how we might move forwards to maintain and develop a sustainable Earth.

The University of York aims to become a world leader in interdisciplinary research by encouraging interdepartmental and international research activity. A relevant example for the post is the York Environmental Sustainability Institute, a pioneering interdisciplinary partnership within the University of York which facilitates interactions between staff interested in environmental research throughout the University. It also provides links between University of York researchers and a range of external partners, including other Universities, non-governmental organisations, and businesses.

The Centre Manager will take primary responsibility for the operational management of the Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity, which will have a Directorate of Professor Chris Thomas and Associate Directors Dr Mark Jenner and Professor Kate Pickett, and a Research Strategy Group representing a wide range of discipline areas. We will also engage with a wider group of collaborators, employ postdoctoral researchers (approximately 10 in a given year) and support postgraduate students across a range of disciplines, making for about 70 people at any one time. The Centre will have additional professional support staff. We will also have an External Advisory Board of national and international experts.
THE DEPARTMENT

The Centre Manager position will be hosted by the University of York Department of Biology, the same Department as the Director. Our department welcomes staff and students from around the world. We celebrate excellence, breadth and diversity across the spectrum of modern biology.

Our research is focused around fundamental science research foci, which are Ecology and Evolution, Bioinformatics and Mathematical Biology, Cell and Developmental Biology, Molecular and Cellular Medicine, Infection and Immunity, Microbiology, Biochemistry and Biophysics, Cancer and Plant Biology. The Department has successfully continued to establish state-of-the-art facilities, including a new teaching building that opened in Autumn 2016. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, the Department of Biology was again placed in the top 10 in the UK. We are ranked 1st for impact outside academia - our research has had major influence on environmental policy, industry and health. This demonstrates our strengths across the biological sciences: from ecology to biochemistry, biotechnology and biomedical sciences. The Department of Biology covers the spectrum of contemporary biological sciences with no internal barriers, and collaboration internally and externally is strongly encouraged. Our Department comprises >70 academic and teaching staff, >100 research associates, >140 professional support staff (technical and administrative), 180 graduate students, and approximately 860 undergraduates.

The department is strongly involved with prestigious Doctoral Training Partnerships, including the NERC Adapting to the Challenges of a Changing Environment, which encompasses environmental, ecological and evolutionary research across the Universities of York, Sheffield and Liverpool, together with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and other partners. Students benefit from PhD training programmes with interdisciplinary collaboration at their core. This enables students to develop a range of research skills in biological, ecological and environmental areas as well as equipping them with core mathematical, data analysis and generic professional skills that are necessary for research in the coming decades.

As befits a department of our size, we have extensive professional support services which underpin our teaching and research. This includes teams in operational services; horticulture; stores and logistics and teaching laboratory technicians. We provide excellent biological services facilities and mechanical and electronic workshops. We also have administration teams which cover; Health and Safety; Research support to assist with external funding proposals for research activities; a Student and Academic Services team in place to support academic staff and students; a core Department Management Team Hub who support a broad range of administrative processes in order to facilitate the smooth running of departmental activity. The Department also has a dedicated bioinformatics support team within the
THE DEPARTMENT

Technology Facility who can provide help and assistance with a wide range of software.

The University of York operates a set of family-friendly policies and welcomes applications that are made on a part-time and job share basis. We will do our best to accommodate such requests where possible. Staff working patterns are flexible and a formal flexitime system is also in operation, and the University has a nursery on site. We are proud to foster a supportive culture that helps staff and students reach their full potential and we embrace equality, diversity and inclusion as well as the values of the Athena SWAN Charter in all our departmental activities. Our philosophy is that poor working practices discriminate disproportionately against any potentially disadvantaged group whereas good practices support all. The Department of Biology holds a Gold Athena SWAN award, in recognition of our culture, ethos and activity.
The University

Founded on principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, the University of York opened in 1963 with just 230 students. In 2019 it is the home of more than 18,000 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 one of just six post-war universities to have appeared in the world top 100. We were rated 22nd in the 2019 Times & Sunday Times league table. 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 multiple 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 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](https://jobs.york.ac.uk)
- Find this job using reference 7412
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (local UK time) on 31 March 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 Centre Director, Professor Chris Thomas, via email: chris.thomas@york.ac.uk or Associate Director, Professor Kate Pickett email: kate.pickett@york.ac.uk. If you have any questions about your application, contact the HR Services team:

recruitment@york.ac.uk

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