Director & Professor of Biodiversity
Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity

Closing date: 03/01/2023
Interview date: 25/01/2023
Vacancy reference: 11514
INTRODUCTION

The Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity (LCAB) is an interdisciplinary and collaborative research centre which examines how the relationship between humanity and the natural world is changing, positively as well as negatively, and how we might develop and maintain a sustainable Earth. The Centre is funded by The Leverhulme Trust (£10 million over 10 years), and based at the University of York.

We seek an inspiring individual to become the new Director of LCAB at the start of the fifth year of the Centre’s 10-year programme. You will continue to build the LCAB community and develop and take forward its research aims. You will be an internationally recognised researcher in any area of Anthropocene biodiversity, a collaborative interdisciplinary leader who can harness research strengths across faculties, and be able to articulate the implications of biodiversity research for wider society.

The Director will also be Professor of Biodiversity in the University of York’s Department of Biology, which ranks first among UK research-intensive universities for student satisfaction. Biological sciences at York has been consistently ranked in the UK top 10 for Research Excellence since 2008, including in the most recent exercise REF2021. We expect the successful candidate to provide leadership, ideas and new disciplinary strength to influence both our research strategy and our taught portfolio.

The Leverhulme Trust encourages higher-risk research which is often therefore fundamental or curiosity-driven. The expectation of LCAB is that it will draw upon a range of perspectives and expertise embracing the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities to bring new disciplinary mixes to bear on a particular topic. Trust Centres should strive to become recognised internationally for excellence in their chosen area.

Professor James Moir
Head of Department
Main purpose of the role

The LCAB Director will develop an internationally-leading programme of biodiversity research and provide outstanding leadership in collaborative research across the natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. You will support research excellence and the career development of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

You will manage and maintain productive relationships across disciplines and external partners to develop LCAB’s research priorities, to understand the causes and consequences of biodiversity gains and losses, and inform and influence how society responds. As a Department of Biology Professor, the Director will be expected to advance their subject nationally and internationally and contribute to maintaining the University as an international centre of excellence for the relevant subject area through research and publication, teaching, and networking.

You will be required to undertake the duties outlined below:

• Undertake an internationally-leading programme of biodiversity research

• Build and develop new partnerships with key external organisations to drive LCAB’s research agenda and support the University’s global engagement programme to develop effective research collaborations

• Provide high-level strategic leadership for LCAB. Guide LCAB successfully through the next stage of its development and identify and drive forward high quality research and interdisciplinary research collaborations

• Continue to raise the profile of LCAB’s research both internally and with external partners to leverage additional and continued external funding

Key responsibilities

To conduct and support research and its dissemination

• To carry out internationally outstanding, collaborative, interdisciplinary research and scholarship

• To disseminate this research through articles in journals of international standing and other appropriate forms of dissemination, including engagement outside academia that enables the societal impacts of the research to be realised

• To play a leading role in developing LCAB’s collaborative research agenda through robust, responsive and inclusive top-level management, and to grow and extend the research programme by securing external funding through research grants and contracts

• To attract, supervise and mentor the research of research students, postdoctoral researchers, fellows and academic colleagues in order to promote research excellence and the career development of earlier-career researchers

• To ensure that LCAB’s profile is maintained and developed as an international Centre of excellence in research

To support the teaching objectives of the University

• To play a leading role in departmental and interdepartmental curriculum development and quality enhancement, particularly in relation to education related to biodiversity and the Anthropocene

• To be fully engaged with Biology’s taught programmes for undergraduate and graduate students

• To design teaching relevant to your area of expertise, mark assessments, and give feedback
JOB DESCRIPTION

- To supervise undergraduate and graduate projects and dissertations
- To undertake pastoral support of students, as a personal supervisor or in another designated role

To contribute to the efficient management and administration of the Department

- To hold overall accountability for the successful running of the Centre through robust, responsive and inclusive top-level leadership, including chairing LCAB management meetings, responsibility for annual reporting to the funder, and overseeing LCAB recruitment, with the support of the LCAB management team (Associate Directors, Centre Manager, Centre Administrative Officer) and our team of project supervisors and mentors.
- To carry out relevant professional managerial duties, commensurate with the Professorial grade, including contributing to appropriate committees and working groups within the Department of Biology and University, and undertaking specific departmental roles and management functions as may be reasonably required
- To support and line-manage research students, researchers and support staff and mentor academic colleagues to promote quality of research and teaching, and their career development
- To support and develop new collaborative initiatives
# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>PhD in a subject area related to biodiversity and substantial relevant research experience</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Membership of professional societies</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outstanding and internationally recognised knowledge of relevant subject area, as evidenced by relevant publications</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Understanding the most successful ways to foster interdisciplinary research and collaboration; developing a network of collaborators, fostering partnership and relationships</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<th>Skills, abilities and competencies</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrable capacity for high-level and inspiring strategic leadership, ensuring robust and responsive to top-level management</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to guide LCAB successfully through the next stage of its development, and identify and drive forward disciplinary and interdisciplinary research collaborations</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to attract funds for internationally excellent research</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to manage and interact with staff and students at all levels and to contribute to broadening the strategic development of LCAB</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Evidence of international collaboration</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Evidence of the ability to translate research into impact outside academia</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Able to communicate and persuade with clarity and enthusiasm to a wide range of audiences</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Evidence of contributions to the wider academic community, such as peer review activities, journal editorships, strategic input to external committees, conference organiser and/or roles at a national or international level</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<th>Experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>International leader in a major research field, including invited presentations at major international conferences</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Proven experience of leading interdisciplinary research and collaboration programmes</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Proven experience of overseeing development of research, including monitoring overall progress and adjudicating on the novelty and feasibility of proposed new initiatives</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Substantial publication record in leading peer-reviewed journals</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Recruitment and effective supervision of postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers and fellows</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Significant and sustained success in obtaining research grants and other external funding</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to raise the profile of research both internally and with external partners</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Effective and sustained involvement in major administrative tasks or positions of responsibility within a department or research unit, including oversight of complex budgets</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Authorship or editorships of books</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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## Personal attributes

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<tr>
<td>Demonstrable capacity for strategic thinking and planning</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Enthusiasm for interdisciplinary and collaborative research</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Self-motivated, pro-active and innovative</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>A thorough understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and ability to lead on this</td>
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THE LEVERHULME CENTRE FOR ANTHROPOCENE BIODIVERSITY

The Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity (LCAB) is a major research Centre funded by the Leverhulme Trust for 10 years (2019-2029) 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 Centre represents an interdisciplinary collaboration between the University of York (UK), the University of Sherbrooke (Canada), University College London and the University of St Andrews (UK).

Human-caused changes to the world are so great that we increasingly think of the Earth as having entered a new geological epoch, the ‘Anthropocene’, which is as much a culturally-defined state of human thinking as it is a scientific phenomenon. This disruption has already resulted in the extermination of many species. However, transformation of our planet is enabling many species to thrive in parts of the world that they would not otherwise have reached, and to hybridise with species from which they were previously isolated. These gains are often ignored and disliked, seen as evidence that the Earth system has moved away from a more desirable state of nature, located somewhere in the historical past.

LCAB aims to redress this imbalance, recognising biological gains as well as losses, changes that are beneficial to humans as well as ones that are harmful, and identifying the circumstances under which changes are perceived as either positive or negative. It seeks to understand and thus inform and influence society’s response to these changes.

LCAB is a University Research Centre, with the Director also an appointment in the Department of Biology. LCAB engages and collaborates with researchers across disciplines, departments and faculties, and with partner institutions.

The post is a Department of Biology position. Biology is a broad spectrum biosciences department with disciplinary strength from ecology to biomedicine. The University of York is proud to be a top 10 UK University for Research according to REF2021. Biological sciences research at York has been consistently ranked in the UK top 10 since 2008, including in REF2021. The Biology Department runs highly successful taught undergraduate and masters degree programmes in Biology including specialist undergraduate programmes in Ecology and Genetics. We expect the successful candidate will provide leadership, ideas and new disciplinary strengths to influence the development of our taught portfolio. The department has a diverse graduate student body and we would expect the successful candidate to build a research group of graduate students and post-docs.
OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Founded on the principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, the University is proud to create an environment that attracts staff and students from all over the world. What we gain from diversity is immeasurable.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which was developed in partnership with our staff and student communities, describes our commitment to create a culture where everyone can contribute to university life, knowledge and growth.

We want to create a working, learning, social and living environment that will enable all staff and students to achieve their full potential. Our strategy sets out an ambitious set of objectives to succeed in our commitment, but we have a challenging journey ahead. We recognise that we are not truly representative of our communities locally, nationally and internationally. We would like to pay particular focus to gender parity across all levels, particularly in senior roles; the recruitment, retention and success of a more ethnically diverse staff and student community; an accessible and inclusive campus and ensuring that the values and behaviours we expect from everyone embrace inclusive responsibility and leadership.

Opportunity for all
Our outreach programmes and widening participation work have made us one of the most socially diverse universities among our peers. The York Students in Schools (YSIS) programme has been providing a helping hand in the city’s classrooms for 25 years, placing around 700 students with local schools every year. It recently introduced a new English and Mathematics tutoring scheme.

A report by The Reform Research Trust in September 2017 ranked York second out of 29 high-tariff institutions for our track record in increasing access for disadvantaged students from 2011/12 to 2015/16.

Wellbeing and support
Students are encouraged to balance their studies with activities and interests to give them a healthier and more rounded student experience. We have invested heavily in support of physical health with new and improved sports facilities, and in mental health through our Open Door counselling and crisis team which now opens in the evenings during term time. We have also developed a support network of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid. University staff have access to wellbeing help and support, and can access advice through our site. Further information on our health and wellbeing support can be found at https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/support/
We are a world-class institution, focused on creating an environment of excellence in which all our students, staff and researchers can thrive. Our Research Strategy encompasses our vision that York should provide a home for some of the best research in the world. ([https://www.york.ac.uk/research/](https://www.york.ac.uk/research/))

We are a high-performing member of the Russell Group, ranked, 17th in the Times Good University Guide 2023, 19th in the Complete University Guide 2023 and 21st in the Guardian University Guide.

In the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, York was ranked in the top 10 of UK universities for research quality, with all of our subject areas ranked in the top 30 (with four Departments positioned in the top five). Over 50 per cent of our research was judged to be four star or “world-leading” and 40 per cent to be three star or “internationally excellent”.

We have been awarded TEF Gold for our research-led teaching which provides "consistently outstanding outcomes for students from all backgrounds".

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy speaks to the core of our values. We hold 23 awards from Athena SWAN, recognising the advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

**At the heart of the region**

The University is deeply embedded in the local community of North Yorkshire. Our values and commitment to the public good have never been more important. We are a hub for sharing knowledge, inspiring collaboration and enriching lives.

In 2021 we were shortlisted for Times Higher Education’s University of the Year Award in recognition of the University’s response to the Covid pandemic [The Year We Came Together - Our Covid-19 response](https://www.york.ac.uk/about/mission-strategies/vision-for-york/).

Across the University, we are mobilising our knowledge, our people and our resources to tackle the immediate and long-term challenges. The new University Strategy 2030, ([A University for Public Good](https://www.york.ac.uk/about/mission-strategies/vision-for-york/)) was launched at the end of 2021, outlining our vision and strategy for the next decade.

Further information on the new strategy can be found on the following webpages; [https://www.york.ac.uk/about/mission-strategies/vision-for-york/](https://www.york.ac.uk/about/mission-strategies/vision-for-york/).
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 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 11514
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (local UK time) on 03 January 2023.

What will I need?

We will ask you for details of:

- Your CV
- A cover letter describing your motivation for application and how you meet the requirements of the job
- A statement of your research and teaching intentions

You will also need details of three academic referees (one International) and one Employment referee.

Help and assistance

For an informal discussion regarding this post, please contact Professor Chris Thomas (christomas@york.ac.uk)

If you have any questions about your application, contact the HR Services team:

recruitment@york.ac.uk
+44 (0)1904 324835