

Post Details		Last Updated: 18/12/2025	
Faculty/Administrative/Service Department	Surrey Space Institute		
Job Title	Head of Institute Operations		
Job Family	Professional Services	Job Level	6
Responsible to	Director of the Institute		
Responsible for (Staff)	Direct line management of the Institute Administrator. Collaborative working with faculty and central partnership and bid managers.		
<u>Job Purpose Statement</u>			
<p>The Head of Operations for the Surrey Space Institute is a member of the Institute’s management board responsible for leading the operational management of all non-academic activities. The post holder will play a key role in supporting the Director in the overall development and implementation of strategic, operational and non-academic activities to establish a pan-University collaborative culture, build the Institute’s internal and external profile and achieve long-term growth.</p> <p>The post holder will play a lead role in the design and implementation of a partnerships strategy and activities promoting pan-University collaboration to establish an open and inclusive culture of cross and trans-disciplinary collaboration in research, training and innovation. The post holder will work closely with the Director and Co-Directors to ensure the provision of world-class research, training and student experience in accordance with policies and practices established for the Institute and University.</p>			
<u>Key Responsibilities</u>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with the Institute Director and management team to play a leading role in developing and implementing the strategic plans and vision for the Institute; ensuring growth of the Institute’s scale and quality.2. Represent the Institute at University level to ensure the strategic needs of the Institute are recognised and considered.3. Work with the Director and Co-Directors, Faculties, and colleagues from across professional services to ensure that successful implementation, operational efficiency, and definition of desired goals and outcomes are in place for major initiatives and key projects of the Institute including the Institute strategies e.g. partnerships and communication.4. Support the Director with the financial planning and management of the Institute’s budgets and resources, ensuring that investment cases are robust, resources are optimised and budgetary controls are efficiently and effectively carried out and ensure that Institute decisions are consistent with agreed budget targets, KPIs and constraints.5. Manage professional services support staff within the Institute to ensure service delivery and development is aligned with Faculty and Professional Services Department’s strategic ambitions; provide leadership, advice and mentoring to develop and maintain an effective and resilient team, with particular emphasis on the delivery of high-quality services and succession planning.6. Manage the health and safety, risk management, business continuity and other compliance related accountabilities such as data protection, to ensure that the Institute complies with all internal and external requirements, using agreed processes to ensure adequate mitigation is in place.			
N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.			

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.
- Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.
- Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.
- Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.

Help maintain a safe working environment by:

- Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand.
- Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy.

Elements of the Role

Planning and Organising

The post holder will:

- Be required to translate the strategy into implementation plans and actions. The work associated with this will involve coordinating complex and sometimes conflicting work streams, therefore a high degree of planning and organising will be essential to the successful delivery of objectives.
- Enjoy substantial freedom in developing methods for effectively implementing strategic objectives and targets, operational systems and procedures, often working closely with the senior management team.
- Work closely with Faculty Partnership Managers, and manage a large range of strategic partnerships, collaborations and relationships, from local authorities supporting regional SME networks and collaborators on the Surrey Research Park, to the innovation aspects of strategic partners

Problem Solving and Decision Making

The post holder will:

- Operate in a complex environment, often involving working with multiple stakeholders from many different communities. For example, within the University, there are multiple academic communities with different cultures and practices, and externally, multiple universities and businesses of different scales, cultures and specialisms as well as local authorities, NGOs and the public. The post holder will require well-developed communications skills, including an ability to rapidly adjust communication style to deal with technical and non-technical constituencies.
- Be expected to operate with a high degree of autonomy, with discretion to determine their own priorities, within the overall alignment of activities and priorities for the Institute. The post holder will have latitude to decide the best course of action to be followed in the resolution of problems and issues, determined generally by referring to experience and making a significant contribution to the development of Institute strategy and policies.
- Work in conjunction with the Institute Director and other members of senior management in the Institute, the post holder will be expected to make a significant contribution to the development of Institute strategy and policies.

Continuous Improvement

The post holder will:

- Have a substantial impact within the Institute, supporting the Director and Co-Directors in continuously improving the research and educational programmes. The impact of research and innovation is critically

important for universities, with both the Research Excellence Framework (REF), and the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), driving the strategy of the University.

- The post holder is expected to work with colleagues in other Institutes and Faculties to share best practice and, as a self-managed team, seek standard and consistent approaches to issues wherever possible.
- The post holder acts as the principal link with other University stakeholders involved in the management and running of the Institute and must therefore be able to put into practice high level communication and influencing skills.

Accountability

The post holder will:

- Support the Director and Co-Directors to work with directors of the University's other institutes and the Associate Deans Research to help ensure the effectiveness of cross-Faculty research teams.
- Manage an operating and partnerships budget approved through an annual formal process, with reporting to the Director, to be used within the levels of approval.
- Lead and direct operational management and oversee all support staff based within the institute and have overall responsibility for the development, motivation and performance review and reward of the Institute's professional service staff.

Dimensions of the role

The post holder will work with the Director, Co-Directors, direct report(s), approximately 30 Research Fellows, other academics and hundreds of stakeholders and partners, to promote the interests of the Institute.

They will manage the interface between the Research and Innovation Strategy Directorates, to contribute to the University's Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange performance.

Key external liaisons are with: Funding bodies (UKRI and Research England), Commercial and not-for-profit organisations (UK and International), Government representatives (Local, Regional, National), organisational Institute members, as well as prospective investors in the Institute. The post holder will represent the Institute on appropriate local and regional management boards.

Key internal liaisons are with: the Vice-Provost, Research & Innovation, the Associate Deans Research & Innovation and their Faculty-based research teams; the Research Innovation and Strategy Directors and their teams; the Research & Innovation Services team, including legal, finance, HR & commercial services team and small-scale business development team; the Director of Surrey Research Park and their team.

Supplementary Information

The role holder has the authority and flexibility to manage all aspects of this diverse role including balancing the demands of strategic and operational management with delivering a programme of diverse projects to meet Institute and University objectives working with a broad stakeholder base where there is often no direct line management responsibility.

Person Specification This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships

Professionally qualified with a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification; relevant managerial/leadership experience and proven success in innovation;

OR

Extensive vocational and strategic management and experience in HE, working in business development partnerships, demonstrating professional development through involvement in a series of progressively more demanding and influential roles

E

Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge) This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role (please refer to the Competency Framework for clarification where needed and the Job Matching Guidance).	Essential/ Desirable	Level 1-3
Experience in developing and implementing strategies and strategic plans	E	3
Experience in managing large, complex bids and tenders	E	3
Excellent organisational management skills along with the ability to influence, manage and develop high performing teams and implement policy and procedure effectively at all levels	E	3
An innovative approach to operational management and the ability to make decisions with little precedent	E	2
Experience of stakeholder management and partnership building	E	3
A sound understanding of the principles of financial management in a devolved context	E	3
Experience and proven success in planning and leadership of organisational and external communications strategy including event planning and delivery	D	3
Significant management leadership experience within a large, complex organisation. Experience of working in higher education is highly desirable.	D	3
Demonstrable people management skills	D	3
Experience of negotiating at senior level	D	3
Experience of fund raising and the investment community	D	2
Experience of leading teams in operational delivery	D	3
Experience of managing budgets/financial forecasting	D	3
Experience of managing memberships and portfolio of clients	D	2
Experience of leading change and continuous improvement	D	3
Understanding of latest Sustainability challenges and funding opportunities	D	3
Experience in effectively communicating sustainability strategies and goals to internal and external stakeholders.	D	3
Understanding of how businesses can work together with corporate, government, and non-profit actors to bring about large-scale change in the sustainability space.	D	2
Special Requirements:		Essential/ Desirable
The post-holder will be required to attend events and meetings held off University premises		E
Core Competencies This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade.		Level 1-3
Communication		3
Adaptability / Flexibility		3
Customer/Client service and support		3
Planning and Organising		3
Continuous Improvement		3
Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills		3
Managing and Developing Performance		3
Creative and Analytical Thinking		3
Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills		3
Strategic Thinking & Leadership		3
This Job Purpose reflects the core activities of the post. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder develop, there will inevitably be some changes to the duties for which the post is responsible, and possibly to the emphasis		

of the post itself. The University expects that the post holder will recognise this and will adopt a flexible approach to work. This could include undertaking relevant training where necessary.

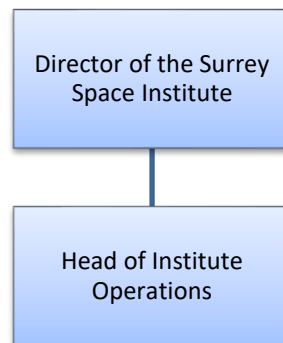
Should significant changes to the Job Purpose become necessary, the post holder will be consulted and the changes reflected in a revised Job Purpose.

Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

Background Information

The Surrey Space Institute is one of the University's Pan University Institutes, established to coordinate and enhance interdisciplinary research, innovation and training in the space domain. The Institute brings together academic and professional services colleagues from across all three Faculties to support high quality research programmes, external partnerships and educational activities aligned with the University's strategic priorities.

Department Structure Chart



Relationships

The Head of Institute Operations is a senior member of the Institute's leadership team and is responsible for coordinating operational activity across the Institute. The role requires close working relationships with the Director and Co-Directors, academic leads, Faculty teams, and central professional services departments, including Research & Innovation Services, Finance, HR, Legal, Marketing & Communications and the Doctoral College. The post holder will also engage with external partners, including industry, funding bodies, government agencies and regional stakeholders, to support the Institute's strategic objectives.

** The post-holder will also work closely with the lead for sustainability on the University's Executive Board and the Associate Deans for Innovation and Research Strategy.*