Post Details	Last Updated: 04/08/2026		
Faculty/Administrative/Service Department	Research, Innovation & Impact (RII)		
Job Title	Head of Research Development		
Job Family	Professional Services	**Job Level**	6
Responsible to	Associate Director (RII Operations)		
Responsible for (Staff)	Research Development (21HC), 11 Research Development Managers (to be recruited over 2-3yrs) (currently 6) 8 Research Development Officers (to be recruited over 2-3 yrs) (currently 7) 2 Research Development Co-Ordinators (to be recruited over 2-3yrs) (currently 0) Direct reports to be confirmed.		

Job Purpose Statement

The Head of Research Development is a key leadership role within the RII Operations function. The post holder provides strategic leadership for the University's research development function, driving growth in externally funded research and supporting the delivery of institutional research ambitions. The role leads the identification and development of major funding opportunities, provides strategic intelligence on the external funding landscape, and works closely with academic and professional services colleagues to strengthen research excellence, collaboration, and impact. Through leadership of a high-performing research development team, the postholder will enhance institutional research capacity, build strategic partnerships with funders and external stakeholders, and position the University to secure significant research income and achieve its research performance objectives.

Key Responsibilities

1. **Research Strategy and Funding Growth:** Lead the development and implementation of research funding and development strategies that support institutional priorities, research excellence, and growth in external research income.
2. **Strategic Bid Development:** Lead support for major, strategic and interdisciplinary funding applications, working with academic leaders to secure large-scale national and international research investments.
3. **Horizon Scanning and Intelligence:** Identify emerging funding opportunities, analyse funder priorities and sector trends, and inform institutional positioning to maximise future research opportunities.
4. **Partnership and Stakeholder Development:** Build and maintain strategic relationships with funding bodies, academic leaders, industry, public sector organisations and international partners to strengthen research collaborations and institutional profile.
5. **Leadership of Research Development Services:** Lead and develop the Research Development team, ensuring the delivery of high-quality, researcher-focused services, effective resource management, and continuous improvement.
6. **Research Culture, Capacity and Capability Building:** Develop initiatives that strengthen research culture, researcher development, collaboration, impact and institutional research capability, supporting long-term research performance and competitiveness

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

- To set the strategic direction of the Research Development team.
- The post holder must work effectively under pressure, managing and shifting priorities and progressing numerous work priorities at any one time.
- The post holder will have overall responsibility in planning and organising the workload of the team, ensuring work is managed in accordance with agreed key performance indicators (KPIs).
- The post holder will work with foresight and an independent manner, organising and prioritising their work and that of their team. They will lead by example to ensure that deadlines are met by their team in a timely way.
- The work will, by necessity, be driven by a number of internal and external deadlines, and therefore, the post holder will be adept at changing plans to adapt to these changing circumstances.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

- The framework for the role is provided by the University's suite of research policies and regulatory statute
- The post holder is required to deal with complex problems, which require the post holder to exercise reasonable personal initiative and judgement and to provide solutions. The post holder will be required to apply analytical, interpretative and constructive thinking, as well as a high degree of evaluation in order to make decisions.
- The post holder will be expected to resolve the majority of issues presented to them, only escalating issues/problems where there is a significant risk to the University or where guidance is sought on a subject outside of the post holder's experience.
- The post holder will act as the escalation point for the team in cases where particularly unusual or complex issues or problems are faced.

Continuous Improvement

- The post holder is responsible for ensuring that the Research Development team reacts to the changing external and internal research requirements, and that improvements are made on a continual basis.
- The post holder will identify new ways to enhance the research environment and implement them in liaison with the Associate Director (RII Operations, Director of RII and the Associate Deans (Research and Innovation).

The post holder is expected to adapt to the increasing volume and complexity of research bifs and will need to use their initiative to continuously develop the research development service and find ways of improving efficiencies in order to maintain the expected standards of service.

Accountability

- Manage the Research Development team ensuring the systems, process and services are enabling excellent customer support.
- The post holder will exercise a substantial degree of independent professional responsibility and discretion.
- Working within the University's risk appetite and escalating where appropriate. The post holder will need to ensure a keen balance is maintained between the University's position on risk and the desire to progress matters at pace.
- Decisions taken will impact upon external compliance with regulatory bodies as well as actions taken by senior management and academic staff.

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Dimensions of the role

- The role will be delivering a University-wide service and will have impact across the University.
- The role reports to the Associate Director (RII Operations) and will play an important role as part of the senior management team
- The post holder must demonstrate a highly developed level of communication and collegiality as they are required to provide advice and work with individuals internally and externally.

Person Specification		
Qualifications and Professional Memberships		
Professionally qualified with a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification, plus significant relevant experience, including managerial and leadership experience, or substantial experience and proven success in research development. OR Extensive vocational and strategic management and leadership experience, demonstrating professional development through involvement in a series of progressively more demanding and influential work/roles, supported by evidence of significant development of appropriate specialist knowledge.		E
Evidence of extensive experience of research development, developing multi-million, multi-partner bids for a range of funders.		E
Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge)	**Essential/ Desirable**	**Level 1-3**
Knowledge and understanding of research funding policies, UK and International funders.	E	3
Experience of providing strategic oversight and support to large or complex research bids	E	3
Experience of research development analysis, developing strategy, actions plans and measuring success	E	3
Demonstrable experience of delivering professional customer service in a research environment	E	3
Proven leadership experience and ability to recruit, develop and guide staff to become highly motivated, high performing teams	E	3
Knowledge of research and innovation management IT systems required to support research grant and contract activities.	E	2
Experience of managing a research development team within a research institution or higher education setting	D	
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.

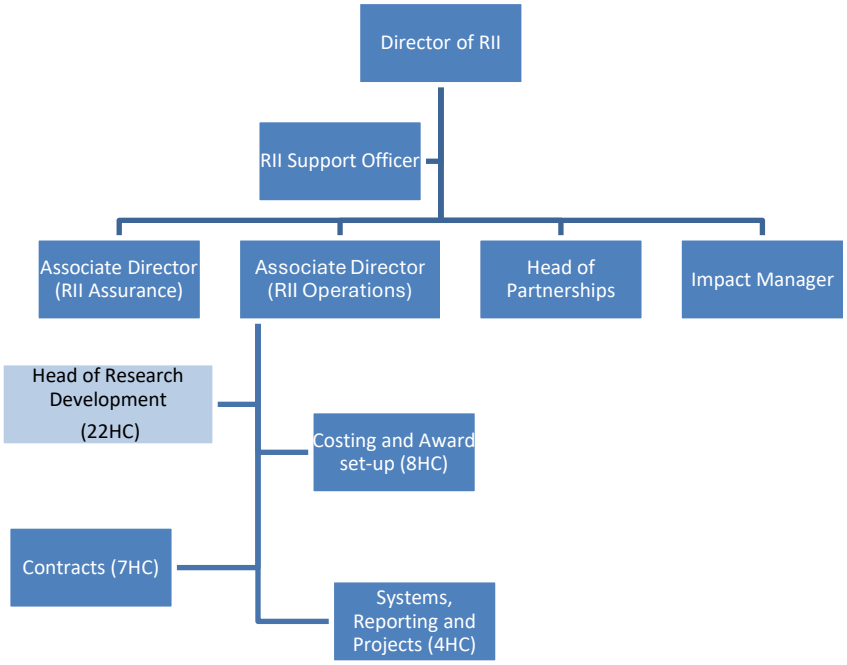
Should significant changes to the Job Purpose become necessary, the post holder will be consulted and the changes reflected in a revised Job Purpose.

Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

Background Information

The RII division supports the research and innovation activity across the University. Support teams are based in faculties and as part of an RII Office. The focus of the RII division is on excellence, assurance and operations. Teams support the lifecycle of research and innovation, supporting funder visits, finding opportunities, bidding and award through to demonstrating outcomes and impact (working closely with colleagues across other professional services, including Strategic Planning, Research Finance, Library and Learning Support Service, Innovate Surrey Limited and the Surrey Innovation District).

Department Structure Chart



Relationships

Internal

- Associate Director (RII Operations), Director of RII and senior leadership team
- PVCR&I senior management team
- Associate Deans (Research and Innovation)
- Associate Heads of Research in Schools
- Academics across the faculties

External

- ARMA
- Other Heads of Research Development
- Funders (key liaison points and portfolio managers)