



Job Title: NCEO Finance and Business Functions Manager
Grade: 7
Salary: £38,205 to £44,263 per annum pro rata
Department: National Centre for Earth Observation
Hours/Contract: Full time, Fixed term until 31 March 2026
Job Family: Management and Administration
Reference: 9972

Role Purpose

The National Centre for Earth Observation (NCEO) is a distributed research centre with over 100 scientists from both Universities and research organisations in the UK. Hosted by the University of Leicester, the NCEO provides long-term strategic research in environmental science using data from satellites in space. The NCEO’s main stakeholder is the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), part of United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The role will manage and oversee the financial processes, contracts, projects and programmes across the NCEO, alongside the effective running of NCEO business functions, including sustainability and social responsibility. It will be responsible for the processes and reporting by which NCEO manages its organisational and operational needs, including those of its partner institutions, head office, and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) as the primary stakeholder for NCEO.

This role also has responsibility for corporate governance activities, including providing support to the NCEO Executive Director, Operational Director, and Divisional Directors through the organisation and administration of Executive level meetings, and of the NCEO Management Board.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

To manage, operate, and develop the business functions of NCEO ranging from the financial management of its scientific work programme to the administrative tasks of NCEO. Particular functions for leadership are financial management and reporting; contract management and maintenance; stakeholder reporting;

- To manage and deliver the finance and contracts function for NCEO as a whole, and particularly with the University of Leicester, to include: leadership of NCEO Finance and Contracts staff; budget setting for NCEO and partners or subsidiary organisations; monitoring spend against budgets, preparing financial forecasts and recommending financial changes to NCEO Directors; liaising with colleagues in University research and NERC finance teams; overseeing issue of payment schedules and contracts including external subcontractors; managing the production of financial reporting tables and coordinating financial audits; overview of capital items (purchases and assets); corporate financial reporting.
- To manage and deliver the organisational functions associated with the NCEO scientific work programme including analysis of staffing levels, monitoring of delivery and management support to grant and contract proposals.





- Develop and execute internal and external contracts for NCEO projects and programmes, including liaising with external partners and university departments. This will include the management of contractual and financial requirements of NERC as our primary funder.
- Work with the NCEO Operations/Executive Director to input into the management and reporting function for NCEO outcomes internally and to NERC/other funders. Responsibilities include but are not limited to: reporting to NERC (e.g., yearly SRAM, Research Council Outputs), reporting such as ResearchFish), Health and Safety.
- To deliver the NCEO business functions directly or through our distributed research centre organisations including sustainability, EDI, risk and compliance, HSE, infosec, and business continuity.
- To undertake and move forward complex staffing and finance discussions with senior level (grade 8-10) academic, finance and HR staff at up to 15 HEIs and equivalent research organisations.
- To underpin the NCEO Executive team (Directors who are senior HEI staff mostly Professors at grade 10) in their function and provide management co-ordination of financial support for large-scale NCEO applications for funding including support for additional NCEO projects and programmes.
- To manage the activities and performance of the NCEO finance and contracts, social responsibility and training teams, working closely with the Operations Director to motivate staff including appraisals, monitor staff workloads and identifying necessary resourcing

To provide integral support of the NCEO Centre Director and Divisional Directors through:

- Core management support to the Operations/Executive Director and Divisional Directors in the day-to-day management of NCEO including ad hoc support of Director work priorities and meeting arrangements.
- Secretariat support for NCEO governance; organisation and execution of Directorate, Executive and NCEO Management Board meetings
- Support to Divisional Directors including management information such as science staffing.
- Support co-ordination of Director-led proposals, corporate presentations and outputs

Internal and External Relationships

- Work effectively with and deliver management oversight of the NCEO finance and contract, and social responsibility teams to ensure the smooth running of NCEO.
- Work closely with the Operations/Executive Director to ensure good management liaison and support.
- Work closely with the Operations Director to ensure effective management of the NCEO support team.
- Support the function of the NCEO Executive Team and NCEO Management Board.
- Work with senior University academic, HR and finance staff including procurement





- Work with up to 15 partner institutions to monitor the financial and scientific outputs of NCEO.
- Work with subcontractors external to NCEO on financial and management aspects of their work.

Planning and Organising

- Plan and organise own work in line with the needs of the Directors of NCEO, and oversee activities of the finance and programmes teams.
- Coordinate with the NCEO Executive and Support Teams to ensure the smooth running of NCEO Programmes.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- Experience of financial management and reporting for a science, research or academic organisation*
- Experience of business function management (e.g., CSR, EDI, Sustainability, HSE, Infosec, etc) and external contract management*
- A business degree or significant relevant experience*

Desirable

- Knowledge of Earth Observation Science, remote sensing, space or equivalent science
- Evidence of involvement in a Research Centre, institute or science-related industry
- Knowledge of NERC (or other Research Councils) and experience of working with it
- Experience of people and/or team management*
- Knowledge of relevant IT software including Microsoft systems such as Outlook and Excel; word processing software; scientific software.

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Ability to work to deadlines
- Ability to scrutinise financial reports and tables
- Ability to produce financial reports, budgets, and forecasts
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Planning and organisational skills
- Ability to work flexibly and adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges





Desirable

- Problem solving and general leadership skills
- Excellent written and oral skills for high quality reports, publications, bids and presentations
- Interpersonal skills for working with collaborators, students and stakeholders
- Ability to manage whole organisation activities.

****Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview***

Reason for Fixed Term Contract

The reason for the fixed term contract is stated in section 1.9 in the summary of contractual terms in your contract of employment.

Criminal Declaration

If you become an employee, you must inform your manager immediately, in writing, if you are the subject of any current or future police investigations/legal proceedings, which could result in a criminal offence, conviction, caution, bind-over or charges, or warnings.

Supporting University Activities

As a University of Leicester citizen, you are expected to support key university activities such as clearing, graduation ceremonies, student registration and recruitment open days. We expect all staff as citizens to work flexibly across the University if required.

University Values

Inclusive - We are diverse in our makeup and united in ambition. Our diversity is our strength and makes our community stronger.

Inspiring - We are passionate about inspiring individuals to succeed and realise their ambitions. We challenge our community to think differently, to get involved, and to constantly embrace new ideas.

Impactful - As Citizens of Change we will generate new ideas which deliver impact and empower our community

Equity and Diversity

We believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is integral to a successful modern workplace. By developing and implementing policies and systems that challenge stereotypes across all aspects of our work, we have a culture that recognises and values the diverse contributions of our staff which benefits everyone. Our strong values of inclusivity and equity support our efforts to attract a diverse range of high quality staff and students, and identify our University as a progressive and innovative workplace that mainstreams equity, diversity and inclusion.

