

Job Title:	Operations Director for National Centre for Earth Observation (NCEO)
Grade:	10
Salary:	Competitive
Department:	National Centre for Earth Observation (NCEO)/ School of Physics & Astronomy
Hours/Contract:	Full-time for four years (with possibility of extension)
Job Family:	Management & Administration
Reference:	11191

Role Purpose

As the postholder, you will lead and direct the development and operation of all professional and support services in NCEO nationally, ensuring that the services support the activities of NCEO effectively. You are responsible for the operational delivery of NCEO strategic and business planning, assignment of resources, and financial management. You are accountable for NCEO's risk management and business continuity planning frameworks. An effective voice with finance and contracts at all NCEO partners will be essential so that you can form effective business relationships, agree administrative arrangements and negotiate project agreements on behalf of all the universities and research institutes involved.

As a full member of the NCEO Management Board, you will work in partnership with professorial academic Board members, Non-Executive Directors and the University of Leicester and NERC Observers to develop the vision, strategies and operational plans for NCEO. With the Executive Director, you will be responsible for overall good governance of NCEO, ensuring that the NCEO is working in line with its agreed strategy and policy at all times and is able to demonstrate this to the satisfaction of stakeholders and the NCEO national partnership. You will liaise at senior levels with Directors and Heads of sectors in UKRI, NERC, space agencies and UK government departments and others as required, building trust, reputation, insights and constructive solutions.

You will have a strategic, operations function working on cross-cutting operations and programmes across the UK EO sector and with NERC Head Office as well as UK government and international space agencies. allowing NCEO to be highly capable and flexible in its ability to organise, monitor and report efficiently on large-scale funded science, enable Directors to ensure project or programme business implementations are actioned promptly and with insight, and work effectively at project level with a range of scientific and operational funders.

Resources Managed

The Operations Director will oversee and direct a team of 10-15 staff, including programme and project managers; the current structure chart is attached separately. They will also have responsibility for the financial and contractual management of core national capability, special projects funding and other financial resources of NCEO. Practically, this involves co-working with close to 15 academic professors and 15 Finance and contract teams, enabling funding for between 100 and 150 NCEO staff across the UK at any one time.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

To be an integral part of the NCEO Board and Senior Team and take responsibility for

1. The development and leadership of a high-quality business strategy, plan and implementation for NCEO operations, including accountability for:





- a. Internal NCEO business and operational strategy, and business planning for NCEO to ensure sustainability as NCEO evolves.
 - b. Financial approvals and collaborative agreements with NCEO partners, working with delegated authority from the NCEO Executive Director.
 - c. NCEO financial status and forecasting, ensuring robust management processes within a constrained budget.
 - d. Review of internal systems, structures and culture to support expanded NCEO delivery in the future aligned to strategy.
 - e. Propose cost models for NCEO operations and science projects which are approved by the Executive Director, Management Board and NCEO partners.
2. Leadership of strategic planning and policy formulation within all operational areas of NCEO to ensure that NCEO is well placed to respond to external circumstances, changes in national policy, external scrutiny and the requirements of funding bodies and other stakeholders and where appropriate leading strategic change to ensure the optimal delivery of all operational services including
- a. Organisational and board level accountability for finance, communications and external engagement, administration, and IT
 - b. Implementation of secure governance arrangements for NCEO, reporting to the Executive Director.
 - c. Review of the structure of the NCEO Operations & Support teams, ensuring resilience, value for money, flexible capability and scalable capacity and innovative solutions to support scientific growth in line with NCEO strategy.
 - d. Business relationships with key stakeholders and major funders working with the NCEO Executive Director, particularly NERC, other research funders, space agencies and sector bodies, UK government and parliamentary bodies and commercial partners.
3. Participating fully in Board level- decision making, providing high quality inputs to the Executive and other Directors with accountability for delivery of capital investment, internal business cases and partnerships including:
- a. delivery of capital projects working with the relevant NCEO science staff
 - b. business operations delivery of major, externally-funded projects working nationally with NCEO directors or science leads.
 - c. formulation and agreement of contractual arrangements with external partners
 - d. relationships with key stakeholders working with the NCEO Executive Director, particularly UKRI-NERC, space agencies, and UK government / parliamentary bodies.
4. Engage as Operations Director with other directors and members within the NCEO Management Board and Executive Team with responsibility for ensuring NCEO has in place a sound operational framework which supports the Board to make robust decisions including policies; financial performance; management and operations assurance; governance and risk.
5. Ensure NCEO brand and culture are strong and respected as independent and trusted experts in Earth Observation, facilitating access to the information needed to retain confidence, including ensuring scientific reporting and operational information flows to strategic surveys and stakeholder agencies.





Internal and External Relationships

Within the University, you should form effective working relationships with senior leaders, including the College Director of Operation, PVC - Research and Enterprise, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Digital Services, and the Chief Financial Officer.

Across NCEO partners nationally, you will liaise with the equivalents to the Deans and Directors of Research and Enterprise.

At national level, you should meet with Director-level and Heads of sectors in UKRI, NERC, space agencies and government departments.

You will:

- Report to and work closely with the NCEO Executive Director to ensure co-alignment of NCEO strategy, large-scale developments and available budgets with operational implementation and value for money.
- Work with the NCEO Executive Director and NCEO Management Board to play a full part in the development of NCEO strategic direction and targets.
- Lead operational activity as the Operations Director in the NCEO Management Board contributing to decisions and policies.
- Work with senior NCEO leads, HR and finance staff at up to 15 partners institutions in support of NCEO activities.
- Be capable of building internal and external relationships which facilitate the planning, leading and organising of activities to facilitate major service / operational changes with NCEO wide impact.
- Work with Operations Directors of other NERC Centres to provide an effective voice with NERC, UKRI and other public stakeholders.
- Work with subcontractors external to NCEO on financial and management aspects of their work, supporting on strategic consultancies where appropriate including commercial organisations
- Engage with NCEO stakeholders and funders particularly NERC, space agencies and government bodies working closely with NCEO.
- Engage stakeholders and potential collaborators, including commercial partners, at corporate events and meetings representing NCEO as a trusted research institute.

Planning and Organising

You will:

Develop and lead the implementation of strategies and plans for NCEO Operations, which support and take forward the NCEO strategy.

Contribute to debates on NCEO strategy and policy.

Lead major operational projects and initiative, or their operational components, where these have significant resources and strategic impact.



Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- A science, business or other relevant degree, or significant relevant experience*
- Experience of translating strategy into achievable and measurable operational outcomes
- Experience of directing relevant organisational or programme delivery*
- Significant experience of staff leadership *
- Experience of instituting or developing corporate branding and reputation
- Evidence of involvement in the leadership of a Research Centre, institute, funding organisation or science-related industry*
- Evidence of leadership of high-level organisational strategy and/or operational delivery including managing/controlling budgets*
- Experience of managing multiple, complex projects to successful outcomes
- Experience of financial planning and assignment of resources
- Demonstrable success of building relationships and partnerships with key influencers
- Experience of initiating, implementing and managing change including through innovative and value-for-money solutions*

Desirable

- Experience or knowledge of working with funding agencies such as research councils
- Experience of working with or at Board-level committees or governance structures
- Experience of working with or in academic institutions

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Proven capabilities as a senior leader and manager, with a flexible and inclusive management style appropriate to the complexity and diversity of NCEO*
- A commitment to people development and the organisational values and behaviours that underpins the culture and value of NCEO
- Excellent negotiating and influencing skills
- Ability to think strategically and plan work over long-term timeframes
- Evidence of excellent communication skills including:
 - o the ability to interact with all levels of staff
 - o the ability to establish and develop strong working relationships
 - o the ability to motivate and develop staff
- Excellent written* and oral communication skills, with the ability to present clear, well - structured reports, briefs and organisational business cases.
- Ability to provide critical insights, challenge and constructive, bespoke solutions to NCEO as an organisation.

****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

NCEO and University of Leicester Values

This role falls under the direct leadership and management of NCEO. We are committed to promoting responsible research and innovation practices in step with NERC and its parent body United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI). NCEO staff are expected to be responsible and accountable. Our objectives in research and professional work are to be accurate and to act with integrity. We encourage our staff to adopt NCEO core values by being respectful, inclusive and collaborative in approach across traditional boundaries, fostering personal and professional growth.

You will be expected to exhibit behaviour in line with the University values which are also relevant to NCEO:

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

Whilst this role falls under the direct leadership and direction of NCEO, you will be expected to exhibit behaviour that supports and aligns to the University's approach to and position on equity, diversity and inclusion:

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.

