Research Director, School of Social Science

Role and core objectives

The role of the Research Director is to provide strategic research leadership within the School.

The Research Director works closely with the Head of School, and as a member of the School Executive Group and School Policy and Resource Committee, to assist in the production and implementation of the School's Strategic Plan and Operational Plan.

The Research Director is charged with leading the School's Research Committee and represents the School at relevant Faculty and University meetings, in particular at the Humanities Research Strategy Committee (HRSC). Through membership of the HRSC the Research Director works with the Faculty Associate Dean for Research in developing and implementing Faculty policy pertaining to research strategy.

The Research Director works closely with the Research Support Services Hub to develop and implement research policy in order to support and enhance the School's research performance. The Research Director also has administrative support provided by the School.

Meetings

- Chair of School Research Committee – SRC (meets 4 times a year)
- Member of School Executive Group - SEG (meets every week)
- Member of School Policy and Resources Committee – SPRC (meets 6 times a year)
- Member of School Promotions Committee - SPC (meets 2-3 times a year)
- Member of Humanities Strategic Research Committee – HSRC (meets 6 times a year)
- Member of Faculty's Simon and Hallsworth Fellowship appointment committees (annual)

Communication/Administrative Lines

- Reporting to: Head of School; SEG; SPRC; School Board; Faculty Strategic Research Committee
- Communication with: HoDAs/DA research representatives, Research Centre Directors and other members of Research Committee
- Support from: the Research Support Services Hub and school administrative support team

Specific responsibilities

To work closely with the Head of School, the research hub, and other members of SOSS as appropriate in order to maintain and enhance the School's research activity, profile and international standing in line with the University's status as a major research-led university and its 2020 agenda.

Strategy

- Maintain a strategic overview of Research to inform the annual development and evolution of the School's Strategic and Operational Plan, with particular responsibility for Research.
- Steer the School's efforts to raise its research profile internationally across all its discipline areas; including preparations for internal and external research audits (eg. the REF), and responding to the results and recommendations of such audits.
- Work with the Head of School, SEG, SPRC, SRC and administrative staff to develop and manage the School Research Strategy and monitor its implementation.

- Work effectively with the Faculty's Associate Dean for Research on research strategy and related operational issues.
- Grow research income in line with the research KPI targets of the University's 2020 agenda.
- Secure investment by the University and external sources in existing and new research areas in the School.
- Support and promote existing and new research initiatives through developing effective and responsive school-wide structures for collegial consultation and the mobilization of our research capacity.
- Promote the School's engagement in new research opportunities; particularly in identifying and responding to major funding calls and in developing interdisciplinary collaborations within and beyond the School.
- Encourage and promote good practice within research activities (e.g. career development of research staff, ethical issues in research, sabbatical policy…)
- Represent the School on other research matters as requested by the Head of School or the Associate Dean for Research (for example at review meetings organized by the University's senior management team, or visits from the Research Councils and other external bodies).
- Advise, if necessary, the Head of School on the school workload allocation model.

Operational

Work closely with and steer the Research Support Services Hub in order to:-
- Identify and effectively communicate new research opportunities and ensure that proactive, relevant systems and services are in place to support the research-intensive environment of the School.
- Secure effective liaison with relevant functions across the school and elsewhere in the University (e.g. on postgraduate fellowships and studentships linked to research awards, post-award finance, press office for dissemination of research, conference organization).
- Implement, monitor and evaluate research strategy and the organization of the office's calendar of regular activities (e.g. the annual research report, the internal shortlisting for the Simon and Hallsworth appointments, Peer Review and Demand Management, DA Sabbatical Leave applications and reporting, annual review of SoSS Research Centres).

Reporting/Communication

- Act as a liaison point between University, Faculty, School and Discipline Areas on issues related to research.
- Take an active role in shaping Faculty and University policy on research.
- Participate in SPRC, SEG and other governance/management bodies at School, Faculty and University level as a representative of SoSS.
- Oversee the activities of relevant School committees.
- Provide day-to-day support of school research through communicating and liaising with SoSS staff.

Person specification

Essential skills, knowledge and experience:
Knowledge
- Knowledge of the research environment, policy agenda and priorities which the School is operating within (internal and external).

- Understanding of the operational structure and division of functional responsibilities within the School, and more broadly at Faculty and University level.

Skills
- Excellent leadership, organizational, consultation and delegation skills (for example applied in relation to preparing for and chairing committees, liaising within the school and externally, providing strategic research leadership as a member of SEG, SPRC and HSRC, working effectively with the school research office on strategic and operational issues).
- Flexibility and the ability to prioritise among competing demands.
- Considerable personal initiative and judgement in order to work effectively inside the University and externally.
- The ability to develop and implement a pertinent research strategy; including mobilizing senior academics and other key actors behind the School's vision.
- The ability to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing; including drafting strategic research documents tailored appropriately for difference audiences.

Experience
- Prior experience leading colleagues on pertinent academic projects, such as a major administrative role at Discipline level or as a PI leading a team on a large or complex research project.
- Completion of, or willingness to undertake, the University's Headstart leadership training or an equivalent course is desirable (e,g., Step into Leadership).

Term of Office

Normally three years.

Reward and Recognition

The Director of Research is a significant and demanding role requiring strategic and operational engagement. A significant workload allocation is attributed to this role (with appropriate financial allocation to the DA to cover immediate teaching needs), together with a one-semester period of research leave on completion of the role (in addition to the one-semester period of leave one is entitled to apply for after six semesters of service). The role of Director is recognised by the School Promotions Committee as contributing 'Service' to the School and demonstrating a senior level of 'Leadership'.

Non-pensionable salary enhancement of (currently) £5100.

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