Job Description

Research Excellence Framework Coordinator

Grade: 8

Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) Location: 2 Taviton Street, London WC1H 0BT

Reports to
The post holder reports to the REF Manager who is responsible for training and development and ensuring appropriate standards of performance and conduct.

Context
UCL is one of the world’s leading universities. Based in the heart of London, it is a modern, outward-looking institution with more than 12,000 academics, research staff and research students. At its establishment in 1826, UCL was radical and responsive to the needs of society, and this ethos – that excellence should go hand-in-hand with enriching society – continues today. UCL’s excellence extends across all the breadth of disciplines; from one of Europe’s largest and most productive hubs for biomedical science interacting with several leading London hospitals, to world-renowned centres for the built environment (UCL Bartlett) and fine art (UCL Slade School).

UCL’s present and former staff and students have included 29 Nobel Laureates. It is a truly international community: almost half of our students and nearly a third of staff are from outside the UK. More than half of its 41,500-member student community is engaged in graduate studies, with almost 6,000 of them pursuing research degrees.

In the most recent (2014) Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, UCL was rated the top university in the UK on the basis of ‘research power’ (grade point average x full-time equivalent researchers submitted), as well as the highest ‘power’ ratings for each element: research outputs, research environment and research impact. The REF confirmed UCL’s multidisciplinary strength, with outstanding results achieved across the subjects, ranging from biomedicine, science and engineering and the built environment to education, laws, social sciences, and arts and humanities.

Further details about UCL can be found at www.ucl.ac.uk and https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/working-ucl/why-ucl

The UCL Vice-Provost (Research) is responsible for:
- the strategy for – and the performance, distinctiveness and impact of – UCL’s research
- attracting research funding; recruiting and retaining the best researchers; securing the provision of a suitable research environment and infrastructure; research evaluation, including achieving the best possible results from external research assessment; and delivering innovative and effective approaches to research management and planning
- adapting and implementing the 2019 UCL Research Strategy in support of UCL 2034, including sustaining and growing our disciplinary excellence and developing cross-disciplinary approaches to global challenges (UCL 2034 Principal Theme 3)
- developing and providing strategic coordination of flagship initiatives
- oversight of research operations on behalf of the UCL research community
- external representation and engagement on research and related issues
- the activities of the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research)
- with the Provost and other Vice-Provosts, providing institutional leadership.
Three Pro-Vice-Provosts – responsible for the Doctoral School, Library Services and Artificial Intelligence – also report to the Vice-Provost (Research).

The **Office of the Vice-Provost (Research)** (OVPR) facilitates, supports and promotes UCL research through seven broad strands of activity:

- research coordination and planning
- researcher development, including through the Doctoral School
- cross-disciplinary development and delivery, including Grand Challenges and Research Domains
- research evaluation (including the REF) and research integrity
- research impact (the influence of research on the world), including communications, events and public policy engagement
- research policy – both developing internal policies, and influencing and responding to external policies
- research operations governance.

The above activities are supported by a professional services team of administrators. The operational work of the OVPR administrative team is both challenging and complex. Continuous change is typical of the environment in which the team works and thrives.

The Office is responsible for the implementation of the 2019 UCL Research Strategy in support of UCL 2034, including sustaining and growing our disciplinary excellence and developing cross-disciplinary approaches to global challenges (UCL 2034 Principal Theme 3).

Further details about the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) are available at [www.ucl.ac.uk/research](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research)

The 2019 UCL Research Strategy: presents a vision for how UCL can best support research over the next ten years; provides an adaptable framework for the pursuit of research and the activities of UCL’s researchers; sets a context for research undertaken at UCL in which discovery, analysis and invention are all part of the way UCL contributes to public good; and defines a supportive environment for individual researchers. The strategy presents nine objectives within three aims, alongside three cross-cutting themes:

**Aims** | **Objectives**
--- | ---
1 | Inspire and empower research leadership
2 | Cross-boundaries to increase engagement
3 | Deliver impact for public benefit

**Cross-cutting themes**

- **A**
  - Pursue a responsible research agenda
- **B**
  - Exert our institutional influence for the greater good
- **C**
  - Maintain a global perspective

**Main purpose of the job**

- To lead in the coordination and project management of UCL’s submission to Research England’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. The post holder will have specific responsibility in preparing and planning our submission to one the four REF Main Panels (Main Panel A: Medicine, health and life sciences, Main Panel B: Physical sciences, engineering and mathematics, Main Panel C: Social sciences, Main Panel D: Arts and humanities).
- To undertake cross-panel work, in liaison with the other panel coordinators, on specific aspects of REF data delivery.
- In undertaking these responsibilities, the post holder will liaise and communicate with staff in academic units, providing support and guidance regarding REF2021 submissions criteria and associated panel requirements. The post holder will also liaise with a broad range of other staff from across UCL’s faculties and professional services.
- To help UCL in furthering our reputation for world leading research, enabling us to maintain our competitiveness in research related league tables while also working to
maximise the Quality Research (QR) income associated with the exercise.

**Duties and responsibilities**

- To take specific responsibility for the coordination of a group of submissions to REF units of assessment (UoA) and to develop strong working relationships with UoA Leads and other staff in those units responsible for delivering the submissions.
- To work in areas of strategy implementation and development. The role holder will be required to work in a self-directed way in developing strategies and systems to meet the significant demands of Deans and UoA Leads in departments, while meeting the complementary, but sometimes differing, demands of the REF Strategy Group. Post holders will be developing localised strategies for delivering key aspects of the REF that will have a direct impact on the institution and our QR research income for the following six years. Role holders will, for example, be developing individual strategies for collecting environment data that meets the demands of a specific academic cohort and developing complex strategic modelling tools for mapping likely QR income for different scenarios.
- To monitor and coordinate progress of submission development through:
  - Production of regular status reports for the REF Manager, UoA Leads, Deans and the UCL REF Main Panel Working Groups;
  - Developing strategic modelling and mapping tools;
  - Convening regular review meetings with UoA leads to identify priority areas in light of status reports;
  - Convening regular review meetings with the REF support team and the Impact Team;
  - Agreeing work and development plans with UoA Leads and the Main Panel Working Groups in accordance with the planning timetable and within allocated resource;
  - Setting up any other informal network structures required to enable monitoring, to deliver training and to share best practice.
- To advise staff in academic departments or across other parts of the institution with regard to:
  - The interpretation of Research England’s guidance on submissions for REF2021 and the panel criteria;
  - The collation and preparation of data for their REF submissions.
- To optimise draft REF submissions, including:
  - Liaison with the relevant Professional Services (PS) Divisions with regard to collation and accuracy of specific REF data for which they are responsible;
  - Performing data validation and ensuring necessary amendments are made, where appropriate, in liaison with the academic departments and PS Divisions concerned;
  - Providing editorial overview of textual sections of submissions including Environment statements.
- To assist with the development and use of systems for the collation and preparation of REF data including:
  - System testing;
  - Training of staff in academic departments in the use of systems;
  - Managing, manipulating and monitoring publications metadata on UCL’s Research Publications system (RPS) to ensure rigorous standards of data quality.
- The post holder will be required to manage and coordinate one of UCL’s REF Main Panel Working Groups; responsibilities will include writing and preparing papers and responding to queries from colleagues. On occasion, the role holder may also be required to service one of the working groups. The role holder may also act as member of, one or more committees; these may include steering groups, set up to oversee UCL preparations for REF2021 as well as faculty or school level research committees. The post holder will be required to draft and present papers to these bodies on a regular basis. Additionally the role holder may be required to establish other groups to deliver specific aspects of the REF.
submission, and in these cases may be required to act as chair.

- To produce any ad hoc reports and statistical modelling of REF submissions as required for consideration by UoA Leads, the Vice-Provost (Research)’s REF Strategy Group and the relevant UCL Main Panel Working Group.
- To work closely with other colleagues in the OVPR, including the Research Impact Curation Team on impact oversight and the Head of Research Metrics on matters related to metrics including citations.
- To coordinate processes related to staff data including the production of reports for the Main Panel Working Groups.
- Where necessary, to lead the collection of physical outputs included in submissions under the main panel and, in liaison with other members of the UCL REF Team, ensure safe transmission to Research England’s REF Team.
- To support the UCL REF Team in the delivery of any communications strategy, including managing web materials, producing REF newsletters and updating social media accounts.
- To ensure effective communication with his / her line manager regarding work in progress, implementation of developments and emerging trends or issues. The post holder will work using his / her own initiative in a self-directed manner, referring complex problems or issues requiring policy decisions, where necessary, to the REF Manager.

Supervisory arrangements and relationships

- The post holder is required to use their own initiative in a self-directed manner, referring complex problems or issues related to policy decisions to their manager.
- The post holder will have significant project management responsibilities that will span all aspects of the REF submission. They will lead in the detailed planning of REF related activities, the scheduling and timing of initiatives such as facilitating training sessions, analysing departmental progress and reporting to key stakeholders that will include Deans of UCL faculties, Unit of Assessment Leads and members of the REF Strategy Group. The role will be driven by the requirement to achieve our submission goals within the constraints of the timetable imposed by the funding bodies. The role holder will be required to be familiar with project planning tools and strategies such as developing Gantt Charts, building financial modelling tools and undertaking risk analysis.
- The post holder is also expected to have regular direct interactions with the Vice-Provost (Research) as chair of UCL’s REF Strategy Group (REFSG), and Deans and Vice-Deans (Research) of UCL faculties, as well as the Director of Research Evaluation and members of the Research Impact Curation Support team.
- This job description reflects the present requirements of the post, and as duties and responsibilities change/develop, the job description will be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with the post holder.
- The post holder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager or Head of Department/Division.
- The post holder will actively follow UCL policies including Equal Opportunities policies and be expected to give consideration within their role as to how they can actively advance equality of opportunity and good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- The post holder will maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations.
## Person Specification

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Essential or Desirable</th>
<th>Assessment method (Application/Interview)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications, experience and knowledge</strong></td>
<td>E</td>
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<td>A first degree or equivalent experience gained within a professional context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of continuing professional development including regular attendance on internal and external study programmes.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>Administrative experience in higher education and/or in a large and complex organisation.</td>
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<td>A clear understanding of the workings and methodologies of the Research Excellence Framework 2021.</td>
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<td>A proven track record of engaging with colleagues at all levels to discuss, implement and deliver strategic initiatives.</td>
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<td>Experience of drafting formal policies for a large research organisation or similar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy and strategy development.</td>
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<td>Report-writing and committee servicing experience.</td>
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<td>An excellent understanding of World Wide Web technologies; using the internet to research and access information on a regular basis.</td>
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<td>Working in a project management role requiring coordination of a large data gathering exercise across an organisation.</td>
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<td>A/I</td>
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<td>A clear understanding of the organisational culture of a large research-intensive university (or similar type of research organisation).</td>
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<td><strong>Skills and abilities</strong></td>
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<td>Excellent interpersonal skills.</td>
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<td>Ability to work independently, managing and prioritising an often challenging workload.</td>
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<td>Excellent oral and written communication skills combined with proof-reading skills and the ability to research, draft, critique and present reports on complex issues to a broad range of audiences.</td>
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<td>Ability to absorb, understand and retain information, both verbal and written.</td>
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<td>Excellent organisational skills and the ability to prioritise in the face of competing demands and to meet tight deadlines.</td>
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<td>A high level of computer literacy and keyboard skills; knowledge of Microsoft Office applications, not least Word, Outlook and Excel.</td>
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<td>Ability to use web-based database systems and confidence in handling and manipulating large datasets.</td>
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<td>Excellent numeracy.</td>
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<td><strong>Personal attributes</strong></td>
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<td>Tact, discretion and an understanding of and respect for principles of confidentiality.</td>
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<td>A combination of personal initiative and the ability to work well as part of a team including assisting colleagues at short notice.</td>
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<td>Current knowledge, understanding and application of equal opportunities and diversity issues.</td>
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<td><strong>UCL Ways of Working for professional services</strong></td>
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<td>Listening closely and speaking with clarity to all colleagues, staff, students and partners</td>
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<td>Sharing relevant knowledge and experience</td>
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<td>Able to say ‘no’ when necessary</td>
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Apply

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