



Job Description

Research Ethics Officer

Grade: 7

Full-time Position (1.0 FTE)

Funding is available for one year in the first instance.

Department: Office of the Vice-Provost (Research)

Location: 2 Taviton Street, London WC1H 0BT

Reports to

Head of Research Integrity

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 **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.

Three Pro-Vice-Provosts – responsible for the Doctoral School, Library Services and Artificial Intelligence – also report to the Vice-Provost (Research).

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).

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	1.1	Support breadth and diversity
		1.2	Nurture, develop and celebrate those engaged with research
		1.3	Cultivate diverse forms of research leadership
2	Cross boundaries to increase engagement	2.1	Champion cross-disciplinarity
		2.2	Build and support partnerships
		2.3	Encourage our research to thrive beyond traditional boundaries
3	Deliver impact for public benefit	3.1	Champion a broad definition of research impact
		3.2	Foster open and engaged research
		3.3	Stimulate societal impact through cross-disciplinarity and collaboration

Cross-cutting themes

- A Pursue a responsible research agenda

- B Exert our institutional influence for the greater good
- C Maintain a global perspective

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

Main purpose of the job

- To manage and support the review of non-high risk applications for ethical review submitted to the UCL Research Ethics Committee (UCL REC) and to maintain an oversight of research ethics review processes and structures across the institution.
- To work with colleagues in OVPR to develop, revise and implement new policies and procedures in relation to research ethics.
- To provide advice and support to the UCL community on research ethics and the application process, including delivering training programmes relating to research ethics.

Duties and responsibilities

General

- To provide high-level professional support to the UCL’s Research Ethics Committee (REC) by leading and coordinating the review of applications submitted for Chairs Review, including all requests to amend and extend existing approval.
- To work closely with, and be guided by, the Co-Chairs of the UCL REC and the Research Ethics Officer (UCL REC) in the implementation of ethical review processes at UCL.
- To maintain an oversight of the research ethics review processes and structures across UCL including the transition to more devolved structures.
- To provide an advisory service to UCL researchers before, during and after the ethics application process.
- To support and assist in the promotion and implementation of UCL policies and procedures in relation to research governance and ethics including the sharing of best practice, including through the Research Ethics Reviewer’s Forum.
- To work with colleagues in the Research Integrity & Ethics team in the maintenance and development of

online support materials and guidance documents for staff and student.

- To keep abreast as appropriate of the changing external ethics environment including any advice / recommendations from relevant professional bodies and assist colleagues with disseminating this knowledge to the UCL research community.
- To act as a member of working groups set up in relation to research ethics and governance as necessary.

Ethics Review

- To take responsibility for the receipt and processing of non-high risk applications submitted to the UCL REC for Chair's Review, including assigning applications for review and managing any post-review actions.
- To undertake an initial assessment review of applications for Chairs Review, returning incomplete applications and referring applications to the UCL REC for full review or Faculty-based committees where appropriate.
- To assist with the review of non-high risk amendment requests and extensions to ethical approval, referring significant requests to the UCL REC, as well as the review of end of project reports where necessary.
- To approve modification and extension requests as well as post-approval action responses for non-high risk applications in consultation with the Co-Chair of the UCL REC or reviewer as appropriate.
- To monitor the progress of applications submitted for Chair's Review and to ensure that any pre- or post-approval actions are followed up.
- To support the handling of complaints as per the relevant complaints procedure.
- To receive and manage appeal requests, as per the UCL REC appeals procedure.
- To be jointly responsible for and manage the research ethics database, ensuring review decisions are accurately recorded.
- To maintain UCL's relationship with national and international ethics committees and other bodies as appropriate, e.g. NHS National Research Ethics Service, Association for Research Ethics, etc. acting as UCL's representative on such bodies as necessary.

- To represent UCL as appropriate on matters relating to ethics at external events and to provide guidance on ethical review to a range of internal and partner stakeholders.
- To provide secretarial support to the UCL Research Ethics Committee where necessary.

Governance

- To support the review of adverse events or incidents reported regarding research ethically approved by the UCL ethics system.
- To consider and participate in decisions relating to changes to policy and process in relation to research ethics across UCL.
- To assist with the drafting of the annual report to Research Governance Committee which will include a summary of decisions, changes to policies and processes and the result of annual monitoring.
- To assist and support the process of devolving ethics review to academic units by participating in discussions on current practice and procedures, and assisting with the identification of and resolution of areas for improvement.
- To liaise as necessary with UCL Safety Services and Data Protection teams to ensure that UCL policies in these areas are not breached in hosting a research project.

Other Duties

- To ensure effective communication with line manager and colleagues regarding work in progress, implementation of developments and emerging trends or issues.
- To carry out any other duties commensurate with the grade and purpose of the post as required by the Head of Research Integrity or the Vice-Provost (Research).
- Note: As duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the postholder.
- 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

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application / Interview)
Qualifications, experience and knowledge		
Educated to degree level or have equivalent qualifications or substantial experience gained within a professional context.	E	A
Evidence of continuing professional development including regular attendance on internal and external study programmes.	D	A
Knowledge of the organisational culture of a large research-intensive university (or similar type of research organisation).	E	A / I
Administrative experience preferably within higher education and/or in a large and complex organisation.	E	A / I
Experience in planning and prioritisation.	E	A / I
Knowledge of the policy and regulatory frameworks for research governance, research integrity and the ethics environment for the UK university sector.	D	A
Knowledge of a broad range of research ethics and integrity issues, including: misconduct allegations, staff development, student training, publications policy, intellectual property, recruitment and reward processes, data management and collaborative research.	D	A
Experience of the promotion of research integrity and ethics and coordinating activities raising awareness of research integrity issues.	D	A
Experience of developing and organising training events and directly delivering research ethics training to researchers.	D	A
Experience of committee servicing.	D	A
Skills and abilities		
Excellent interpersonal and oral and written communication skills and the ability to research, draft, critique and present reports on complex issues to a broad range of audiences.	E	A / I
Ability to work independently, managing and prioritising an often challenging workload.	E	A / I
Ability to work effectively as a member of a team with the willingness to work collaboratively, flexibly and effectively with colleagues at all levels, reprioritising where necessary at short notice.	E	A / I
Robust judgement in difficult cases with consequences for individuals and the organisation and the ability to provide clear grounds for decision to senior staff.	E	A / I
Ability to proactively review the service requirements for the role and the ability to develop and enhance the service offered.	E	A / I
Ability to relate research integrity issues to the broad range of other challenges found in undertaking cutting-edge research, and balance integrity issues against other requirements appropriately.	E	A / I
Excellent IT skills (Microsoft Office, databases and workflow applications, internet, web development etc.).	E	A
Personal attributes		
Strong commitment to due confidentiality, fairness, tact and discretion.	E	A / I
Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, sharing information and ideas, and supporting colleagues.	E	A / I

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application / Interview)
A willingness to work on and implement UCL policy around challenging issues such as animal research, relations to the defence, extractive or other industries.	E	A / I
Current knowledge and understanding of, and commitment to, equal opportunities and diversity issues as they relate to this role.	E	A
UCL Ways of Working for professional services		
Committed to providing a responsive and helpful service.	E	I
Using evidence and quality data to support approaches.	E	I
Listening to others and supporting them with compassion.	E	I

Apply

To apply for this position visit:

ucl.ac.uk/jobs