CANDIDATE BRIEF

Senior Project Manager for UKRAS STEPS Research Technician Strategic Technical Platform, Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

Salary: Grade 9 (£56,021 – £64,914 p.a.)

Reference: EPSME1162

Closing date: Sunday 12 May 2024

Fixed-term until 31 December 2026

We are open to discussing flexible working arrangements

Senior Project Manager for UKRAS STEPS Research Technician Strategic Technical Platform, School of Mechanical Engineering.

Are you a passionate and experienced individual with a background in engineering project management? Are you seeking a fresh and exciting opportunity to take on a senior role in a new initiative aimed at transforming the UK ecosystem for research technicians in Robotics and Autonomous Systems?

In this role, you will lead the implementation of all strategic operational aspects of UKRAS STEPS, playing a pivotal role in driving new initiatives and collaborations. With the support of a dedicated project support officer and an experienced leadership team, you will oversee the operations of this £1.9 million programme. UKRAS STEPS is committed to equal opportunities and encourages applications from individuals of all backgrounds who meet the personal specifications.

The UKRAS Network has successfully brought together academics working in robotics and autonomous systems (RAS) across 37 universities in the UK. UKRAS STEPS aims to replicate this success for all technicians, laboratory, and facility managers working in RAS within the same network.

As part of its mission, UKRAS STEPS will establish a dynamic, community-driven strategic technology platform that empowers individuals to develop their skills while fostering an inclusive community. This initiative aims to enhance the UK environment and support the delivery of world-class RAS research in the country.

Key objectives include:
- Enhancing Individual Technical Knowledge, Skills, and career development of RT in RAS in the UK;
- Transforming the UK environment for RT through networking, shared knowledge, community driven activities, celebrating and publicising success, international collaboration, and national advocacy;
- Delivering a flagship programme, that is professionally managed to be inclusive, ethical, programmatically sustainable, and environmentally conscious.

You will be based at the [Real Robotics](#) lab, University of Leeds, which currently receives direct funding exceeding £3 million from research projects with a cumulative value of >£20 million. Our research portfolio encompasses a range of projects, such as the development of robotic systems for inspecting and repairing urban infrastructure, as well as the manufacturing of robots, including world class robot [fabrication facilities](#). Current major externally funded projects include [Pipebots](#), [Trustworthy autonomy node in Verification](#), and Strength in Places funding which is associated with the Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute ([the AMP Institute](#)). The real robotics lab consists of 10 full-time academics and technicians, >10 post-doctoral researchers, and >20 PhD students, collectively contributing to the vibrant and dynamic research environment.

What does the role entail?

As Senior Project Manager for UKRAS STEPS, your main duties will include:
- Responsibility for the strategic implementation of all operational aspects of UKRAS STEPS. This entails working with partners, strategic task group leads, and the executive committee, to set strategic goals and execute a range of translational activities, for example: the organisation of events, such as the annual UKRAS Technicians' Festival & coordination of multiple strategic task groups (managing the distribution of funding, oversight of group milestones and reporting requirements).
- Cultivating strong collaborative academic and industrial connections and sustaining excellent working relationships with senior national and international stakeholders, including funding agencies, government entities, industry, policy makers, directors, and senior university leadership.
- Developing and leading a multi-faceted communications strategy and engaging extensively with several platforms on social media, draft press releases, updating websites and developing internal systems such as mailing lists for network event coordination.
- Lead the design and implementing robust processes and reporting systems to ensure the timely provision of financial and technical information required by UKRI and network members. This includes maintaining a cybersecurity strategy that upholds rigorous standards.
- Managing the programme finances and, with assistance from the programme directors, ensure the project adheres to all key milestones within the designated timeframe and budget.

- Providing line management for a project support officer, who will assist you in fulfilling these duties.

These responsibilities provide the framework for the position and should not be viewed as an exhaustive list. Other reasonable duties may be necessary in accordance with the grade of the post.

What will you bring to the role?

As the Senior Project Manager for UKRAS STEPS, you will have:
- A degree or equivalent qualification in a relevant scientific or technological discipline and/or possess a relevant professional qualification;
- Demonstrate substantial expertise in the following areas: delivering complex multi-disciplinary projects, project management, relationship management, and coordinating internal activities to meet the delivery expectations of both internal and external clients;
- Experience in the higher education sector or an equivalent substantial relevant background in another sector, demonstrating progression through a series of increasingly challenging work roles;
- Proven leadership skills, independence, and the ability to implement new organisational methods, processes, and procedures. Additionally, you should be adept at developing operational plans and coordinating their execution;
- Business and political acumen with strong leadership and relationship management skills as well as strategic and operational experience;
- Demonstrate extensive experience in developing and managing financial and other resources. This includes preparing, managing, and monitoring budgets, as well as preparing and analysing management reports to inform financial and strategic decision-making;
- Experience in line managing staff, with the ability to enable and empower them to achieve broader project outcomes and career development;
- Possess excellent communication skills, as evidenced by successful presentations at events and workshops.

You may also have:
- A higher-level degree or equivalent in science, technology, or business;
- Evidence of significant operation innovation within previous roles, demonstrating specific positive transformation of project outcomes;

- Experience in Robotics and autonomous systems;
- Experience of intellectual property development, licensing or spin-outs.

How to apply

You can apply for this role online; more guidance can be found on our How to Apply information page. Applications should be submitted by 23.59 (UK time) on the advertised closing date.

Contact information

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:

Professor Robert Richardson, School of Mechanical Engineering,
Tel: +44 (0)113 343 2156
Email: R.C.Richardson@leeds.ac.uk

Additional information

Please note: If you are not a British or Irish citizen, you will require permission to work in the UK. This will normally be in the form of a visa but, if you are an EEA/Swiss citizen and resident in the UK before 31 December 2020, this may be your passport or status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Faculty and School Information
Further information is available on the research and teaching activities of the Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences, and the School of Mechanical Engineering.

A diverse workforce
As an international research-intensive university, we welcome students and staff from all walks of life and from across the world. We foster an inclusive environment where all can flourish and prosper, and we are proud of our strong commitment to student education. Within the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences we are dedicated to diversifying our community and we welcome the unique contributions that individuals can bring, and particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people; people who identify as LGBT+; and people with disabilities. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences are proud to have been awarded the Athena SWAN Silver Award from the Equality Challenge Unit, the national body that promotes equality in the higher education sector. Our equality and inclusion webpage provides more information.

Working at Leeds
We are a campus-based community and regular interaction with campus is an expectation of all roles in line with academic and service needs and the requirements of the role. We are also open to discussing flexible working arrangements. To find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area visit our Working at Leeds information page.

Information for disabled candidates
Information for disabled candidates, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our Accessibility information page or by getting in touch with us at hr@leeds.ac.uk

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Any offer of appointment will be in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations in our Criminal Records information page.