



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CANDIDATE BRIEF

**Head of the School of Physics and Astronomy,
Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences**



Salary: Competitive

Reporting to: Professor Nora de Leeuw

Reference: ASN-93417

Closing date: Friday 25 April at 5.00pm BST

Location: Leeds main campus (with scope for hybrid working)

We are open to discussing flexible working arrangements.

Head of the School of Physics and Astronomy

Can you provide the strategic vision and leadership necessary for the School to successfully develop and deliver its plans through inspiring, motivating and developing staff to achieve their full potential? Are you passionate about delivering world-leading research and an exceptional student experience in an international and interdisciplinary context?

You will lead and manage the School of Physics and Astronomy, maximising strategic opportunities arising from the changing landscape of higher education and the University's strategic plan, whilst leading and delivering excellence in research and education.

You will be an active member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences and the University's Leadership Forum, promoting a coordinated approach to delivering innovative strategic academic development. You will be taking on a significant and complex leadership role in the School and Faculty and must be able to lead with a clear vision, engaging others across the School, Faculty and University.

You will have the leadership skills, ambition and creativity to take forward the development and delivery of the School's academic strategy and objectives. You will thrive on working collaboratively in a busy and dynamic environment to enhance the reputation of the School with a focus on quality and excellence.

Academic credibility is essential. You will have a sustained track record of excellence in research and/or student education, with demonstrable evidence to provide leadership in both, combined with excellent skills in team working and collaboration.

This represents an opportunity for a senior scholar proficient in inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary working to shape collectively the future of a diverse School at a leading Russell Group University. You will be able to obtain very quickly a detailed working knowledge of the School's complex, multi-disciplinary operations, including a wide variety of research and a range of programmes of both undergraduate and postgraduate study.



Main duties and responsibilities

University and Faculty Responsibilities

As Head of School, you will:

- Contribute actively to the University's strategy and performance through membership of the Leadership Forum, University level committees and groups, and the Faculty Executive Committee, with a direct reporting line to the Executive Dean of the Faculty;
- Work collaboratively with your Faculty leadership colleagues to ensure decisions and strategic planning are made in the best interest of the Faculty and University as a whole;
- Consistently promote and deliver on Faculty agreed strategies and objectives both internally and externally;
- Work in partnership with the Executive Dean, the Faculty Pro-Deans (for Student Education; Research & Innovation; International; and the Southwest Jiaotong University-Leeds Joint School), other Heads of School and Professional Service leads to develop and deliver the Faculty's academic strategies;
- Lead programmes of work to successful delivery as requested by the Executive Dean, and act for the Executive Dean as necessary;
- Represent the Faculty and University regionally, nationally and internationally, influencing external developments and sustaining partnerships to enhance our external profile and generate benefits for the University as a whole;
- Act as a role model for the University's expected leadership behaviours, promoting a culture of equality and inclusion, and supporting our sustainability agenda.

School Leadership

As Head of School, you will:

- Provide strategic vision, direction and inspirational leadership for the academic development and delivery of the School's plans;
- Support and promote collaboration across all academic activities;
- Promote excellence in student education with a focus on the student experience and measurable outcomes;
- Support and encourage excellence in research, innovation and impact, providing an enabling environment;



- Support and deliver the international strategy and objectives through engagement in building a strong international profile for the School and promoting its reputation and impact;
- Take responsibility and accountability for the overall performance of the School through its finances and cost control, staff and structures, processes and procedures, monitoring performance against plans;
- Lead, manage and support the development of all School staff, ensuring that talent management and succession planning are delivered, and promoting service excellence and quality enhancement;
- Promote and deliver improvement in equality and inclusion, including through internal action and advocacy and engagement with relevant external bodies;
- Work collaboratively with professional service leads to ensure the delivery of high quality student and staff experiences;
- Ensure that appropriate structures and mechanisms are in place for the effective leadership of the School, and lead the School Management Team comprising academic and professional service leads;
- Ensure the effective implementation of the University's health, safety and wellbeing policies and management systems within the School and support our sustainability agenda.

These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

You will report to the Executive Dean of the Faculty.



Qualifications and skills

As Head of School, you will have:

- Experience of providing academic leadership in an academic school with a clear vision and the ability to engage others in that vision;
- The ability to respond flexibly and with resilience to the demands of delivering a complex leadership role, and respond positively to changing priorities;
- A breadth and depth of academic expertise in research and/or teaching to build credibility and influence at all levels, internally and externally;
- Experience of developing and implementing strategy, demonstrating an ability to think and plan strategically, articulate priorities and imperatives, and deliver change;
- A highly developed awareness of internal and external political issues and higher education regulation with proven ability to operate effectively within these different environments;
- Significant creativity and judgement and the willingness to suggest and try new and creative approaches to problems;
- Highly developed communication skills with the ability to build and maintain effective and productive working relationships internally and externally;
- A demonstrable commitment to creating an environment for staff and students that is inclusive, promotes equality and supports diversity;
- Evidence of effective and appropriate delegation, providing and responding to constructive feedback, monitoring and addressing performance, and building trust and teamwork;
- Evidence of success in delivering results, effectively managing people, finances, and other resources to achieve these.

Terms of Appointment

As part of our ongoing recognition of, and commitment to, leadership roles at the University of Leeds, senior leadership appointments are made on an ongoing (not termed) basis. These roles require significant focus and will require the post holder to use their judgment as regards the allocation of their time. However, we would ordinarily expect leadership responsibilities in such senior roles to absorb circa 0.8 FTE, leaving the remainder of time for the pursuit of your academic activity. Any additional support will be by negotiation with the Faculty Executive Dean.



How to apply

Closing Date: Friday 25 April at 5.00pm BST.

The preferred method of application is online at www.berwickpartners.co.uk/93417.

If you are unable to apply online please email your application to response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk.

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process.

For detailed information on how we process your personal data, please review our privacy policy on our website <https://www.berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-policy/>.

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do **NOT** send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Informal consultation

If you have any queries or would like more information in regard to this document, please contact:

Elizabeth James, Partner and Head of Education Practice

Email: Elizabeth.James@berwickpartners.co.uk



Additional information

The University of Leeds

The University, established in 1904, is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK. We are renowned globally for the quality of our education and research.

The strength of our academic expertise combined with the breadth of disciplines we cover, provides a wealth of opportunities and has a real cultural, economic, societal and environmental impact.

The University strives to achieve academic excellence within an ethical framework informed by our values of integrity, equality and inclusion, community and professionalism.

Leeds is truly a community, with more than 38,000 students from 170 different countries, over 9,000 staff of 100 different nationalities and we are in touch with more than 281,000 alumni in 190 different countries. A member of the Russell Group of universities, we are one of the UK's top ten research institutions and one of the UK's most prestigious and diverse universities.

Highlights include:

- Leeds is ranked in the top 100 universities in the QS World University Rankings 2025.
- The results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 identified that 90% of University of Leeds research has a quality rating of "world-leading" or "internationally excellent".
- The latest High Fliers report, The Graduate Market in 2024, has ranked Leeds as the fourth-most targeted university in the UK by graduate recruiters.
- We contribute £1.3 billion every year to the UK economy and students add close to £200m of international revenue into the City Region each year.



Values

The [University's core values](#) are as follows:

- Collaboration: We work together to achieve our goals and ambitions
- Compassion: We are caring and considerate in our words and actions
- Inclusivity: We are a community where everyone is welcome and belongs
- Integrity: We are open and honest in our words and actions.

Faculty and School Information

The **School of Physics and Astronomy** has a 140-year history of nationally and internationally leading research and teaching. Over 75 academic, academic-related and research staff, 20 support and technical staff and 80 research students combine with 500 undergraduates to form a lively community in an established research focused university.

At an Undergraduate level there are no fewer than eight courses available that also offer opportunities to study abroad and work placements. There are three MSc options and a lively post graduate research environment.

Facilities in the School of Physics and Astronomy enable students to build upon their expertise. This means they can confidently move into industry or further study. There are purpose-built teaching facilities based in the Sir William Henry Bragg Building. The laboratories used by undergraduate and masters students are equipped with the latest technology for practical, hands-on learning which is very much the approach across all courses. Astrophysics students have access to an observatory, situated at the top of the said building. This purpose-built facility includes two 35cm telescopes, complete with sensitive CCD detectors capable of multi-wavelength imaging.

There are also dedicated collaborative theory lab spaces which enable students and academics to come together and engage in collaborative work. This allows students to join a community of researchers committed to exploring theoretical physics and leveraging state-of-the-art resources for comprehensive academic growth.



REF 2021 saw 99% of the School's research as being "world leading" or "internationally excellent. 100% of submitted Impact Case Studies were "world leading" or "internationally excellent." Research activity covers the following main areas:

- Star and planetary system formation;
- Spintronics in condensed matter;
- Experimental biophysics and bio-nanoscience;
- Dynamics of polymers and complex fluids;
- Quantum information theory and its applications.

Collective expertise is being applied to the development of sustainable energy harvesting and storage, and towards translation into healthcare and medicine.

Research with wider economic impact includes the development of functionalised nano-materials for use in photo-voltaics and in the catalysis of methanol oxidation, the micro-bubble delivery of medication to cancerous tissue, and quantum sensing applications for medical imaging.

There are strong links with the Astbury Centre for Structural Molecular Biology, the Bragg Centre for Materials Research, and the Priestley Centre for Climate Futures.

The **Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences** was established on 1 August 2019, integrating the former Faculties of Engineering and Physical Sciences to build on and expand existing strengths. It has expertise across a wide range of disciplines and staff who deliver outstanding student education and research within the following eight Schools:

- Chemical and Process Engineering;
- Chemistry;
- Civil Engineering;
- Computer Science
- Electronic and Electrical Engineering;
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering; and
- Physics and Astronomy.



The Faculty provides the context in which to promote our academic excellence and to offer a compelling narrative to all stakeholders, including students and potential students, potential research partners, research councils and other research funders. In recent years, there had been increasingly close collaboration between the two former Faculties, including in doctoral training through the EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training in Fluid Dynamics, Soft Matter and Functional Interfaces, Complex Particulate Produces and Processes, and Bioenergy. Both Faculties had important external academic links with national research institutes such as the Alan Turing, Rosalind Franklin and Henry Royce institutes and each has industrial partners in common.

The integration provides significant opportunity to grow further our interdisciplinary research and education across the Faculty and beyond. In education, there will be greater scope for complementarity in programmes, which are interdisciplinary in nature with opportunities to refresh the curriculum with a greater emphasis on discovery and employability. In research, it is anticipated that there will be increased success with funding organisations, such as EPSRC, and better interaction with the Industrial Challenge Strategy and Global Challenges Research funds.

The Faculty in Numbers

The Faculty employs over 1000 staff and currently has around 8,600 students; 7,400 are in Leeds, of which 5,500 are on undergraduate programmes and 1,900 are postgraduate students, with a further 1,200 undergraduates at our Joint School with South West Jiaotong University in China. The Faculty's total planned income for 2024/2025 is circa £208 million, of which £56 million is research income.

Student Education

The Schools within the Faculty have an excellent track record of recruiting outstanding students, delivering an excellent student experience and supporting our graduates to achieve the best possible outcomes, both at Leeds and beyond.

Research and Innovation

Each School within the Faculty has a clear research strategy that focuses on maintaining and growing well-defined areas of core research excellence, many of which underpin our multidisciplinary research investments.



Capital Developments

The University is undergoing a significant capital programme, with major projects relating to the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences. These include the recent £100 million investment in the Sir William Henry Bragg Building, an integrated space for Engineering and Physical Sciences to provide greater opportunities for researchers to collaborate across disciplines.

Further information is available on the research and teaching activities of the [Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences](#), and the [School of Physics and Astronomy](#).

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.

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.

Information for disabled candidates

Information for disabled candidates, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found under the 'Accessibility' heading on our [How to Apply](#) information page or by getting in touch by emailing HR via 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.

