



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CANDIDATE BRIEF

Operations Director – Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission, Faculty of Environment



Salary: Grade 9 (£59,139 – £68,529 p.a. depending on experience)

Reporting to: Rosa Foster

Reference: ENVEE1826

Fixed term for 24 months to complete specific time limited work

Location: University of Leeds (with scope for hybrid working)

We are open to discussing flexible working arrangements

Operations Director – Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission, Faculty of Environment

Overview of the Role

Do you have a successful track record in leading, engaging, integrating and developing diverse teams of stakeholders and senior leaders towards coherent climate action?

We are looking for an operational leader to lead a complex & agile programme of partnership initiatives & collaborations driving societal change across the Yorkshire & Humber Region, inspiring and enabling system level change locally, nationally and internationally.

The climate crisis is the most significant challenge the world faces. The science is clear and, at the University of Leeds, we are highly focused on impact – it is our most important contribution to make a positive difference in the world. As a research-intensive university, we are perfectly placed to help deliver unparalleled collaboration at scale across institutions and nations. Our strategy focusses on creating and working with community, culture and impact, combining our global outlook with a keen awareness of the importance of local, regional and national impact. Our Climate Plan is at the heart of what we are doing to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, locally and globally, while also contributing to a healthier, greener and fairer place to live, work and study.

Originally developed as part of the Place Based Climate Action Network, the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission was created to catalyse evidence-based, collaborative action to address these crises by linking the global outlook and big-picture science to on-the-ground impact at a local, regional and national scale. The Operations Director, a new position, will play a central role in driving this activity by leading the prioritisation and implementation of the Climate Commission's work.

About the Commission

The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission (YHCC) is an independent advisory body working with public, private and third sector (i.e. NGOs and community-based) organisations across the region. Through the approach laid out in its Climate Action Plan, the YHCC works across four pillars of climate action: supporting rapid



decarbonisation; promoting climate resilience; protecting and restoring nature; and facilitating just (i.e. a fair and inclusive) transitions across the region.

The independent Chair is supported by four political Vice Chairs that represent each of the sub regions of Yorkshire. Over the last 18 months, the YHCC has adopted a membership model, creating Associates and Affiliates who also support the Commission's work in a range of ways. The YHCC draws on its Commissioners expertise through a number of routes: leading flagship projects; chairing & contributing to core groups; or providing strategic overview of the work of the Commission as a whole.

The YHCC is in an exciting phase of work, having launched nine flagship projects aimed at realising systems level change in areas such as decarbonising the energy sector; place-based interventions for climate adaptation; enabling investment and transitioning the way we use and manage our land and water to benefit us all and support nature's recovery.

About the role

The YHCC is supported by the Climate Commissions team hosted by the University of Leeds. The Climate Commissions' team support both the YHCC and the Leeds Climate Commission and is funded by a mix of private and public sector donations, research grant funding and funding from the University of Leeds Climate Plan. This role is wholly funded by donations from partners who want to see strong climate action and leadership driving positive change for the people and environment of Yorkshire and the Humber. You will be accountable to the Climate Commissions' Director who provides strategic oversight and leadership for both Commissions.

You will represent the YHCC and the University of Leeds through building relationships with senior local, sub regional and national policy makers. You will build and work effectively with existing private and third sector collaborations to support businesses and organisations, from micro-enterprises to large anchor institutions, to take effective climate action. You will build relationships with researchers across the institution, Yorkshire's Universities and beyond to ensure the Commission's work is drawing on the best and contributing to current, research.

You will also champion and embody the principles of a fair and just transition, ensuring that the work of the Commission is focussed on supporting the most affected and the



most vulnerable, as well as ensuring that seldom heard communities are able to engage with and influence policy development and implementation.

Because the University both host and provide considerable funding to support the Climate Commissions' team, you will also support the Director to provide clear progress reports to the University's Climate Principles Programme Board on the YHCC's work and progress as required.

You will actively develop your expertise relating to climate change, biodiversity loss and just transitions, including the latest scientific information, the changing policy environment and impacts on the ground, drawing on knowledge within the region, nationally and internationally.

Main duties and responsibilities

- Working with the Director and the Commission's Leadership Team to develop and lead the implementation of a programme of flagship projects that enable the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Action Plan, providing the strategic framework for climate action across the region, maintaining an overview of the synergies and multi-benefit opportunities and co-dependencies across projects, work programmes and groups;
- Being responsible for the oversight and performance management of the project portfolio ensuring delivery of agile projects across the region;
- Leading the current operating model of the Commission, and developing an informed strategy to deliver effective governance, risk management, communications, financial reporting, impact monitoring and reporting (including post project reviews), securing funding and membership management;
- Operational oversight of two of the YHCC's 'Core Groups': Communities and Engagement Group and the Regional Picture and Evidence Group;
- Identifying, assessing and developing new project or work programme opportunities, determining which become flagship projects, regularly reviewing the existing programme and organising the capacity and resource of the Commission to focus on the most effective initiatives. This include identifying, cultivating, and securing major strategic funding opportunities;
- Leading and managing the Commissions team (currently c.5 FTE, with scope to grow if external funding is secured) to ensure strategic priorities are delivered whilst ensuring they are supported, able to develop and grow through



professional career development and succession planning, are working in accordance with the University's policies and are an integral part of the SEE's Sustainability Research Institute;

- Working in concert with the Director, lead the development of a programme of Commission meetings including regional collaboration events that are informative and engaging (including two key annual events: the 'Whole Commission' event and the Climate Action Pledge Networking event), as well as supporting the progression of key areas of work, creating a sense of cohesion across large groups of diverse stakeholders;
- Regular reporting to the YHCC Leadership Group on YHCC resource management, including finance and people and the monitoring of appropriate goals and metrics;
- Nurture and maintain strong collaborative relationships with internal and external partners and stakeholders, across the Commissions' diverse network of regional leaders, funders, delivery partners and senior decision-makers, locally and nationally;
- Through effective working with the relevant teams within the University, including the Sustainability Team (Living Labs) and the Priestley Centre for Climate Futures, you will work with the Director to ensure effective alignment between the University, the city and the region's climate actions;
- Working in partnership with the Leeds Climate Commission Programme Manager and the Policy and Public Affairs Manager to embed smooth working between scales (city & region) and that the policy, public affairs and communications workstreams are well informed and supported;
- Working with the Director and the Strategic Overview Group to develop and shape an appropriate sustainable model for the Commission and develop and deliver a transition plan to those new arrangements by 2029;
- Co-developing with the Chair and Director the Commission's strategies (e.g. funding, engagement, communications, data management etc), providing support, advice and challenge to ensure they (the strategies) draw on operational expertise and learning from the Leadership Group, as well as the strategic insights from the Commission's Strategic Overview Group;
- Being a member of the School of Earth and Environment team contributing to and leading, discussions and meetings relevant to Climate Principles workstreams (& in particular the Net Zero Cities theme), in addition to attending meetings to present reports on key issues, projects and progress in own area and input and support colleagues in other areas;



- Building and maintaining strong collaborative relationships with Heads of School, Institutes, Pro-Deans and Services as well as wider stakeholders, both within the Faculty of Environment and wider University and externally;
- Undertaking University projects and initiatives relevant to the role, as required and as capacity permits;
- Liaising and advancing partnership working with colleagues in HR, finance, facilities, health and safety and IT to maintain an effective team, systems and processes.

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.

Qualifications and skills

Essential

- Direct experience of leading complex partnerships that include a wide range of partners across Yorkshire and the Humber;
- Significant experience of successfully managing multiple major and complex projects and programmes, from inception through to completion and an ability to make informed decisions with agility based on business and strategic need;
- Knowledge of what the climate action priorities are for the region, what the strategic delivery challenges are associated with them and what the opportunities are to overcome them;
- An ability to apply systems thinking to explore, understand and assess the wider impact of decisions complemented by excellent verbal and written communication skills with the ability to present complex information clearly and concisely to executive stakeholders;
- Strong financial acumen including experience of managing multiple budgets, different funding sources and financial reporting;
- Strong, purposeful and significant leadership experience, gained in a complex challenging operating environment, working at a senior level with a track record of prioritising and leading multifaceted, competing demands on the resource and capacity of an organisation, and people management skills of diverse teams;
- Experience of working with partners and collaborators across sectors and industries, including senior leaders in the public, private and not-for-profit



sectors, and to build collaborations across university networks to increase the impact of academic research and how this translates into real world implementation;

- Negotiation, communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to articulate priorities, and effectively to engage and influence others. You will be able to demonstrate an ability to deliver through people that are outside your direct line management, are predominantly outside your organisation and often work in different corporate or sectoral cultures;
- A background in a scientific discipline (ideally interdisciplinary with practical/operational delivery experience in natural, physical or social science projects).

Desirable

- Experience leading and influencing within the private sector, driving change and challenging established operating principles;
- Experience in managing conflicting priorities and resolving them to commonly supported outcomes in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Advanced degree in a related field (e.g. MBA, or advanced Programme Management).

Additional information

Please note: If you are not a British or Irish citizen, from 1 January 2021 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.

Please note that this post may be suitable for sponsorship under the Skilled Worker visa route but first-time applicants might need to qualify for salary concessions. For more information please visit: www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa

For research and academic posts, we will consider eligibility under the Global Talent visa. For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/global-talent>

Find out more about the [Faculty of Environment](#)



Find out more about the [School of Earth and Environment](#)

Find out more about our [Research and Associated Facilities](#)

Find out more about [equality in the faculty](#)

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.

Our University

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/School of Environment 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, those who belong to a minority ethnic community; people who identify as LGBT+; and disabled people. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

The Faculty of Environment has received a prestigious Athena SWAN silver award from [Advance HE](#), the national body that promotes equality in the higher education sector. This award represents the combined efforts of all schools in the Faculty and shows the positive actions we have taken to ensure that our policies, processes and ethos all promote an equal and inclusive environment for work and study.

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](mailto:hr@leeds.ac.uk).



Criminal record information

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.

