



UK Research
and Innovation

Chief of Operational Delivery

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Innovation

Candidate Prospectus
March 2025

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Candidate Prospectus
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About UKRI

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is an independent, non-departmental public body, which invests £8bn per annum in research and innovation. We bring together nine executive council partners (the seven Research Councils, plus Innovate UK, and Research England) with a shared vision to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. UKRI also provides coordinated strategic advice to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on the balance of funding between research disciplines.

We employ 8,000 staff who support some of the world's most exciting and challenging research projects. We develop and operate some of the most remarkable scientific facilities in the world and work collaboratively with industry, academia and government in exciting partnerships. We are pushing the frontiers of human knowledge through blue skies research and delivering benefits for UK society and the economy through world-class research and business-led innovation.

About the role

The Chief of Operational Delivery is an executive leadership role, financially minded, with responsibility to oversee and deliver operational management across a broad range of pan-UKRI operational delivery functions.

The Chief of Operational Delivery will work closely with members of the Executive and Operational Leadership Team to achieve the successful strategic leadership, management, and effective operation of UKRI. As a member of the Operational Leadership Team and observer at Executive Committee the Chief of Operational Delivery will contribute to discussions and decision-making at Executive level and will bring a dynamic, service-oriented and commercial mindset to UKRI planning and operations.

As a senior executive, the Chief of Operational Delivery will be entrusted with leading critical operational initiatives, applying sound judgment to ensure all decisions are in the best interest of the organisation, its stakeholders, and its future. The Chief of Operational Delivery will develop and implement operational strategies and plans that align with the short- and long-term objectives developed in tandem with the CEO and CFO, and wider Executive to deliver the UKRI Strategy.



The CFO leads the Operational Leadership Team (OLT), namely:

- **Chief People Officer**
- **Chief Information Officer**
- **Chief of Investment Planning and Strategy**
- **Finance Director**
- **Legal Director and General Counsel**
- **Change Implementation Leader**
- **Chief of Staff**
- **Chief of External Affairs and Communication**

The Chief of Operational Delivery reports to the Chief Finance Officer, who sits alongside the CEO as one of the two executive members of the UKRI Board.

Key accountabilities



The Chief of Operational Delivery is accountable for:

- Deputising for the CFO when required, including as chair of the People Finance and Operations Committee
- Driving high performance across the pan-UKRI operations portfolio, facilitating clear and collective support for UKRI operational integration and ensuring collaborative working with operational teams across the organisation; with a deep understanding of the business landscape, the role will be expected to make key operational decisions that impact the organisation's success, while navigating uncertainty and aligning functions towards a unified vision
- Developing an effective framework to measure and report on operational delivery performance across the organisation
- Developing the culture and effectiveness of funding services, and working with the Funding Service Delivery Authority to oversee schemes, policy, and process for funding across UKRI, considering how best to support the strategic objectives of UKRI's business areas in delivering their funding opportunities.

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- Overseeing our commercial services for the delivery of commercial excellence across UKRI, leading on innovation and best practice across the whole commercial lifecycle and delivering whole-life value for money, working within the constraints of public sector regulations
- Influencing an organisational culture that values effective commercial input, innovation, procurement excellence, and supply chain management
- Leading the office estates team and teams responsible for pan-UKRI security, resilience and health and safety functions, and the office estates team. Provide a point of coordination for equivalent federated functions across the organisation as required.
- Embedding environmental sustainability into the management and development of UKRI's estates, ensuring our operations align with organisational ambitions and contribute to achieving net-zero targets
- Oversight of a budget of approximately £15 million and direct leadership of functional areas comprising around 135 FTE, ensuring effective resource allocation, operational efficiency, and delivery of strategic objectives.
- Providing matrix leadership and strategic influence across the entire organisation, including Council Chief Operating Officers and functional areas, to drive alignment, collaboration, and effective service delivery
- Ensuring that there is a proportionate and flexible Business Continuity Management (BCM) Framework in place and that BCM arrangements across UKRI (and its critical supply chains) reduce risk to within appetite; in times of crisis or unexpected challenges, this individual will act as the tactical lead on all incident response and recovery efforts. They will be the go-to person for navigating high-pressure situations, making swift decisions, and coordinating resources to resolve operational issues across UKRI, ensuring minimal disruption and a rapid recovery.
- Providing strategic oversight and accountability on behalf of UKRI as both an owner and customer of UK SBS, ensuring that services meet operational needs, drive efficiency, and align with the priorities of UKSBS owner and user groups, including DSIT and other government departments.
- Building and maintaining an effective management team; leading and managing high performing teams to get the best from others, and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- Keeping abreast of national and international policy and practice affecting operations, and the opportunities and risks presented.

Your skills and experience

We understand that individuals might hesitate to submit an application if they don't meet each of the criteria. If you're enthusiastic about joining our organisation and possess a majority of the skills or experience, we encourage you to proceed with an application. We recognise that a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences enriches our work environment and therefore actively welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

Candidates will be assessed against the following criteria throughout the recruitment process:

- Providing clear strategic leadership by setting objectives, translating organisational goals into action, and ensuring successful delivery in a complex operational environment. This includes managing large-scale, multifaceted operations with a focus on efficiency, service quality, risk management, and continuous improvement
- Demonstrating inspirational leadership by motivating, empowering, and developing high-performing teams, fostering a collaborative, accountable, and results-driven culture.
- Demonstrating strong commercial and financial acumen, including managing budgets, optimising resources, and ensuring value for money in a public sector context.
- Building strong relationships and influencing outcomes through effective communication with diverse stakeholders at all levels, while maintaining resilience and composure under pressure to balance competing demands, make sound decisions at pace, and guide teams through challenges.
- Driving organisational change by identifying opportunities for improvement, implementing innovative solutions, and ensuring effective transformation at scale.
- Applying strong analytical skills and attention to detail to interpret complex data, evaluate performance, and drive informed decision-making.
- Ensuring compliance with governance, legal, and regulatory requirements, embedding robust policies and risk management practices across operations.

Terms of appointment

Band: UKRI-Band Y

Salary: £110,000 - £120,000 per annum (depending on skills and experience)

Hours: Full Time

Contract: Open Ended; secondees and transfers welcome. Job shares also considered.

Location: Swindon, Wiltshire – hybrid working available with regular travel across UKRI offices.

Timescales and selection

The selection process will consist of a panel interview which may also include a presentation. Interviews will be held in person in our London office. Please note, dates and details are subject to change.

Process	Date
Closing date	Sunday 30th March 2025
Shortlist panel meeting	Week commencing Monday 31st March 2025
Panel interviews	Week commencing Monday 14th April 2025



How to apply

Please submit your application via the **Careers Portal by 23:59 on Sunday 30th March 2025**

You will need to supply:

- A curriculum vitae (up to two pages).
- A supporting statement/ cover letter (up to two pages).

Your Statement of Suitability should provide specific information about why you believe you would be suitable for appointment for this role. Think about your knowledge, skills, experience, personal attributes, and vision for the organisation, and take full advantage of the space available. Use practical examples where possible and ensure you refer to which of the essential criteria your application is aligned to. Again, please aim for no more than 2 A4 pages.

Please note, failure to provide a supporting statement/cover letter or failure to address the above points may result in your application not being considered further.

You will only be assessed on the content of your CV and supporting statement, and not the 'experience' section of the application of Careers Portal.

To apply via the UKRI Careers Portal you will receive a notification confirming your profile has successfully been created (if you have not previously set up an account) and a second notification confirming your application for this role has been submitted. If you do not receive the second notification confirming your application for this role has been submitted or experience issues applying, please contact seniorrecruitment@ukri.org, so we can ensure your application has been received.



General information



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UKRI believes that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our board and executive positions and bringing in talent, regardless of its origins. We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. We also value diversity of thought and experience and are committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured throughout their time with us.

As a Disability Confident Leader, UKRI will offer interviews to disabled candidates who meet the published minimum requirements for a job or role. Whether you choose to apply under the Disability Confident scheme or not, you can still ask us to make particular adjustments for you when attending an interview.

We know actions speak louder than words. For further information, please visit the UKRI web page: [‘How we support EDI in the workforce’](#)

Pre-employment screening



To enable us to hire the very best people and to safeguard our people, our assets and our important role we will conduct a comprehensive pre-employment check on successful applicants as part of the recruitment process.

UKRI supports research in areas that include animal health, agriculture and food security, and bioscience for health which includes research on animals, genetic modification, and stem cell research. Whilst you may not have direct involvement in this type of research, you should consider how this aligns with your personal values or beliefs. Our pre-employment requirements include a security check and an extreme organisation’s affiliation check.

The role holder will be required to have the appropriate level of security screening/ vetting required for the role. UKRI reserves the right to run or re-run security clearance as required during the course of employment.

Standards

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

Consistent with the Commissioner's Code of Practice, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates will need to uphold the standards of the [UKRI Code of Conduct](#) and conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life, which are:

Selflessness: Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: Carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Complaints Procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Senior Appointments team (SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org) who will make every effort to deal with this and respond to you within 48 hours.

If your complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, you can find information about the steps you can take under [UKRI Complaints Procedure](#).



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