



1 Advertisement

Post Title: Commercial Contracts Business Partner

School/department: Research & Enterprise Services

Hours: full time or part time hours considered up to a maximum of 1 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).

Requests for remote working, job share, or flexible working options up to 1FTE will be considered (subject to business need).

Contract: permanent

Reference: 8629

Salary: starting at £35,333 to £42,155 per annum, pro rata if part time

Placed on: 14 July 2022

Closing date: 12 August 2022. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: To be confirmed

Expected start date: As soon as possible

We are seeking to appoint a Commercial Contracts Business Partner to join the busy Contracts team of the University's Research and Enterprise Services Division. This post provides an exciting opportunity to play a part in delivering the University's research, impact, and knowledge exchange ambitions through a diverse range of industry sponsored research activity. The role focuses on contract support for the Innovation and Business Partnership team, though you will also support the research development business partners and researchers in a range of cross-University interdisciplinary grant funded/industry focused research projects; liaising with relevant funders, project partners and attending project progress meetings where required, You will also provide clear and pragmatic advice to key stakeholders after identifying and assessing relevant contractual risks.

You should therefore have an excellent track record in reviewing, drafting, and negotiating industry sponsored research or commercial contracts, including multi-party consortium agreement, an extensive knowledge of intellectual property rights, along with a good working knowledge of contract law, export control and data protection regulations. You will be a proactive person with strong communication skills, able to work both independently and within teams, along with the ability to manage and prioritize your work from multiple clients. You will have excellent contract management skills and enjoy the challenge of a fast-paced research-centered role.

You will be educated to degree level or equivalent or be qualified by experience, gained within the Higher Education sector, or within industry/research organisation or the legal profession.

The successful applicant will be part of the Research Finance and Contracts Department and will report to the Senior Research & Commercial Contracts Manager.

Please contact Denise Forbes - Denise.Forbes@sussex.ac.uk for informal enquiries.

For full details and how to apply see our [vacancies page](#)

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.

2. The School / Division

Please find further information regarding the school/division at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/>

3. Job Description

Job Description for the post of: Commercial Contracts Business Partner

Department:	Research & Enterprise Services
Section/Unit/School:	Research Finance & Contracts
Location:	Falmer House/ Hybrid
Grade:	7
Responsible to:	Senior Research & Commercial Contracts Manager
Responsible for:	None

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Provide professional business partnering support to client group in support of the aspects of the University's strategic and operational plans in area of expertise.
2. Acting as key point of contact for commercially funded research contracts. Building and maintaining working relationship with key stakeholders; providing an efficient, effective, timely and responsive contracts service; and building strong links into the Innovation & Business Partnerships project pipeline.
3. The formulation and delivery of objective and trusted advice to client group, defining and delivering university strategy in area of expertise, to meet university objectives

Ensure that contractual risk is identified and appropriately managed within each contract.

4. Actively support the effective management of the client area, delivering value for money for the University in all areas of responsibility.
5. Building and improving excellent management literacy and practice across the University in area of expertise.
6. Diagnosing issues and scoping requirements through analysis and effective listening and questioning and assisting senior managers in developing substantive plans, to address issues and provide oversight of delivery.
7. Maintain a good understanding of the University's policies as they relate to research and knowledge exchange and particularly commercial collaboration.
8. Serve as the key point of contact for commercial clients and Innovation & Business Partnerships colleagues on contractual matters. Act as contractual "middleman" between university researchers and clients, ensuring timely review and approval / reconciliation of contract queries, signature, and variations.
9. Maintain strong working links with Innovation & Business Partnerships colleagues to contribute to the business partnerships project pipeline

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Client Group Support

- 1.1 Establish effective and productive working relationships with client group staff to optimise the contribution of Business Partnering role to the University. Work in close partnership with the Innovation & Business Partnership managers to understand their current and future business challenges, objectives, and associated requirements, influencing them to face up to and address difficult and sensitive issues, and support them in making difficult decisions.
- 1.2 Ensure the effective flow of management information to and from key stakeholders, to include analysis and evaluation of such information. Ensure that contract information is captured using the appropriate form.
- 1.3 Provide full commercial input, contractual advice and support at pre-bid and proposal stage of industry sponsored projects, ensuring the relationship status and contract requirements of the parties and the needs of the University are aligned.
- 1.4 Identification of commercial risk, weighing up risk against reward and the development and implementation of effective risk mitigation strategies and actions
- 1.5 Support the project teams to identify contract changes and manage the contract change process, through regular attendance at project progress meetings.
- 1.6 Lead in contract negotiation of any amendments to existing contracts and new agreements, working closely with Innovations & Business Partnerships colleagues for a steer when appropriate, to ensure resolution of contractual issues.

- 1.7 Review, draft and negotiate a variety of commercially funded research and services related contracts and agreements, including relevant ancillary agreements
- 1.8 Provide regular updates on current and anticipated commercial contracts to Innovation & Business Partnerships colleagues to build the business partnerships project pipeline.
- 1.9 Ensure researchers and where relevant appropriate RES staff are kept regularly informed of the status of contract development.
- 1.10 Support researchers and/or RES staff (in particularly Innovation & Business Partnerships colleagues) to facilitate the resolution of contractual disputes supporting the Senior Research and Commercial Contracts Manager in preparing a dispute summary to General Counsel for advice.
- 1.11 Provide pragmatic and commercially focused advice to researchers and other relevant RES staff.
- 1.12 Create a schedule for reporting industry sponsored contracts and contract issues.

2 Policy Development

- 2.1 Work within function to support the design and implementation of policy and procedure to support the achievement of university objectives.
- 2.2 Provide guidance and interpretation to management and university staff on the application of policy and procedures.
- 2.3 Support the research & commercial contracts senior manager to develop, improve and maintain commercial contract processes.
- 2.4 Develop and maintain an understanding of relevant regulatory and legal requirements in the context of commercial contractual compliance.

3 Project Work

- 3.1 Undertake project work, both leading and supporting, planning, and implementing activities in area of expertise to support the achievement of functional objectives, providing regular updates on current and anticipated commercial contracts to Innovation & Business Partnerships colleagues to build the business partnerships project pipeline.

4 Problem identification and resolution

- 4.1 Support client group in identifying, diagnosing contractual problems as well as providing appropriate functional expertise to support successful resolution. This will require analysis, problem identification, solution generation, decision making, planning, and organizing the approach, communicating the proposal, orally, in writing or both, and influencing others to engage.
- 4.2 Work with functional and cross functional colleagues to implement university plans and strategy

5 Functional Team Working

- 5.1 Work as part of the functional team, ensuring effective contribution, supporting colleagues where needed, within the permitted activities funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund.

To carry out any other duties that are within the employee's skills and abilities whenever reasonably instructed.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Manage workflow and execution of contracts in a timely manner.
- Ensure the effective flow of contractual information to and from key stakeholders in a timely manner
- Provide contractual advice and response to enquiries', in a timely manner.
- Ensure that all contracts, contract summaries and correspondence are stored in the relevant project folder in a timely manner
- Ensure contract requests are actioned within 15 days of allocation
- Create structured contract summaries for each contract, highlighting where relevant risk to the university and implications for the researcher in a timely manner prior to contract signature.
- Ensure all information and aspects of a project activity are covered in the contract, liaising where required with the relevant RES staff and researchers for further information, ensuring an understanding of the aims of the researcher in the context of each contract within 15 days of allocation.
- The post holder reports to the Research & Commercial Contracts Senior Manager, working under general direction within a clear framework the post holder will manage their own work to achieve their agreed objectives. The role holder will play a key role in supporting the Divisional leadership team to achieve the strategic and operational goals of the University & Professional Services. The post holder is expected to work collaboratively across the University and with key stakeholders to deliver single team working that efficiently and effectively supports the achievement of those goals and objectives.
- Support achievement of the Division's compliance with all applicable statutory and regulatory compliance obligations, including (but not limited to): UKVI, Health & Safety, the Prevent Duty, data protection, Export Control, National Security & Investment Act, Competition and Markets Authority requirements and equal opportunities, as appropriate to the grade and role. Additionally, to promote good practice in relation to university policy, procedure, and guidance in relation to those compliance matters in respect of students, staff, and other relevant parties.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Of graduate calibre with relevant professional qualification or qualified by directly relevant experience, as appropriate to the discipline (see role-specific criteria below)
2. Highly developed oral and written communication skills with the ability to present complex and conceptual ideas in a way that can be understood by most employees.
3. Planning and organisational skills, including contract management.
4. Highly developed interpersonal skills with the ability to effectively influence client group in area of expertise, effectively contribute to team working.
5. Analytical skills with the ability to generate effective solutions.
6. Effective IT Skills on MS platform. Experience using functional databases.

ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Experience of reviewing, drafting, and negotiating a variety of contracts.
2. Understanding of English contract law
3. Comprehensive understanding of Intellectual Property and legal issues which may arise in the context of research contracts
4. Understanding of other contractual issues which arise in the context of research contracts
5. Ability to assess and mitigate contractual risk
6. Decisions making skills

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Knowledge of export control and data protection
2. Experience working in a higher education institution or research organisation.