Programme Funding Officer

Grade 7
Full Time
Fixed Term Contract until 25 September 2023

The Open University’s (OU’s) Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) works across a range of disciplines including education, childhood and youth, health and social care, youth work, social work, languages and applied linguistics, nursing, and sport and fitness, falling under three Schools. WELS takes an innovative approach to teaching and learning; develops collaborative and effective partnerships with partners, funders, employers and other institutions; and engages in cutting edge, action oriented and internationally recognised research.

About the Role

The role of the Programme Funding Officer is to support the growth of WELS income and to raise WELS profile by securing external research and knowledge exchange funding, in adherence with funders’ requirements. The post-holder will be based within WELS Research Funding and Support Team.

- Proactively identifying and mapping funders that match WELS priorities and research and knowledge exchange project ideas and proposals.
- Managing a portfolio of funder prospects, identifying and developing funding approaches for WELS research and knowledge exchange projects.
- Being recognised as a source of expertise on key funders within your portfolio.
- Working closely with WELS academics to prepare effective and compelling research and knowledge exchange proposals, in order to secure large funding (including £1m+ level projects) from a wide range of funders.
- Supporting the Head of Programme Funding and Business Development, as well as other colleagues in the Research Funding and Support Team and the WELS Faculty in fundraising as required to drive new business and growth.

The role will entail interaction at a senior level with UK-based and global funding bodies and partners, as well as senior staff within the OU.
Key Responsibilities

1. Develop and maintain a good knowledge and understanding of the higher education research and knowledge exchange funding environment (UK and global), including sector, funder and partner trends.

2. Map strategic funding opportunities and key funders against WELS strategy and project ideas and proposals, working closely with all relevant stakeholders within and outside WELS.

3. Identify, and form strong partnerships to leverage income from key funders in line with WELS strategy.

4. Manage a portfolio of prospects, ensuring exceptional funder and partner relationship management, cultivation and stewardship, and sound management of relationships with a number of University faculties and departments.

5. Co-create with WELS academics and other OU colleagues high calibre research and knowledge exchange bids (including £1M+ ones) to be submitted to a wide range of governmental, intergovernmental, philanthropic and other funders, including complex, multi and interdisciplinary academic projects. This includes: coordinating bid applications; supporting partnering strategies and negotiating/brokering collaborations; providing advice on funder requirements; providing inputs into bid writing; assisting with costing and pricing; reviewing bids for readability, funder compliance and competitiveness; ensuring timely bid submission, in line with all funder’s requirements and the OU’s internal approval processes.

6. Negotiate and secure contracts for awarded projects, and facilitate hand over to the post-award support team.

7. Attend external network events to raise the profile of WELS research and knowledge exchange work.

8. Assist in identification and preparation of promotional materials (presentations, capability statements, evidence of impact) to support WELS and other OU personnel in fundraising, raising WELS profile and promoting partnership approaches.

9. Support a number of internal and external tasks to ensure compliance with funder requirements, uphold OU’s reputation and increase bid success (e.g. maintenance of bid repository and bid tracker; compliance with International Aid Transparency Initiative, etc.).

10. Other appropriate tasks commensurate with the grade, as requested by the Head of Programme Funding and Business Development and senior management.

All Open University staff are required to:

- Have strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion policies and practices.

- Adhere to Open University Statutory Requirements, Codes of Practice, Policies, and Departmental Health and Safety arrangements.

- Attend appropriate events and undertake staff development activities.
Skills and Experience

Essential:

- Graduate or equivalent experience.
- Demonstrable ability to proactively fundraise from a diverse range of funders.
- Track record in securing five - seven figure grants/contracts.
- Sound financial management skills, including costing and pricing of proposals.
- Internal and external relationship management skills, to represent your team and organisation, and build mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Strong oral and written communication skills, with the ability to convey complex messages succinctly, clearly and convincingly to people from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of seniority.
- Ability to successfully negotiate and to influence a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, demonstrating tact and diplomacy.
- Ability to prioritise, make timely decisions and handle a portfolio of competing projects and deadlines.
- Excellent team-working skills.
- Proven ICT skills (i.e. high level of competency in word-processing, Excel and PowerPoint), and a willingness to learn about IT systems specific to OU research and knowledge exchange work.
- Ability to attend meetings at OU/partners sites and to occasionally work outside normal office hours if required.
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion policies and practices.

Desirable:

- Understanding of the research funding landscape.
- Experience of winning research funding bids.
- Understanding and knowledge of Higher Education.
- International experience.