

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT
FACULTY OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING
FACULTY OFFICE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING
DIVISION OF FSE RESEARCH & BUSINESS SERVICES
PROGRAMME MANAGER - CENTRE FOR AI FUNDAMENTALS
VACANCY REF: SAE-028048

Salary: Grade 7 £46,735 to £57,422 per annum, depending on relevant experience

Hours: Full time (1 FTE)

Duration: Permanent

Location: Oxford Road, Manchester

Enquiries about the vacancy, shortlisting and interviews:

Name: Dr Shaden Jaradat (Research Development and Innovation Manager, Faculty of Science and Engineering)

Email: shaden.jaradat@manchester.ac.uk

Academic lead: Professor Sami Kaski (Director, Centre for AI Fundamentals)

Email: samuel.kaski@manchester.ac.uk

Overall Purpose of the Job

The post-holder will work with the Director of the Centre for AI Fundamentals to develop a world-leading research centre. This is a cross-faculty initiative that builds on the award of a Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship together with significant internal investment, and forms part of an ambitious plan to establish Manchester as an internationally-leading centre for AI research and innovation.

The successful candidate will play a major role in developing and shaping the Centre, working closely with the Director to grow the Centre and plan and deliver an exciting programme of activities, including leading key science translational activity and development of use cases in the Centre's key domains, partnership development, bid writing, resource management, impact and public engagement strategies. The role will involve working synergistically with existing University functions and activities to maximise benefits to the University, including working closely with the Business Engagement and Knowledge Exchange functions on activities involving industry.

Background

The University is home to a thriving AI community. Our Institute for Data Science and AI (IDSAI, <https://www.idsai.manchester.ac.uk/>) brings together over 600 investigators across all three faculties, and leads on the University's membership of the Alan Turing Institute – the UK's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence. The Christabel Pankhurst Institute for Health Technology Research and Innovation (Pankhurst, <https://www.pankhurst.manchester.ac.uk/>) provides a focus for applications of AI in health and care. We are active members of the international AI community, partnering with AIRC Tokyo, Toronto and Melbourne Universities, and the European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS), hosting an ELLIS Unit. We work closely with industry, as well as flagship regional enablers such as the £11m Manchester Turing Innovation Catalyst (TIC), to accelerate growth of the AI business ecosystem in Greater Manchester.

The Centre for AI Fundamentals will play a key role in cementing Manchester's position as an internationally leading centre for AI research and innovation. It will expand our expertise in the underpinning science and engineering of AI, positioning the University at the forefront of new developments that will drive future applications of AI. It will build on several new appointments in AI fundamentals and the award to Professor Sami Kaski of a Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship, designed to build the University's capacity in AI fundamentals. With this strong platform, we anticipate an exciting period of strong growth for the Centre over the next few years, working synergistically with other parts of the University's AI ecosystem.

This role will be based within and report to the Research Development and Innovation team (<https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=63723>), which also consists of the Business Engagement, Research Development and Strategy, Research Impact and Internationalisation functions within the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE).

Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities or Duties

The Centre for AI Fundamentals is an evolving, dynamic initiative, and the appointee will be expected to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to meet its developing needs. The indicative range of duties will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Be a full member of the Centre management group, taking responsibility for developing and leading a portfolio of activity
- Represent the Centre at both internal and external meetings and events, deputising as necessary for the Centre Director and acting as the point of contact for organisations that approach the Centre
- Work with the Director to develop strategic plans for academic partnerships, grant portfolio, major research funding bids, strategic research initiatives, recruitment strategy, international partnerships and profile raising, including:
 - To play a leading role in the development and implementation of AI research and innovation strategies led by the Director of the Centre and FSE's Vice Dean for Research and Innovation, working with key senior colleagues across the University
 - To establish a comprehensive understanding of funder priorities and capture/exploit strategic funding intelligence in AI domains
 - To lead on the coordination of strategic and/or large-scale funding bids, support for large capital projects and national/international collaborative activities

- To liaise and develop relationships with external funding bodies (Research Councils, Charities, EU funding bodies, Government organisations, Industry and other University stakeholders)
 - To establish a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of AI research areas/expertise/interests, and funders interests, identifying areas for strategic growth
 - To perform critical analysis on a variety of research performance data in order to provide advice and reports to senior leadership
 - To anticipate future strategic developments/needs and put plans in place to ensure that the RDI Team/Faculty is best equipped to respond
 - To assimilate and effectively communicate information and opportunities from funding bodies, central University sources and from within the Faculty (keeping abreast of any developments in research policy issues) and advise staff on funding applications to optimise research grant income
- Work with the Director to develop and maintain strategic relationships with national and international initiatives including the Alan Turing Institute, ELLIS, and UKRI AI Hubs, and develop and oversee delivery of a programme of national and international conferences and events to raise the profile of the Centre
 - Work closely with academics and other University initiatives in the AI space, including IDSAI, Pankhurst and TIC, to ensure coordination of activities and communications
 - To proactively develop a mixed portfolio of projects, and to support the development of new funding opportunities (including with businesses) by working in an agile and flexible manner across the Faculty
 - Maintain oversight of the progress of PhD and PDRA projects associated with the Centre
 - Line manage a Professional Services team, manage Centre finances, and take overall responsibility for organising and supporting management, governance and advisory boards

General Requirements

- Undertake the above duties in accordance with the requirements of the University's equality, diversity and inclusion policy, information governance policy, health & safety policy, and its financial regulations
- Engage actively with the need for diversity and inclusion in all that we do, for example when working with individuals who identify with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act
- Be aware of and support compliance with statutory obligations and external requirements
- Maintain confidentiality of information in line with data protection requirements and University policy
- Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development activities
- Contribute to the University's agenda for social responsibility, including sustainability

Person Specification

Essential Attributes

- Degree level or equivalent qualification, or professional experience, preferably in a STEM subject
- A strategic thinker, able to help shape the Centre for AI Fundamentals to deliver real value to participants, partners, stakeholders and the Greater Manchester and UK AI ecosystem
- Experience of leadership within a Higher Education context, including proven ability to think creatively, motivate and inspire confidence in stakeholders
- Ability and willingness to work across organisational boundaries and proactively identify opportunities for collaborative, joined up working and information sharing
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and relationship-building skills, with the confidence and professionalism to project and maintain credibility at all levels internally and with external organisations
- Experience of data analysis and contributing on to the development of strategy, business cases and policy documents
- Experience of playing a substantive role in the preparation of large, complex grant proposals and an increase in research funding
- Knowledge and understanding of the interface between higher education and research funders (e.g. Research Councils, Government, Charities, EU, Industry) and awareness of funding trends, policies, priorities and processes
- Experience of managing projects with multiple partners in an academic or business environment
- Ability to adapt at pace and work under pressure and meet challenging deadlines
- A basic understanding of AI and its potential, and willingness to develop a deeper understanding
- Relevant experience and understanding of academia and of business needs and drivers, ideally in a deep tech context
- Ability to solve complex problems, using initiative, innovation and negotiation
- Commitment to high levels of professionalism and promotion of a culture of excellence, innovation, collegiality, continuous improvement and high performance
- Experience of managing budgets including financial planning and delivering work within budget and to deadline
- Knowledge of the University's organisation, governance and strategic objectives
- Demonstrable commitment to the University's strategy, vision and values

Desirable Attributes

- PhD (or equivalent)

- Degree in AI/Computer Science
- Formal PM qualification or significant demonstrable experience.
- Experience of AI research and/or development, or of supporting it
- Track record of working within international project teams

Further Information

Further information regarding the Centre for AI Fundamentals can be found here: <https://www.ai-fun.manchester.ac.uk/>