



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

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JOB DESCRIPTION**

JOB TITLE	Strategic REF Manager				
DEPARTMENT	Research & Enterprise				
LOCATION	Lincoln Campuses				
JOB NUMBER	EL1134	GRADE	9	DATE	May 2026
REPORTS TO	Head of Research Culture and Impact				

CONTEXT

The University of Lincoln is preparing for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029, the national assessment of research quality, impact and environment in UK universities. The evolving REF framework, including the introduction of the Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) element and updated approaches to Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU) and Engagement and Impact (E&I), requires institutions to adopt a more integrated and strategic approach to research assessment.

The Strategic REF Manager provides institution-wide leadership for the University's REF preparations. Working closely with senior academic and professional services colleagues, the role ensures that governance, planning and institutional processes are aligned with national requirements, enabling the University to deliver a strong and well-coordinated REF submission.

JOB PURPOSE

The Strategic REF Manager provides institutional leadership for the planning, coordination and delivery of the University of Lincoln's REF submission. The role is responsible for ensuring that the University develops a strong and compliant submission across all REF elements, with significant implications for institutional reputation, research performance and the continuation of Quality-Related (QR) research funding.

The postholder provides strategic advice to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange) and senior academic leadership on REF policy, governance and performance. Working across Colleges and professional services teams, the role leads the development of institutional processes, guidance and planning that support a high-quality REF submission.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

REF Strategy and Institutional Leadership

- Provide strategic leadership for the University's REF preparations, ensuring a coordinated and institution-wide approach to research assessment.
- Lead the development and implementation of institutional plans, systems and governance structures to support REF activity.
- Provide strategic advice to senior leadership, including the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange), on REF policy, performance and institutional positioning.
- Monitor institutional progress towards REF objectives, identifying risks and opportunities and advising on appropriate actions.

Institutional Guidance and Stakeholder Engagement

- Act as the University's lead specialist for REF policy and requirements, providing authoritative guidance to senior academic and professional services colleagues.
- Work closely with College Directors of Research and Unit of Assessment leads to support institutional planning and submission development.
- Represent the University at sector networks, consultations and REF-related events, maintaining awareness of emerging national developments.

REF Submission Development and Quality Assurance

- Oversee the development and coordination of REF submission elements, including Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU), Engagement and Impact (E&I), Open Access and Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE).
- Ensure robust quality assurance processes are in place to support the preparation and review of REF data, documentation and narratives.
- Work with colleagues across Research & Enterprise to support the development of a strong research environment and impact culture.

Communication, Training and Institutional Engagement

- Lead the development of institutional communications and guidance relating to REF requirements and processes.
- Promote awareness of REF policy and expectations across academic and professional services teams.
- Support the development of institutional capability in research assessment through guidance, training and dissemination of good practice.

External Engagement and Team Leadership

- Act as the University's primary liaison with Research England and other relevant national bodies on matters relating to REF.
- Contribute to sector consultations and discussions relating to research assessment and policy developments.
- Provide leadership and direction to staff supporting REF activity, ensuring effective coordination across the University.



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In addition to the above, undertake such duties as may reasonably be requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Scope and dimensions of the role

The Strategic REF Manager provides institution-wide leadership for the University of Lincoln’s preparation for the Research Excellence Framework. The role is responsible for coordinating institutional planning, governance and processes to support the development of a strong REF submission across all assessment elements.

Working closely with senior academic and professional services colleagues, the postholder leads the coordination of REF activity across the University, ensuring that information, evidence and submissions are developed in line with national requirements and institutional priorities. The role provides strategic oversight of key REF elements, including Contributions to Knowledge and Understanding (CKU), Engagement and Impact (E&I), Open Access and the Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) narrative.

Through effective leadership, stakeholder engagement and strategic planning, the Strategic REF Manager supports the University in maximising research performance, protecting Quality-Related (QR) funding, and strengthening the institution’s national research profile.

Key working relationships/networks

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Research Enterprise and Culture • Head of Enterprise & Innovation. • Research Development team. • Strategic Research Development lead. • Research and Enterprise team. • College Directors of research. • Senior academic staff, inc. Heads of School & Heads of Colleges • Unit of assessment leads • Targeted College staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research England REF team. • Local and National Government bodies • Regional, national and international universities. • Partner organisations. • Relevant associations and professional bodies (e.g. Universities UK, Praxis Unico, ARMA, UKRO)



**UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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Selection Criteria	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Where Evidenced Application (A) Interview (I) Presentation (P) References (R)
Qualifications:		
Relevant degree or equivalent professional qualification and/or experience	E	A
Postgraduate research degree or equivalent experience in research development	D	A
Experience:		
Senior REF Experience working in a Higher Education	E	A, I
Substantial contribution to prior REF preparation	E	A, I
Experience leading complex institutional research administration or research assessment processes.	E	A, I
Experience of management of pre and post-award research projects	D	A, I
Knowledge of research impact assessment modelling	D	A, I
Experience leading or directing the work of professional or academic teams.	E	A, I
Skills and Knowledge:		
Data handling, analysis, and presentation.	E	A, I
Excellent communication skills: written, verbal and presentation	E	A, I, P
Excellent numerical skills with attention to detail when dealing with finances and business/project planning	E	A, I
In-depth knowledge of REF strategy and policy	E	A, I, P
Ability to develop effective working relationships & networks with a wide variety of internal/external partners	E	A, I
Knowledge of research metrics and Open Access compliance.	E	A, I
Competencies and Personal Attributes:		
Innovative and proactive	E	A, I, P
Results driven and ability to work under pressure to tight deadlines	E	A, I
Excellent organisational and project management skills, able to prioritise workload with attention to detail	E	A, I
Projects a positive and professional image at all times	E	A, I, P
Ability to lead, influence and work effectively as part of a team	E	A, I
Team player, diplomatic and professional	E	A, I, P



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Adaptable and flexible within a team environment	E	A, I
Ability to take judgement on and balance priorities of others including line reports, team, department and institution	E	I
Business Requirements		
Flexibility to work evenings and weekends as required.	E	A, I
Able to travel between sites and nationally as required	E	A, I

Essential Requirements are those, without which, a candidate would not be able to do the job. **Desirable Requirements** are those which would be useful for the post holder to possess and will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.

Author	LG	PBP	GPH
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