University of Edinburgh
Job Description

1. Job Details

Job title: Wide Field Astronomy Unit (WFAU) Manager

School/Support Department: School of Physics: Institute for Astronomy

Unit (if applicable): WFAU

Line manager: Head of Institute

2. Job Purpose

Manage the several grants funding Wide Field Astronomy and Virtual Observatory development work in the Institute for Astronomy, and assist with management of Institute for Astronomy funding. Manage WFA and VO staff, including recruitment, as required by particular projects. Develop future strategy and work planning within WFAU. Contribute to IfA core programme, e.g. by supervision of student projects.

3. Main Responsibilities

a). Manage the Vista Data Flow System (VDFS) work in the WFAU, including planning quarterly work programmes in consultation with staff, managing VDFS grant use, reporting work and resource use to VDFS Management Team (VDMT), participating in VDMT, acquiring data server hardware icw. ITSG of UK ATC; recruit and manage staff.

Approx. % of time = 0.3 FTE


Approx. % of time = 0.2 FTE

c). Manage the other WFA work, including operation of the WFCAM Science Archive and legacy survey projects; and help seek new work for the WFA Unit through contribution to preparation of grant proposals using JeS and following fEC principles and University procedures.

Approx. % of time = 0.2 FTE

d). Assist with management of Institute for Astronomy finances, getting allocations, producing draft budgets, advising Head of Institute and colleagues regarding spend, resolution of problems and preparation of grant proposals following University and funding providers’ procedures.

Approx. % of time = 0.1 FTE

4. Planning and Organising

This is a fragmented job with many stakeholders; the jobholder has to prioritise work to meet the variety of requirements; attending to immediate demands, but not losing sight of long term funding and staffing requirements.
5. Problem Solving

Reconcile different funding requirements, including staffing, with available grant and other funding.

6. Decision Making

Minor (< £k 3) purchases without consultation, but the post holder consults colleagues for most decisions and must be able to select the appropriate level at which to seek advice or authorisation from senior staff and PIs.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships

- a) WFAU staff, VDFS and VO-TECH team members at University of Edinburgh and other Universities, other School and Institute staff especially Grant PI and co-Is, and relevant staff of the UK ATC at the ROE.
- b) University of Edinburgh staff in ERI, Finance and HR regarding grants, accounts, staff recruitment, staff contracts and their renewal, staff leaving and redundancy.
- c) Staff at grant awarding bodies, PPARC (Swindon) and European Union Research Policy & Funding (Brussels).
- d) Scientific and technical staff at collaborating universities and research organizations in the UK and continental Europe.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job

- Knowledge and experience of research funding cycles, research proposal preparation (including JeS and fEC) following University procedures, evaluation, funding and reporting procedures used by grant awarding bodies such as PPARC and the EU Research Policy & Funding.
- Knowledge of University of Edinburgh financial and HR procedures
- Ability to communicate and interact with staff having wide ranges of knowledge and levels of expertise.
- Familiarity with standard office-type software tools, e.g. MS Office.
- Degree(s) in relevant subject (physics, astronomy or computing).
- (desirable) Knowledge of some of the technologies (e.g. Python, SQL, XML) and scientific goals (e.g. survey astronomy) of the work managed.

9. Dimensions

There are currently (March) 12 staff to manage directly plus 3 based outside Edinburgh (indirect) and two Y4 student projects. Total personnel affected: 44 staff and 18 post-grads in the IfA and about 14 FTE VO-TECH staff in Europe. Annual grant expenditure is about £k 600-700 (£k 651 in 2004-5 FY) plus about £k 900.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information