Job Description

This form summarises the purpose of the job and lists its key tasks. It is not a definitive list of all the tasks to be undertaken as those can be varied from time to time at the discretion of the School, in consultation with the postholder.

Job title: Research Grants Officer

Department/Division: Firoz Lalj Institute for Africa and CPAID
Accountable to: Institute Manager

Job Summary

The Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA) promotes independent academic research and teaching; open and issue-oriented debate; and evidence-based policy making across LSE. The Institute accomplishes this by connecting different social science disciplines and by working in partnership with Africa bringing African voices to the global debate. The Centre for Public Authority and International Development (CPAID) is an associated research Centre, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which aims to produce high-quality research and evidence that can help generate informed and successful international development policies, particularly in crises-affected areas in Africa.

Under the supervision of the Institute manager, the post holder will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Institute's research grants, working closely with the other professional services staff, to ensure the smooth running of the research projects focused on the African continent. The post holder will be the primary contact for all research grant related queries, liaising between project partners and LSE team members as needed. Furthermore, the post holder will be responsible for working with Research Division to process all expense claims and payments related to the grants accurately, including advances and invoice payments.

Working closely with the Institute's management team, the post holder will organise research meetings and events such as workshops and seminars. The role is vital to the operations of the Institute and will assist with planning research dissemination activities, liaising with research staff, booking and processing academic flights, and developing processes for organising the activities on the grants. The post holder will also provide assistance with external grant reporting, internal Institute reporting and budget forecasting. The post holder will be encouraged to suggest and develop new policies for the FLIA and CPAID and contribute to building the Institute's growing research network.

The post holder's main responsibilities are:
- To independently manage the day-to-day tasks of multiple research grants held within the Institute;
- To work with researchers and the Institute Manager and the Director to carry out strategic objectives;
- To coordinate and deliver successful research meetings and events;
- To handle, record and process research expense claims;
- To independently manage a portfolio of research grants held within the Institute and CPAID;
- To coordinate the grant reporting processes;
- To support researcher fieldwork travel and fieldwork operations.

The post holder will be expected to take a proactive approach to managing the day-to-day operations of the grants and raise any concerns to senior professional services members and the Institute Manager.

Duties and Responsibilities

Research Grant Management

- To provide a central, primary point of contact for all external enquiries relating to research Institute activities.
- Provide essential administrative support to programme activities including booking and organising meetings, conference calls and agenda circulation.
- Contribute to efficient information flow within the research projects by maintaining a project management portal for internal project communication, correspondence and documentation as required.
- Maintain and build relationships with internal and external grant stakeholders, such as LSE professors and overseas partners.
- Organise regular meetings of grant project teams and partners and prepare, take and circulate meeting minutes.
- Lead on the planning, organisation and execution of grant related events including annual CPAID and FLIA team meetings, Advisory Board meetings and dissemination events etc.
- Manage the planning and organisation of grant dissemination events as required for grants such as room booking, catering, stewards and audio-visual arrangements.
- Take responsibility for managing all administrative aspects of a portfolio of small to medium-sized grants held in the Institute.
- Work closely with Research and Innovation to ensure grant and School policies and procedures are followed.
- Take responsibility for monitoring and reporting on research activities as needed to meet both LSE and funder reporting requirements.
- Providing support for updates to ResearchFish, a platform regularly used by funders ESRC/AHRC.
- Provide complex diary management and travel coordination and booking support for the Institute Director.
- Managing a system for identifying funding opportunities and collating information for grant proposals.
- Support the compiling of information and documents for grant proposal submissions.
- Ensure staff are fully briefed and aware of internal Institute and wider LSE funding policies and processes for seeking new research funding.
- Managing the Institute's timesheets and ensuring timely receipt and processing of research timesheets.
- Assisting with risk assessments and insurance requirements for researchers travelling abroad.
- Ensure eligible publications are submitted to the library for open access publishing.

Financial Management

- Manage a portfolio of research grants and their related budgets.
- Manage the payment of invoices, expense claims and placing orders as required from the grants and the broader Institute.
- Maintain a record of expenses and invoices processed and paid on a regular basis.
- Work with Research and Finance Divisions to process all expense claims and payment requests relating to the Institute's grants, including advances and external invoices from partners.

- Assist in compiling annual written progress reports and annual accounts for internal and external reporting in collaboration with Research and Innovation and Finance Division as appropriate. Involving collating and presenting information in the most appropriate format, drawing on records kept and maintained through the year.
- Advising and taking day-to-day decisions on budgetary matters within the grant portfolio managed
- Maintain budget models and provide regular updates and analysis as needed for year end and forecasting, highlighting areas of concern.
- Checking in regularly with the Research and Innovation on expenditure and ensuring planned commitments are suitable within the award before proceeding.

Communication

- Foster collegiality within the research teams and with research partners and contribute actively to the broader work of the Institute.
- To conduct all aspects of administration in a professional and responsible manner, for example, when liaising with external audiences and partners as a representative of the Institute.
- Ensure data protection and other relevant policies and procedures are adhered to within research teams (such as research grant data management plans).
- To maintain effective and open channels of communication with colleagues, especially when delegated or delegating tasks, ensuring clarity of understanding and expectations so that tasks are delivered accurately and effectively in-line with core objectives.
- Supporting the Blog Editor and Communications manager with grant updates and information to support the Institute's website development and social media channels.
- Create and manage a database of grant publications and following-up with staff on outcomes from submitted publications and expected publication dates.
- Ensuring Word versions of publications are submitted to LSE Research Online within 3 months of the acceptance date for peer-reviewed journals.
- Maintaining and overseeing records relating to presentations by Institute staff, as well as other dissemination and communications activities in liaison with the Institute's Blog Editor and Communications manager.

Teamwork and Motivation

- To provide the first point of contact and administrative support to research fellows, occasional researchers, visiting fellows, and others related to the management team activities.
- To provide administrative support to colleagues associated with the research projects in any project related activities, including travel arrangements, stakeholder participation, budgetary decisions, event planning, and dissemination of research activities undertaken. Offering guidance on administrative matters to assist them in their work and decisions.
- Willingness to seek best practice in the School and contribute to changes in School policy and procedure according to knowledge developed that encourages a supportive research environment for staff.
- To take delegated responsibility for Institute operations when the manager is absent.
- To contribute actively to the effectiveness of the team and to the Institute's objectives.
- To proactively support the implementation of best practices.
- Providing support to wider members of the Professional Services team as requested by the Institute Manager and Director.
- Supporting processes for visiting appointments, such as Centennial Professors.
- Undertaking other duties and projects which may from time-to-time be assigned by the Institute Manager or Director.
- Supporting the organisation of training events as requested.

Liaison and Networking

- To monitor grant expenditures in collaboration with appropriate LSE departments, liaising with colleagues in Research and Finance, and tracking commitments as they are made to ensure the budget is not over committed or under spent.
- To develop effective working relationships with colleagues across the School as relevant to the demands of the Institute's activities, to ensure School policy and procedure is implemented at all times, developing internal processes that engage these appropriately.
- To develop and maintain stakeholder relationships with external academics, students, organisations and networks in Europe and on the African continent.
- Liaising with external suppliers where necessary to secure products or services.

Decision Making

- To be able to take day-to-day decisions within existing procedures and practises.
- Ability to make day-to-day informed decisions on grant operations and budgetary matters.
- Monitor monthly grant budgets and provide advice on financial reports to budget holders.
- To identify and implement strategies to make best use of funding to achieve the research framework goals and milestones.
- To identify when decisions and matters should be raise with the Institute Manager and/or Director.

Initiative and Problem Solving

- To organise and take responsibility for own workload with minimum supervision and take responsibility for advising academic and professional services colleagues of upcoming grant reporting deadlines, payment milestones and project deadlines ensuring these are met.
- To plan sufficiently and to recognise areas of concern and suggest alternative solutions where available.
- Problem solve using evidence and consultation when issues arise on research grants.
- To consider potential areas for development for finance, research support and facilities in the Institute and methods for implementation.
- Exercise discretion when dealing with sensitive and confidential matters.

Planning and Organising
- Writing user guides and manuals for Institute procedures and systems.
- Planning grant resources, monitoring individual grant progress, adjusting priorities when needed and identifying the need for further action to ensure work is completed efficiently.
- Effectively managing and responding to a high volume of information requests and queries, providing a range of options to choose from based on knowledge and experience, and highlighting potential implications or areas of concern.
- Independently prioritise and manage the post holder's own work with minimal supervision.
- Overseeing and managing stationery orders and costs.
- Overseeing and managing the telecoms arrangements and the IT arrangements (including printers and copiers).
- Maintaining and supporting a record of staff annual leave and records of staff mentors.
- Managing and supporting the organisation of the Institute's seminar series (booking rooms, circulating abstracts, taking attendance and sending out reminders).

Team Development

- Assist with the training, development and line-management of junior staff such as graduate

interns.
- Assist with setting clear goals and expectations for junior staff and supporting them in the delivery of their objectives and providing constructive feedback.
- Managing temporary staff, such as event stewards or hourly-paid employed students.
- Proactively seek ways to improve team functions, service delivery levels and adjusting processes based on reflection and feedback.
- Ensuring Health and Safety procedures are in place by reviewing and reporting on working practice, highlighting potential risks and hazards to the team and wider Institute.
- Assist with planning staff away days, taking and circulating Institute meeting minutes, and participating on relevant and appropriate interview panels.

This is a varied and flexible role, and there will be additional duties allocated by the Institute Manager as they arise. There may be opportunities to travel abroad to project countries and there may be times when the postholder will need to work in the evening for an event.

Flexibility
To deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility may be required in the duties performed in order to meet the exigencies of service. Job roles may also naturally develop over time and ongoing substantial changes to a role will be discussed between line managers and their staff, with job descriptions updated as and when appropriate.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
LSE is committed to building a diverse, equitable and truly inclusive university. All posts (and post holders) will seek to ensure diversity and inclusion, while opposing all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, or social and economic background.

Ethics Code
Posts (and post holders) are assumed to have a responsibility to act in accordance with the School's Ethics Code and to promote the principles and values that the Code enshrines. The Ethics Code clearly states that the whole LSE community, including all staff, students, and governors of LSE, are expected to act in accordance with the principles which are set out in the Code. As such you are required to read and familiarise yourself with it. The School's Effective Behaviours Framework is designed to support this Code. It sets out examples for the six behaviours that all staff are expected to demonstrate, these can be found on the following link: click here

Environmental Sustainability
The post holder is required to minimise environmental impact in the performance of the role, and actively contribute to the delivery of the LSE Environmental Policy.