



Job Description

Job Title:	StoryFutures and CoSTAR Operations Director
Department:	StoryFutures SBU
Job type	Full-Time, Permanent, Professional Services
Grade:	RHUL 10
Accountable to:	Director of CoSTAR National Lab
Accountable for:	Line management of the StoryFutures operations and administrative teams Matrix Management of StoryFutures CoSTAR partner programme administrative staff.
Purpose of the Post	
<p>The Operations Director is a senior strategic and operational leadership role responsible for the effective governance, financial management, reporting, monitoring & evaluation, compliance, and delivery infrastructure for a large-scale, multi-partner R&D innovation programme based within the StoryFutures Strategic Business Unit (SBU), the CoSTAR National Lab (CSNL) and Royal Holloway, University of London</p> <p>The postholder will provide exceptional organisational-wide leadership across complex, multi-partner and multi-funder activity, delivered in accordance with funder terms and conditions, public procurement regulations, institutional policies, and statutory requirements.</p> <p>The role has organisational-wide responsibility for establishing, operating and continuously improving the systems, processes and controls that underpin the delivery of the CoSTAR National Lab and the StoryFutures SBU.</p> <p>The role ensures that programme delivery is compliant, financially robust, contractually secure, and strategically positioned for long-term economic sustainability, including the development and delivery of new grants and commercial R&D.</p> <p>Working closely with the CoSTAR National Lab and StoryFutures Directors, senior academic leadership, professional services teams and external partners, the Operations Director will align university, funder and partner processes to enable the successful delivery of research, innovation, infrastructure, and industry-facing activity.</p> <p>The Operations Director will provide assurance to the CoSTAR National Lab Director, StoryFutures SBU Directors, University Executive, governing bodies and funders that public funding is being managed appropriately, risks are identified and mitigated, and that the programme is positioned for long-term financial and operational sustainability.</p>	

This role has the capacity, when designated, to act for the StoryFutures Directors and the CoSTAR National Lab Director.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership, Governance & Assurance

Implementation of the StoryFutures SBU and CoSTAR National R&D Lab with focus on the long-term issues of growth, financial self-sustainability, environmentally sustainability and multi-partner estates, capital and operational processes.

- Provide senior operational leadership for the CSNL R&D innovation programme, shaping long-term strategy, operating models and organisational design.
- Act as a key advisor to the CSNL Director, StoryFutures SBU Directors and governance bodies on operational risk, compliance, performance and financial sustainability.
- Design, implement and operate governance structures including Boards, Executive Committees and Advisory Councils.
- Own and direct programme-level risk registers, ensuring risks are identified, mitigated, escalated and reported appropriately.
- Lead change management initiatives to support programme growth, maturity and long-term viability.

Funding, Financial Stewardship & Sustainability

Directing and managing a pro-active, engaged, and self-sustaining financial model, processes and culture within StoryFutures SBU and its external partners.

- Oversee delivery, monitoring and reporting of CSNL and other grants.
- Actively manage the collation, sign off and reporting of StoryFutures SBU data across different funding streams.
- Actively support the onward development, management and reporting of the StoryFutures Sustainability Strategy and carbon management plan for SMEs and network labs utilising the CoSTAR infrastructure.
- Through line management of the R&D Producer team and collaboration with the StoryFutures Executive, develop, maintain, and ensure reporting against sustainable production strategies.
- Direct financial planning, budgeting and forecasting across a complex, multi-stream funding environment.
- Directing the Production and Programme Team(s) to ensure that staff resources, estate, finance and support are appropriate and aligned with programme requirements – both internal and external.
- Active engagement with the development and roll out of a financial management plan with the University CFO that enables devolved budgetary responsibly to

Executives (internal and external to the University) and Network Labs as appropriate.

- Take a lead role in the strategic and business model planning of StoryFutures within wider long-term University strategies and infrastructure, including developing the business case where necessary, for creative industries companies to occupy StoryFutures estate on University or the CSNL and commercial R&D strategies.
- Develop and direct business and commercial models to support long-term economic sustainability, including commercial R&D, partnerships and infrastructure.
- Lead and support the development of major funding bids.
- Lead devolved financial management frameworks across partners, ensuring funder and institutional compliance and demonstrable value for money.
- Actively engage with the monitoring, development, reporting and delivery of long-term R&D investment and return models for financial and KPI ROI that ensure the long-term success of the CoSTAR National Lab.

Compliance, Contracting, Procurement & Infrastructure

- Provide senior oversight of regulatory compliance, including UK subsidy control, state aid and UK VAT rules as applied to R&D and commercial activity.
- Lead and oversee contracting for academic collaborations, industry partnerships and delivery partners.
- Direct high-value procurement activity, including procurements exceeding £1 million, in line with public procurement regulations and university frameworks.
- Ensure effective management of contracts for substantial services, goods, infrastructure and technology.
- Provide strategic oversight of infrastructure, estates or studio operations, aligning capital, operational and compliance processes across partners.
- Assisting in the direction, briefing and alignment of the CoSTAR project for Estates Team Heads at both RHUL and Pinewood to ensure effective estate project works programmes in line with UKRI funding requirements.

People, Partnerships & External Engagement

Directing and managing an inclusive, pro-active, transparent, sustainability-aware and R&D enabling colleague-focused operations team for StoryFutures staff, University and partner stakeholders in relation to the delivery of CoSTAR infrastructure, its related programmes and their monitoring and evaluation.

- Line manage senior leadership team members across operations, delivery and CSNL programmes.
- Build, develop and sustain a diverse, inclusive and high-performing operations and delivery team.

- Embed a culture of transparency, accountability, sustainability and continuous improvement.
- Represent the university and programme to funders, government departments, industry partners and strategic stakeholders.
- Build and maintain strong relationships across academic, public sector and industry ecosystems to support programme objectives.

Other Duties

The duties listed are not exhaustive and may be varied from time to time as dictated by the changing needs of the University. The post holder will be expected to undertake other duties as appropriate and as requested by his/her manager.

The post holder may be required to work at any of the locations at which the business of Royal Holloway is conducted, including the CoSTAR National Lab at Pinewood Studios.

- Represent the University to the outside world, to further the University's interests and secure its objectives.
- Promote and maintain equality of opportunity and diversity with respect to both University staff, students, and external stakeholders.
- Appropriately and effectively discharge departmental and University Health & Safety obligations and responsibilities.

Internal and external relationships

The following list is not exhaustive, but the post holder will be required to liaise with:

Internal (University)

- University Council
- University Executive/SMT
- Project and Programme Boards or Committees (PAG, EB, BCPC, FC, EPC and University Council)
- University MI&BC

External

- CoSTAR partners: NFTS, University of Surrey, Abertay University, Surrey County Council, Bucks County Council
- LEPs and local authorities
- National Government Departments – BEIS, DSIT, DCMS
- MP and Local Councillors
- CoSTAR Network and IFU Labs
- National and International Creative Industries SMEs
- Cultural institutions, such as The National Gallery, Royal Shakespeare Company, BBC etc.

Multinational technology companies – Meta, Niantic, Google, Amazon, etc

Our Values

Advancing equity and inclusion is central to our identity as a University of Social Purpose, guided by our values of being Respectful, Innovative, Open, and Daring. We strive to build a fair and inclusive environment for all colleagues and students, where we challenge ourselves and others with integrity, and approach difference with understanding and kindness. Every member of our community is expected to treat others with dignity, work collaboratively across a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives, and contribute to a place where everyone can participate fully and feel valued.

Person Specification

Job Title: StoryFutures and CoSTAR
Operations Director

Department: StoryFutures SBU

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, Education, Qualifications and Training		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum degree level. Or equivalent in experience in the creative industries or related discipline.	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognised qualifications or substantial training in a project management i.e., Prince or Agile or Scrum.	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of UK subsidy control, state aid in an R&D context and strong understanding of UK VAT applications to R&D and commercial activity.	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A working knowledge of UKRI funding rules, including finance, monitoring and reporting	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A working knowledge of public procurement rules.		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge for the development of sustainable business and commercial models		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of studio-based or specialist R&D infrastructure operations.		X

Skills and Abilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent written and oral communication skills with the ability to negotiate in a variety of contexts. 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide leadership and support to motivate colleagues to reach objectives with limited resources and meeting tight deadlines when required. 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge and support the needs and interests of diverse staff, students and external University clients. 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to co-ordinate and build relationships between Universities and Creative Industries or across different creative industry sectors. 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding ability to work pro-actively, including both deputising and delegating 	X	
Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant senior leadership experience managing large-scale, grant-funded research and innovation programmes within the creative industries and/or academic environments (exceeding £5 million), including delivery of multi-stakeholder projects with responsibility for project management, stakeholder engagement, governance and monitoring and reporting. 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant experience contracting academic collaborations and industry partnerships. 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrable experience of contributing to successful funding bids exceeding £5 million. 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of successful change management. 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of collaborative data management tools e.g. Basecamp, Slack, Asana, Dropbox, Doodle client relationship management processes and systems (e.g. Sales Force, Zoho, Apptivo or large spreadsheets/databases) 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working in an R&D context in Higher Education or Large Enterprise organisations. 		X
Other requirements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement for national and international travel and a full and clean driver's licence 	X	