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Excellence in  
Education

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Research Director / Senior Research Manager** **(International Education)**

<b>Job Title:</b>	Research Director / Senior Research Manager (International Education); Grade 7 or 8 depending on skills and experience
<b>Department:</b>	Research
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Head of International Education
<b>Staff Supervised:</b>	As required

#### **Job purpose**

To play a leading role in realising NFER's vision to support the development of education systems around the world, focusing in particular on donor-funded activity in low-income countries, through proactive business development, successful research proposals, engaging with the international education and development communities, and delivery of high quality education projects.

#### **Main activities**

***Text in bold italics refers to additional requirements of the Research Director post.***

Around 72% (**50%**) of time will be spent working on charged for project work. This role will be based in our Head Office in southeast England, but will require extensive international travel.

Creating new opportunities:

- Contributing to (***leading***) NFER's strategy to win and deliver donor-funded projects in low-income countries.
- Seeking intelligence on upcoming opportunities and ensure that NFER are well prepared and positioned to respond to these;
- Leading (***directing***) the development of high quality proposals;
- Contributing to (***leading***) proactive business development, working in a consultative manner with potential clients to identify their needs and how NFER can address them;
- Developing innovative research, assessment or knowledge solutions to meeting the challenges faced in international education;
- Building a strong network of partner organisations and Research Associates who bring additional capacity and complementary skills to NFER;
- Working with colleagues across the Foundation, particularly in the Bid Team and Sales, Marketing and Impact (SMI) team, to monitor international competitors and their activities.

Leading the delivery of research projects:

- Leading (***directing***) the design and delivery of projects to ensure that they have an impact on learners, practitioners or policy makers;

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- **Overseeing multiple projects in the role of Project Director, ensuring these are delivered on time and on budget, in keeping with NFER quality assurance procedures;**
- Managing positive client relationships, **particularly with major clients such as DfID**, ensuring issues are addressed rapidly and effectively;
- Managing project risks and ensuring issues are escalated to senior management when required.

Developing expertise:

- Maintaining an expertise in global education issues, **and a strong profile among the international development community**, in relevant areas of research, and what could be addressed through new research;
- Contributing to NFER's understanding of international education and our internal capacity by identifying and sharing with NFER colleagues key developments in policy, practice and research, and delivering/organising internal training or seminars where appropriate;
- Providing cross-Foundation technical expertise in line with the post holder's background, **as part of a professional leads network where relevant.**

Impact and stakeholder engagement

- Raising the profile of NFER amongst the international education community, and increasing awareness and recognition of the Foundation's research and assessment expertise, services and products;
- Developing and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, including clients, partners and others in the international development community;
- Contributing to NFER's positive impact on education and learning by building influence in the sector, ensuring high quality evidence is used to inform decision-making;
- Representing NFER at external meetings, conferences, and events, to promote the NFER and insights from our research, and to gain information on the market, innovations, methodological developments and technical trends.

Other organisational responsibilities:

- **Supporting the Head of International Education in developing an overall international strategy for NFER;**
- Attending training courses, seminars or conferences as required by the role and agreed with the line manager;
- Working with the Head of International Education to discuss performance, targets and development needs for yourself and the team;
- Contributing to Foundation-wide strategic activities as required, **including taking major responsibility for aspects of departmental or NFER-wide activities;**
- Conducting other professional duties from time to time, as directed by the line manager or Head of Centre.

The post-holder will also be required to take on line management responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the corporate view is communicated and understood by staff and provides a channel for feedback to senior management;
- Supporting the change process both within departments and across the Foundation;

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- Conducting effective performance reviews, setting clear individual/project and departmental objectives and ensuring these are monitored; seeking and collating feedback from Team Managers to ensure staff are being developed, motivated and to support performance review;
- Planning appropriate learning and development activities to support the department development plan and individual development; reviewing the effectiveness of investment in learning and development;
- Encouraging staff to be involved in decision making; utilising the skill of direct reports to their full potential by coaching and mentoring; recognising and acknowledging excellent performance;
- Providing timely and appropriate feedback, both positive and developmental;
- Addressing any performance issues effectively, involving the Team manager as required.

### Person specification

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following skills, capabilities and experience:

Essential background and experience:

- At least three (**five**) years' experience supporting education in low income countries
- Expertise in either educational research or assessment, with an established track record applying at least one of the following areas of expertise in an international context:
  - the design and use of assessment systems and tests in education
  - educational curricula and qualifications
  - education policy and strategic planning
  - the design and delivery of mixed methods monitoring and evaluation
  - education statistics and secondary analysis
  - experience in schools, other learning environments or in education leadership
- Experience winning and delivering donor-funded education research, evaluation or capacity building activities
- Experience of working with senior stakeholders and policy makers, and an understanding of their need for evidence and knowledge to inform decision making
- Educated to degree level

Essential skills and attributes:

- Highly developed analytical capabilities
- Strong interpersonal and relationship building skills
- Able to communicate clearly to a variety of audiences, particularly in writing
- Able to work collaboratively, as an effective team member and in a wider organisational structure, working with a range of junior and senior colleagues
- ***Has consultancy expertise and the ability to work with uncertainty and turn high level ideas into firm projects and outputs***
- Creativity and innovation
- Ability to work in a fast paced environment and to tight deadlines

Desirable:

- Experience working on DfID-funded projects
- Experience working in Eastern Africa or Southern Asia
- Foreign language skills