

N8 Centre of Excellence for Computationally Intensive Research (CIR) RDM Theme Leader

Job Description

Job Title: Research Data Management (RDM) Theme Lead

Duration and Commitment: Up to 31st July 2026 (in the first instance) at 0.2 FTE

Reports to: N8 CIR Director

Responsible for: Designing, developing and driving forward the Research Data Management (RDM) Theme and leading the N8 RDM community.

Background

The N8 Research Partnership (<https://www.n8research.org.uk/>) is a collaboration of the eight most research intensive Universities in the North of England: Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York. The N8 Centre of Excellence for Computationally Intensive Research (N8 CIR - <https://n8cir.org.uk/>) was launched in November 2018 to help N8 researchers gain a competitive edge by developing their computational skills and facilitating access to appropriate computational resources. N8 CIR is directly funded by the 8 partners, initially from 2018 - 2023, and recently renewed from 2023-2028.

A direct benefit of establishing N8 CIR is the potential to share computational training and resources, address key challenges in the selected research areas and themes and provide capability in cross-cutting methodologies. The two initial academic priority areas were decided to be Digital Health and Digital Humanities and in 2022 we added Machine Learning as a third research theme. In parallel with this, we have also been building the support community, initially focussing on Research Software Engineers (RSE). This led to the creation of the UK-wide Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) professionals retreat, a five-day event involving panel discussions and group sessions for specialists to develop soft skills and network with peers. Initially held as a fully hybrid 5-day event in 2022 with EPSRC funding, it attracted over 200 attendees (either in-person or online) and was hailed as a great success. This was repeated in 2024 with STFC funding and is now set to become an annual event (see Jan 2025 event information at <https://n8cir.org.uk/training-and-events/dri-retreat-2025/>). It became obvious at the initial event that work with other parts of the DRI community, including Research Infrastructure Engineers (RIE) and Research Data Management (RDM) professionals is needed. For this reason, we created an RIE Theme Lead from 2022 - 2024 and now wish to replace this with an RDM Theme Lead.

Overview of the role

The N8 partners (along with the research councils) have each individually recognised the importance of Research Data Management (RDM) and the key role of the professionals that support this, e.g.

<https://n8cir.org.uk/supporting-research/research-data-management/>. There are already various networks, of differing degrees of seniority (e.g. N8 Library Directors Group) that work in this space, so we wish to build upon this by supporting the formation of a coherent community of RDM professionals at all levels across the N8. Such professionals may have various job titles and be found in many departments including university libraries and elsewhere. We aim to be inclusive, and build upon the founding vision of N8 CIR to develop active communities of researchers and research support staff across N8 institutions, sharing expertise and good practice, and collaborating to provide training to enhance the digital skills of researchers. RDM professionals have a key role in delivering this vision, and so the role of RDM Theme Lead has been created to act as the focal point for all RDM-focused activities of N8 CIR.

The appointee will lead activities to develop communities of practice for Research Data Management professionals across the partnership and beyond, including convening local and regional community-building events, developing and sharing training and best practice, and contributing to running CIR events such as the annual Digital Research Infrastructure Retreat.

We are seeking an effective and capable leader, currently based at an N8 institution, to head the N8 CIR RDM Theme. This will involve working closely with the N8 CIR Project Director's Group, the research and RDM community at each of the N8 partners, the N8 Library Directors Group, and the wider RDM and research community.

The successful applicant must be based at one of the N8 institutions – Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield or York. This 0.2 FTE role will suit someone who is not already at 1.0 FTE or for whom the time can be 'bought out' from their existing role.

Key responsibilities, accountabilities and duties

- Be a community leader for RDM professionals across the N8, including organising regular meetings and events
- Co-organise events such as the Digital Research Infrastructure professionals retreat
- Work with the key research areas identified by the N8 Strategic Executive Group
- Contribute to the strategy of the CIR through membership of the Directors Group
- Identify and disseminate good practice within the RDM theme
- Work with the leaders of other areas to:
 - Identify key opportunities for CIR to accelerate progress
 - Propose a joint programme of training and activities
 - Develop the existing communities of practice
- Report on RDM activities to University governance groups across N8 including the N8 Library Directors Group

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience of research data management in a university setting
- Be able to demonstrate strategic thinking and vision
- Potential and motivation to be a leader

- Be able to build and maintain good relations and networks with diverse research communities
- Ability to manage/coordinate several projects simultaneously
- Ability to organise events and chair meetings

Desirable

- Experience of RDM in multiple settings
- Experience of creating a business case for RDM-relevant need
- Experience of data management requirements for grant funding process

Application Process

Applicants should send a covering letter and a 2-page CV to matt.probert@york.ac.uk by noon on November 29th 2024. Interviews are expected to take place online w/b 9th December 2024.