

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

Job Description

Job Title: Research Software Engineering Theme Lead

Duration and Commitment: Up to 30th June 2023 (in the first instance) at 0.2 FTE

Reports to: N8 CIR Director

Responsible for: Designing, developing and driving forward the RSE Theme in concert with other theme leaders; managing / coordinating RSEs working on cross-institutional projects; engaging nationally and internationally as appropriate; leading the user group for the EPSRC National Tier-2 HPC service, Bede.

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/](https://n8cir.org.uk/)) was launched in November 2018 with a 5-year mission to help N8 researchers gain a competitive edge in their research by developing their computational skills and facilitating access to appropriate computational resources, all with the support of a network of research software engineers.

A direct benefit of establishing N8 CIR is the potential to share computational training and software infrastructure – both to address key challenges in the selected research areas and themes and to provide capability in cross-cutting methodologies. The two initial priority areas were decided to be Digital Health and Digital Humanities. We therefore started with a community consultation to identify common training and software challenges/needs and since then have been busy delivering these needs, building the RSE community and securing a Tier-2 facility (Bede) to support this.

Overview of the role

The N8 partners (along with the research councils) have each individually recognised the key role that can be played by research software engineers (RSEs) in realising benefit from, and democratising access to computational facilities. The N8 CIR was set up to build on these existing initiatives by developing an active community of RSEs (and other Research IT staff) across N8, sharing reusable software, expertise and good practice, and collaborating to provide training to enhance the digital skills of researchers. We recognize that RSEs are key to delivering this vision, and so this role of RSE Theme Lead was created to act as the focal point for all the RSE-focused activities of N8 CIR.

The appointee will lead activities to develop communities of practice for Research Software Engineers across the partnership and beyond, including convening the user group and coordinating RSE activities in support of the EPSRC National Tier 2 HPC facility, Bede (<https://n8cir.org.uk/supporting-research/facilities/nice/>).

We are looking for an effective and capable leader, currently based at a N8 institution, to head the N8 CIR RSE Theme. This will involve working closely with the N8 CIR Executive, the research and RSE community at each of the N8 partners and with the wider RSE 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

- Work with the key research areas identified by the N8 Senior Executive Group
- Identify cross-cutting capability (training, software tools, methodology, expertise) that could benefit multiple research groups across the N8
- Work with the leaders of other areas to:
 - Identify key opportunities for CIR to accelerate progress
 - Propose a joint programme of training and work
 - Develop the existing communities of practice
- Lead the joint programmes of work and RSE community of practice
- Work with RSEs across the N8 to deliver training and complete pieces of work identified as being for the “common good”
- Disseminate good practice and the tools produced by the RSE theme
- Report on activities to University governance groups across N8
- Manage / coordinate work across the N8 institutions by staff without direct managerial responsibility
- Lead the Tier-2 Bede User Group and the Women in HPC Action Group

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience of Research Software Engineering at a research intensive university
- Be able to demonstrate strategic thinking and vision
- Demonstrable leadership qualities
- Be able to build and maintain good relations and networks with diverse research communities
- Ability to manage / coordinate several projects simultaneously

Desirable

- Experience of Computationally Intensive Research

Application Process

Applicants should send a covering letter and a 2 page CV to gillian.sinclair@manchester.ac.uk by noon on Friday 11th September 2020. Interviews are expected to take place online on Wednesday 14th October 2020.