

Excluded Management Job Position Description

Section 1: Position information

Effective Date: July 1, 2024 <input type="checkbox"/> Update Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classification Review	
Position Title	Director, Research and Innovation
Position Number	998517
Classification Level	Excluded Management - Level E
Department	Research Office
Reports To	Associate Vice President Research

Position Summary

The Director, Research and Innovation will collaborate with the Associate Vice-President Research (AVPR) to propel the ambitious research vision of Athabasca University (AU). Their leadership directly aligns with the university's priority of cultivating an active, ambitious, and inclusive research culture. They will achieve this by driving success and delivering services that support AU's new strategic plan (*Like No Other*, launching Summer 2024) and upcoming Strategic Research Plan (launching Fall 2024). Their work and that of their teams will increase the activity, supports, and successes in seeking and securing external research grants for enhanced research impact. They play a critical role in elevating the priority and enhancing the profile of research at AU.

Organizationally, the Director oversees the departmental leadership of the Research Development team and Research Services team and ensures a positive and engaged team culture in support of AU researchers. As the operational leader of these portfolios, the Director enhances the capacity, priority, strategic success, and impact of AU's research community.

Through effective governance representation, meaningful engagement with the five faculties, effective service delivery, and policy development, they will contribute to the maturation of AU's research enterprise.

As the AVPR's primary delegate, the Director will champion and represent AU's research priorities, capabilities, and opportunities on behalf of the AVPR as needed.

Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership: (20%)

- Partner with the AVPR to spearhead the development and execution of initiatives



and operational plans aligned with the Strategic Research Plan and university priority on cultivating an active, ambitious, and inclusive research culture.

- Formulate and implement strategies to strengthen AU's competitive edge in securing sponsored research funding from Tri-Agency, industry, and community sources.

Operational Excellence: (20%)

- Lead and supervise two personnel (Manager, Research Development team, and Manager, Research Services team); oversee and optimize the performance and service coordination of their growing Research Development and Research Services teams (currently 12 staff total).
- Lead the development of annual RO Operational Plans and Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) budget requests and represents budget cases to AU governance bodies.
- Support the growth and development of teams and lead sustainable change initiatives by evergreening administrative processes, strategic services, and implementation of technological solutions.

Administrative Management: (30%)

- Ensure effective and efficient internal grant approval, submission, and post-award processes managed by the Research Office teams.
- Act as a signing authority, endorsing and approving internal and external pre-award research proposals for the AVPR to ensure compliance with reporting guidelines and regulatory processes.
- Collaborate with the Manager, Research Services and Manager, Research Development to establish, monitor, and report on operational budgets for both teams as well as advise on cross team collaborations.
- Act as the departmental signatory for financial and contractual matters as delegated by AVPR (up to value approved in AU signing authority policy).
- Collaborate across the Research Office and with leaders of academic and administrative teams on matters of organizational resilience and integrity (e.g., enterprise risk management, business continuity, research security, ethics) and assume a leadership role in the development and implementation of corresponding plans as applicable.
- Act as the first point of contact for any major compliance issues and works with the



AVPR to address concerns.

- Serve as a point of contact for research integrity concerns (i.e., ethics and research security) and coordinate information and responses with appropriate team members in the RO or other administrative units.
- Represent the AVPR in the annual animal care review process to ensure compliance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) requirements.

Representation and Engagement: (15%)

- As the primary liaison between the RO and the faculties, the Director will be a catalyst of research culture with Associate Deans Research as well as work directly with Directors in administrative committees to develop and mature processes or policies for effective research administration.
- Serve as a designated delegate for the AVPR on committees or in external meetings, as needed.

Policy and Reporting: (15%)

- Lead the development and refinement of policies, procedures, and program guidelines governing AU's research and innovation activities.
- Assume a primary role in compiling and submitting institutional research reports for external entities, including funding agencies and compliance bodies.

Occupational Health and Safety

Employees:

Responsible to participate in the AU OHS Program as required.

Supervisors:

Responsible for awareness of one's OHS Responsibilities as an AU employee and supervisor, for participating in the AU OHS Program as required, and for ensuring the participation of employees in the AU OHS Program as required.

See: <https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li008>

Classification Factors

Communication

The Director leads through influence, builds awareness, and garners buy-in through clear, effective, and persuasive communications with internal audiences in the AU research community. They excel in engaging audiences across mediums (written, online, and in-person) to drive research culture and elevate the organizational priority on research. They effectively represent and promote AU's research priorities with clarity and strength. Their communication style fosters engagement and excitement through meaningful interaction, both within the Research Office and across academic and administrative groups at the university. The Director is a skilled presenter, able to create and deliver compelling presentations about AU's research activities and initiatives. They will regularly develop compelling, accurate, and informative materials for briefs, reports, business plans, and committee presentations.

Supervision

The Director provides direct leadership to two key managers: Manager, Research Development and Manager, Research Services who collectively lead a staff of twelve. These teams are central to supporting research activities across all five faculties at AU. The Director brings a proven track record of success in leading change initiatives and delivering projects effectively through their direct reports.

In anticipation of future growth, the Director is prepared to supervise additional personnel within the evolving Research Office structure.

The Director will also foster strong working relationships with key internal stakeholders, including Associate Deans Research (or equivalent) and Directors in other units to ensure collaborative research success across and within faculties.

Impact of Service or Product

The Director plays a significant role in elevating the priority and opportunity of research at AU at the institutional level. Their work has a high impact on growing research culture, increasing research capacity, translating strategic priorities into impactful initiatives that both increase sponsored research revenue and enhance the reputation of AU as a distinctly open and competitive research university.

They oversee research administration, ensuring effectiveness and continuous improvement. Their work in this domain directly influences supports and success rates for securing external research grants by fostering a culture of strong proposals and applications. Their work and the services their teams provide have a university-wide impact on research across all faculties.

They collaborate with the AVPR to align operational effectiveness and strategic research goals and develop key performance indicators and unit level plans. In this respect, they elevate the profile and impact of AU research through targeted engagement, opportunity development, and collaboration.

Independence of Action

Collaborates closely with the AVPR while exercising independent judgment to translate university research strategy into operational plans and initiatives. The Director is an empowered decision maker and aligns operational plans, resources, and finances within the Research Office teams with institutional priorities. As the operational leader of the Research Office, they manage unit performance, budgets, and financial and administrative approvals.

They leverage data and strategic thinking to make high-impact decisions regarding resource allocation and growth initiatives. The Director empowers direct reports to flourish within their roles, fostering a culture where everyone contributes their best to AU's research success.

Proactively champions and develops innovative approaches to position AU's research community for greater activity, success, and impact. The Director will work with a high degree of independence with internal support units and client partner relationships (i.e., Human Resources, Finance, and IT).

Complexity

The Director plays a key role in navigating the evolving research landscape. They possess a comprehensive and current understanding of the growing complexities within a university's research enterprise and external environment, including policy and programs of Tri-Agency and provincial funders, open research, research finances, compliance, EDI (equity, diversity & inclusion), Indigenization, research data management, research security, and ethics. They build capacity, foster awareness, and grow understanding of these complex areas within their teams and across the university. With the support of the AVPR and through their direct reports, they lead and implement services, resources, policy, and support structures to mature and strengthen AU's research enterprise in these domains.

As both a strategic partner to the AVPR and operational leader of the Research Office, they recognize the interconnectedness of research with other facets of AU's success, both academic and administrative. They utilize strategic thinking to navigate complexity while supporting areas of research growth through both current services and new initiatives.

Planning

The Director will lead and develop operational plans of the Research Office teams, flowing from the priorities of the university's strategic plans and research priorities and metrics. They will lead the annual integrated resource planning process on behalf of the Research Office, ensuring financial resources are secured, allocated, and managed to advance these priorities. They will also manage all in-year reporting on financial plans and operational budgets to track progress against projections. They will collaborate with and support the AVPR to ensure internal and external research program reports accurately reflect progress against planned commitments.

Section II: Qualifications

Education and Experience:

- Master's degree and minimum five years experience in a leadership role within post-secondary research administration. Doctorate degree an asset. Equivalent combinations of formal qualifications and experience may be considered.
- Demonstrated commitment to career and personal growth through additional training.

Knowledge and Skills:

- **Research Funding:** Current knowledge of Tri-Agency programs (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR), key federal programs (CFI, Canada Research Chairs, Research Support Fund), and provincial funding landscape (Alberta Innovates, Research Capacity Program).
- **Research Integrity:** Up-to-date knowledge of research security, research data management, EDI in research, ethics, Indigenization, and best practices for open research.
- **University Priorities:** Strong understanding and commitment to AU's mission as a comprehensive and academic research university, Strategic Research Plan, and research policies/procedures.



- Financial Acumen: Ability to develop, manage, administer, and report on internal operational budgets and external sponsored research revenue.
- Communication: Excellent communication, engagement, and presentation skills across mediums, including the creation and delivery of briefs, reports, and financial statements.
- Collaboration: Experienced in liaising and consulting with a diversity of stakeholders, effective in collaborating with other like leadership roles across the university and cultivating meaningful relationships internal and external to the university.
- Team Leadership: Builds and leads effective and engaged distributed teams for operational effectiveness and strategic success. Thrives in a hybrid team environment.
- Initiative: A self-starter who embraces challenges, strives for continuous improvement in their role and that of their team, and is adaptable to pivot in response to emerging needs or opportunities.
- Engagement: Works effectively in a hybrid environment and ability to travel regionally within Alberta as needed.