

Development Officer *Recruitment pack*

September 2026



The Institute for
Research in Schools

researchinschools.org

Development Officer Recruitment Pack

September 2026

Role: Development Officer

Responsible to: Director

Working hours: 37.5 hours per week

Contract: Fixed term contract to September 2028. Extension subject to funding and trustee approval.

Location: Home-based with occasional travel throughout the UK

Salary: £38,000-£42,000

Benefits: 10% employer pension contribution, 30 days' annual leave plus public holidays, CPD and employee assistance programme.

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) wants to change the culture in UK education so that authentic research and innovation is part of every young person's experience. We're looking for a skilled and thoughtful development professional to join our small, collaborative and ambitious team as Development Officer.

This hands-on role offers the opportunity to shape and strengthen IRIS's fundraising approach by developing persuasive proposals, building funder relationships, developing major-gift opportunities and helping establish sustainable systems for future growth.

Reporting to the Director, you'll work closely with colleagues, consultants and funders to build a strong fundraising pipeline, produce compelling bids and pitches and support effective donor engagement. Your work will strengthen IRIS's long-term sustainability and help us extend the impact of our mission.

What you'll be doing:

- **Build and manage the fundraising pipeline**, maintaining accurate prospect and opportunity records and reporting progress to Directors.
- **Research prospective funders and relationships**, producing concise intelligence and briefings to support engagement.
- **Develop high-quality funding proposals**, coordinating contributions across IRIS and aligning applications with strategic priorities.
- **Support donor relationships and strengthen internal fundraising capability**, coordinating stewardship, tracking follow-up actions and embedding sustainable systems and organisational knowledge.

This is an exciting time to join IRIS as we invest in a more strategic and sustainable approach to fundraising. You'll have the opportunity to help shape this developing function, work directly with senior colleagues and support growth in our reach and impact.

We welcome applicants from diverse personal and professional backgrounds, including people living with disabilities and those from underrepresented groups. We are committed to a fair and accessible recruitment process.

About IRIS

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) was founded on the belief that young people have the capacity to change the world. If their education empowers them with the right tools, school-aged students can contribute to the community of scientific research right now.

This founding belief remains central to IRIS. Our mission is to change the culture in UK education so that authentic research and innovation is part of every young person's experience. We do this by:

- Creating opportunities for students to participate in cutting-edge STEM research and collaborate with leading universities and institutions while still at school
- Evidencing the impact of students carrying out research while still at school
- Facilitating a research culture by influencing and demonstrating best practice of research and innovation in schools.

As a charity, everything we do is driven by our moral purpose; to capture talent and break down barriers that impact underrepresented young people in STEM.

How to apply

Please complete the [IRIS application form](#) and [Diversity Monitoring form](#) and email both documents as set out below. IRIS assesses candidates from the information provided in the application form, so CVs or applications in other formats will not be considered.

Applications should address:

- Why you wish to take on this role.
- What you can bring to the post.
- How you meet the criteria as stated in the job description and person specification.

If you wish to have an informal conversation about the role prior to applying, please contact Dr Jo Foster, Director by email at info@researchinschools.org ensuring that the subject of your email is ***Inquiry – Development Officer***.

The key dates to note for the recruitment process:

- **Monday 19th October 2026 (midday):** Deadline for applications, which should be emailed to info@researchinschools.org with the subject heading ***IRIS Application – Development Officer***.
- **Monday 26th October 2026:** candidates selected following initial review will be invited to first stage online interviews. Applicants who have not received an invitation by this date should assume that their application has not progressed.
- **Wednesday 4th November 2026:** formal interviews in London for shortlisted candidates.
- **January / February 2027:** the successful candidate is expected to start in post.

Please note that candidates must have the right to live and work in the UK. The successful candidate will be employed under UK law. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. An online search based on the information provided by shortlisted candidates will also be conducted. Appointment will be contingent on a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check. All applications and recruitment records for unsuccessful candidates will be retained for a period of 12 months before being securely deleted.

Job Description	Development Officer
Responsible to	Director
Working hours	37.5 hours per week
Contract	Initial fixed term contract to September 2028. Extension subject to funding and trustee approval.
Location	Home-based with occasional travel throughout the UK
Salary	£38,000 - £42,000 per annum
Benefits	10% employer pension contribution, 30 days' annual leave plus public holidays, CPD, employee assistance programme

Purpose of the Job: The Development Officer will help shape and deliver IRIS's fundraising activity. Working closely with the Director and Development Consultant, the postholder will manage the funding pipeline, support the development of major-gift relationships, prepare high-quality proposals and establish practical systems that strengthen IRIS's long-term fundraising capability.

Key Responsibilities

Pipeline Management and Reporting:

- Maintain and develop a prospect database
- Track all funding opportunities from identification to decision
- Produce regular pipeline reports for Directors and Trustees
- Ensure accuracy, consistency and accessibility of data

Prospect Research and Intelligence:

- Identify and research prospective funders across trusts, foundations, corporate partners and individuals
- Map relationships across IRIS, trustees and wider networks
- Prepare concise briefings for meetings and engagement activity

Proposal Development:

- Draft funding applications, expressions of interest and supporting documentation
- Coordinate input from across IRIS teams
- Ensure applications align with strategic priorities and are of a high standard

Donor Stewardship and Relationship Management:

- Support cultivation and ongoing communication with funders and major donors
- Coordinate reporting and stewardship requirements
- Maintain records of engagement and commitments

Support to Director and Development Consultant:

- Prepare briefing packs for meetings and events
- Track follow-ups, actions and relationship development
- Support coordination of fundraising activity across the organisation

Institutional Knowledge and Capability:

- Capture and maintain knowledge of funders, relationships and approaches
- Develop systems and processes that embed organisational learning
- Contribute to building a repeatable and sustainable development function

This is not an exhaustive list and other duties may be required to meet the charity's objectives. IRIS staff work from home with equipment provided. Reasonable travel expenses are reimbursed under IRIS policy; occasional travel is required for meetings and events.

Person Specification	Development Officer	
Criteria	Key Attributes	Assessment
Qualifications and professional experience	• Relevant professional experience in fundraising, development, partnerships or a related field, or an equivalent professional qualification. • A high standard of written and spoken English.	Application
Experience	Essential • Experience of building and developing relationships with major donors, corporate partners, senior stakeholders or other high-value supporters, or demonstrably comparable relationship-management experience. • Experience of researching potential donors, supporters, partners or funding opportunities. • Experience gained in fundraising, business development, partnerships, account management or a comparable relationship-based role. • Experience of producing persuasive proposals, briefings, reports, presentations or senior-level correspondence. • Experience of managing competing priorities and maintaining accurate prospect, relationship or pipeline records. • Experience of working collaboratively with senior leaders, trustees, colleagues or external partners. • Experience of maintaining accurate prospect, relationship or pipeline information, using a CRM or comparable system. Desirable • Direct experience of major-gift fundraising, including prospect development, donor cultivation or stewardship. • Experience in the charity, education, research or not-for-profit sectors. • Experience of fundraising campaigns, donor events or stewardship programmes.	Application / Interview
Knowledge	• Understanding of fundraising regulations, best practice and the charity sector.	Application / Interview
Skills and Competences	• Strong organisational and project management skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and deliver to agreed deadlines. • Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to produce persuasive	Application / Interview

	materials and present clearly to varied audiences. • Strong relationship-building skills, with the ability to engage donors, trustees, senior colleagues, partners and other external stakeholders. • Proficiency in Microsoft Office and confidence using digital systems to maintain accurate records and manage information. • Ability to work independently and manage own time in a home-based role with occasional travel.	
Personal Attributes	• Proactive, well organised and able to use initiative. • Discreet and professional when handling sensitive information. • Collaborative and comfortable supporting senior colleagues in external-facing work. • Adaptable and constructive as organisational priorities develop. • Committed to IRIS's mission and values. • Pragmatic and focused on results.	Interview
Other	• Able and willing to travel. • Able and willing to work outside normal office hours on occasion, with TOIL accrued.	Application / Interview