

Council for British Research in the Levant

Role Specification for Director – Initial 3-year fixed term contract

March 2025

The Council for British Research in the Levant, the UK’s social sciences and humanities research hub in the region, seeks to appoint a new director.

This is an exciting opportunity to shape CBRL’s research agenda, ideally suited for a scholar who combines a commitment to the cultures and histories of the Levant with the demonstrable ability to lead an interdisciplinary and multi-sited research organisation.

With centres in Amman, Jerusalem and London, CBRL fosters, produces and disseminates original, rigorous and independent research and invests in promising emerging scholars. Our overarching mission is to advance knowledge and understanding of the peoples and cultures of the Levant through scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.

The successful applicant will be a leading scholar with a background in the humanities, social or environmental sciences. They will have an outstanding research profile and demonstrable experience of academic leadership and strong general management ability. They will have a clear vision for building on CBRL’s existing strengths as a research centre and regional hub for scholars of the Levant.

Working closely with CBRL trustees and staff, as well as other stakeholders, the successful applicant will develop a strategy for the future that prioritises both cutting-edge research initiatives and relationships with regional and international partners. As part of this, they will devise new fundraising and grant-generating initiatives. With overall responsibility for the CBRL’s management, they will work to foster an inclusive, dynamic, and team-oriented research culture.

Founded in 1998, CBRL is the successor to the British Schools of Archaeology in Jerusalem and Amman. In recent years, it has expanded its remit to fund and lead research in other disciplines, such as history, sociology, and literary and cultural studies, while maintaining its historical strength as a hub for archaeological research. As a vital part of the British Academy’s network of British International Research Institutes (BIRI) we sustain and support British research overseas. Leveraging an extensive regional network, rich library and archive resources, and a legacy of independence and local partnership we continue to promote scholarship of the highest standard.

CBRL achieves its goals through a programme of research partnerships and projects, research grants, academic and logistical support to scholars, our libraries and archives in Amman and Jerusalem (and increasingly online), dissemination of research through our academic journals: *Levant* and *Contemporary Levant*, and a programme of public and on-line events.

A key function of CBRL is to provide opportunities across a range of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and related subjects., that will enable a future generation of scholars to develop careers within research on the Levant.

Role Specification

Job Title: CBRL Director

Reports to: CBRL Chair

Based: UK or Amman

Status: The post may be on secondment from a UK university or other institution, or otherwise the Director may be employed directly by CBRL. The Director must be able to spend time in the Levant and/or be able to travel freely around the region as well as to/from UK.

Responsibilities

Strategy and Performance

Working with CBRL trustees, and in dialogue with the British Academy and other partners:

- Lead a review of CBRL's strategy.
- Ensure alignment with regional dynamics and evolving geo-political landscapes.
- Put in place a sustainable model for CBRL's activities, setting ambitions for the next 3 – 5 years.
- Develop and promote high quality, visible UK research projects and research partnerships in and with the region.
- Enhance and increase use of CBRL facilities on the ground

Partnerships

- Cultivate productive relationships with the British Academy, BIRIS and other key stakeholders.
- Expand networks across relevant UK and regional entities to bolster CBRL's strategic and funding objectives.
- Explore and develop possibilities for collaboration and funding beyond the UK Higher Education sector.

Research

- The Director will be expected to develop a programme of highly quality personal research for which time will be allowed within the role, as agreed with CBRL.
- Support and oversee delivery of a high-quality programme of research activity in the region, including research partnerships, grants, projects and events.

Delivery

- Develop the accessibility and sustainability of CBRL archives.
- Ensure high standards of project management and administrative efficiency.
- Develop the communication and dissemination of CBRL's work.

People

- Manage the CBRL staff team to deliver on key priorities, creating a culture of ambition, collaboration and shared values.
- Ensure optimal organisational structure.
- Make sure HR policies and procedures are up-to-date and well-applied.

Finance and Resources

- Develop and implement strategies for sustainable income generation across a range of sources
- Exercise oversight of budgets, resource allocation and reporting
- Oversee financial proposals and reports to BA and other funders
- Make sure facilities are well-managed and secure

Governance

- Report regularly to the Chair of Trustees, keeping them informed of progress against objectives
- Collaborate in setting agendas for and report to trustee Board meetings and the AGM
- Ensure compliance with CBRL's constitution and regulatory requirements

Person Specification

Essential

- Outstanding record of research and publication in the humanities, social or environmental sciences, in one of the disciplines supported by the CBRL.
- Knowledge and experience of the UK higher education and research sector.
- Appreciation of the CBRL's mission
- Demonstrable ability to provide academic and management leadership across a range of disciplines
- Strategic vision and demonstrable ability to lead in the development and delivery of a strategic plan.
- Ability to develop plans and set and monitor objectives
- A consultative and inclusive approach to management, combined with ability to make executive decisions
- Commitment to transparency and to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Clarity and effectiveness in communications
- Significant experience in managing change.
- Strong interpersonal skills conducive to effective engagement and management across diverse environments and contexts.
- A proven ability to communicate well across cultures.
- Willingness to learn Arabic if not already an Arabic speaker.

Highly desirable

- Working knowledge and ability to speak Arabic or other regional language.
- Demonstrable knowledge of accounting, financial and personnel procedures
- Experience of external fundraising
- Experience of managing large grants

Terms of appointment

Appointment Term: Initial period of 3 years.

Location: UK or Amman

Remuneration: Salary range: Appointment will be made at an appropriate point in UK HE Associate Professor or Professorial scales (Grades 9 and 10) commensurate with research track record and management experience. Additional benefits to be discussed during interview.

Time commitment: Full time

20% of salaried time funded by the CBRL will be allowed for development and delivery of personal research

Application process:

Please submit a current CV and a covering letter that explains your interest in, and suitability for, the position, and an outline of the research you would plan to undertake if appointed to the role - including plans to raise research funding - to info@cbri.ac.uk by Monday 7 April.