



Job Description & Person Specification

Section 1 Role Overview

Job title:	Trials Conducting Officer
Vacancy reference:	5414
Faculty/Theme/Centre:	Engineering and Applied Sciences/Cranfield Defence and Security/COTEC
Job type:	Full time Permanent
Hours of work:	37 hours per week, normally worked Monday to Friday. Flexible working will be considered
Salary details:	Salary Level 5 – range £38,655 to £46,492 per annum with potential progression to £53,108 per annum
Line Manager:	Trevor Lawrence – Director of Operations, COTEC
Start date:	As soon as possible
Closing date for applications:	31 October 2026
Interviews will be held:	To be confirmed

Section 2

About Cranfield University

Cranfield's world-class expertise, large-scale facilities and unrivalled industry partnerships is creating leaders in technology and management globally. Find out more about our unique impact, and our vision, mission and values [here](#).

We aim to create and maintain a culture in which everyone can work and study together and realise their full potential. We are a Disability Confident Employer and proud members of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme. We are committed to actively exploring flexible working options for each role and have been ranked in the Top 30 family friendly employers in the UK by the charity [Working Families](#). Find out more about our key commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Flexible Working [here](#).

Section 3

About Cranfield Defence and Security

Based at the UK Defence Academy at Shrivenham in Oxfordshire, CDS has an unrivalled reputation for defence education, research and consultancy, our expertise is trusted by governments, armed forces, and industry and security services around the world.

Visit the Cranfield website to learn more about the School's current research activities, taught programmes and impact: [Learn more about CDS](#).

About COTEC

COTEC is an outstation of Cranfield Defence and Security within the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences and is located on Salisbury Plain south of Devizes. The site is leased from the MOD and all range operations are carried out under the authority of Defence Training Estates Salisbury Plain DTE(SP).

The site carries out a large range of tasks primarily based around the testing and evaluation of explosives, ordnance and munitions for defence and commercial customers. The site also carries out research and supports the research projects of Cranfield University students.

COTEC carries out its own technical, facilities and administrative duties and facilities management with support from the relevant departments on Shrivenham Campus. Human resources and finance management is provided by Shrivenham.

Section 4

Job Details

Job Purpose

You will have established technical expertise and a defined area of specialism, working independently to manage daily tasks. As a Trials Conducting Officer (TCO), you will be primarily responsible for planning trials and range activities, ensuring the safe conduct of the trial, disposing of any residues, and accurately reporting results. Additionally, you will operate specialised equipment, deliver training, and support research and teaching. With strong problem-solving abilities, you will apply advanced knowledge to non-routine situations and be called upon to deliver lectures for COTEC training courses, acting as a key resource in your field.

Key Deliverables

	Description of Deliverables	% of time
1	You will lead, manage, and conduct trials as the nominated Trials Conducting Officer, involving the testing and evaluation of explosives, ordnance, and munitions for defence and commercial customers. You will ensure the planning, preparation, execution, and reporting of proof/trial activities meet time and quality requirements.	50%
2	You will produce trial plans, risk assessments, and COSHH assessments, ensuring compliance with established procedures and practices. You will also develop and maintain safety protocols, acting as the Trials Conducting Officer and Nominated Safety Manager when necessary.	25%
3	You will liaise with customers to develop trial specifications tailored to their requirements, providing significant input into the design, development, and testing of equipment. You will be the primary contact for addressing equipment failures and malfunctions, and you will reach out for external assistance when necessary.	15%
4	You will conduct various management duties, including overseeing quality procedures in accordance with ISO 9001:2015. You will ensure the smooth operation of a complex work area. You will analyse and interpret data and test results, and present findings. Additionally, you will supervise students, and contractors.	10%

Please be advised that the percentages allocated for the key deliverables may be adapted to take into account the needs of the School and / or University.

Planning and organising

The Trials Conducting Officer is required to plan each trial from its earliest conception through to the delivery of the trial report.

To carry this out successfully the TCO must be able to demonstrate well- developed organisation and time management skills along with the ability to liaise with various personalities and organisations both within and outside of COTEC.

The TCO will be required to produce detailed trials plans and be available to meet with customers and other stakeholders in order to fully establish customer requirements and to match them to available resources, relying in an in-depth knowledge of the facilities available both within Cranfield University as a whole, and the wider energetics community.

Detailed planning of the logistic and material requirements need in order to meet the agreed deliverables is essential throughout the planning phase of the trial. In addition, the TCO must have the ability to respond speedily to the changing requirements that are an inevitable consequence of trials and evaluation.

In addition to the planning of the explosive activities it is the TCO's responsibility to plan the correct deployment and protection of the required instrumentation and data capture equipment.

Communicating and influencing

As a Trials Conducting Officer, you will have well-developed written and verbal communication skills that enable you to engage effectively with stakeholders, including staff, customers and students. While you may not have direct line management responsibilities, your ability to influence and collaborate will be essential for fostering a safe and productive environment. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to train others in specialised techniques, including technical teaching.

Problem solving

The TCO is required to demonstrate advanced problem-solving skills throughout the planning and conduct of trials.

While customer requirements may occasionally conflict with what is practically achievable within the constraints of instrumentation capabilities and safe range operating procedures, the TCO will manage expectations and develop workable solutions when such challenges arise.

It is in the nature of trials and evaluation work that the consequences of prescribed activities may not be those expected. This will frequently require a change to the planned schedule and will require the ability to re-plan and re-evaluate on an on-going basis.

Many trials will be bespoke and may require novel solutions. You will be responsible for analysing causes and developing solutions based on their findings. This includes collaborating with staff to initiate and develop new methods or adapt existing equipment for different areas of research.

In this role you will need to determine work priorities, ensuring a flexible approach to address the highly variable nature of the work and evolving customer requirements.

Decision making

I) Decisions you will take without reference to others

- Technical requirements of the trial to provide accurate advice and assistance to colleagues.
- Deployment of equipment and personnel on the range.
- Conduct of the trial within the parameters laid down in the trial plan.
- Analysis of trials data and the sentencing of test items.
- Monitor compliance with safety protocols during trials and act when necessary.
- Establish and maintain effective communication channels with stakeholders to ensure transparency and collaboration throughout the trial process.

II) Decisions you will refer to your manager/colleagues

- Any changes to the firing programme or method of firing whilst the trial is in progress.
- The general outline and methodology of the trial will be agreed in conjunction with the Director.
- Any significant changes to safety protocols that may impact trial conduct or personal safety.
- Decisions regarding budget allocations for trials or research projects that exceed agreed limit.

Guiding framework

All firings of explosives, ordnance and munitions will be carried out in accordance with the general outlines laid down in Ammunition and Explosives regulations Vol 3 Pam 21.

All range activities will be governed by the procedures laid down in COTEC Range Orders and Procedures.

The post holder must also operate within the University procedures and rules, and those of the Defence Academy, including those relating to Health and Safety, Dignity at Work, Security and Information Technology.

Impact

The TCO is the main point of contact between COTEC and the customer and, as such, holds a vital position in the perception and image of COTEC as a professional, technical organisation.

In addition, the technical reports produced by the TCO will often be submitted by the customer to agencies within the MOD and abroad.

The post therefore requires the highest level of professionalism at all times.

The collection of accurate data and the clear, unambiguous presentation of that data is key to COTEC operations. Unless that data is captured the trial could potentially be a waste of a considerable amount of time and expensive resources. The clear presentation of reliable, verifiable and correctly analysed data is vital in maintaining COTEC's reputation as an independent, reliable test house. The maintenance and calibration of specialist equipment is vital to ensuring COTEC maintains its level of capability to conduct trials. As a Nominated Safety Manager (NSM), the Trials Conducting Officer is responsible for the Health & Safety compliance and maintenance of at least one of COTEC's five SHEL areas. This requires regular appraisal of the work areas and involvement in biannual internal audits and inspections. Where standards in these areas fall below an unacceptable level then work within them would need to cease- impacting COTEC's revenue and reputation adversely

Facts and Figures

COTEC will typically generate an income in excess of £2M per annum and generate a surplus in excess of 5%. A large part of this income is generated by the provision of accurate and correctly analysed data.

Section 5

Am I suited to this role?

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education / Qualifications	A military or civilian awarded qualification in the disposal of explosive items such as Class One Ammunition Technician or UNMAS EOD Class Three.	Membership of a relevant professional body. A degree in a relevant science subject.
Experience	Significant demonstrable experience in the firing of explosives, munitions and ordnance in a variety of environments. Proven management and supervisory skills such as those held by a SNCO, Warrant Officer or Commissioned Officer in the Armed Forces. Analysis of data and the production of technical reports.	Experience in the testing and evaluation of Ordnance. Experience in the operation of instrumentation and the gathering of data. Experience in a university research facility. Experience of working with Industrial partners. Preparing and editing technical documents.
Knowledge	In-depth, sound, technical knowledge of ammunition systems. An in-depth knowledge of range procedures. A knowledge of Microsoft Office programmes. Basic knowledge of computers and Software. Working understanding of Health & Safety regulations and procedures.	
Skills / Aptitudes	Good verbal, written communication and interpersonal skills. Good time management and organisational skills and ability to deliver to deadlines.	

	Accuracy and attention to detail. Well-developed understanding of Health & Safety regulations and Procedures. Ability to understand and address non-routine work. Negotiating, influencing and networking. Ability to learn new skills. Flexible attitude and ability to cope with change. Good presentation and technical writing skills. Hold a UK Driving Licence. Analytical capability. Advanced problem-solving skills. Ability to control and command a technically complex environment. Ability to make decisions based on constantly changing data. Ability to liaise with all stakeholders involved in the trial to achieve trial objectives in a safe, technically sound and timely manner. Able to cope with high pressure situations in a safety critical role.	
Values	Ability to demonstrate our values: Ambition, Impact, Respect and Community.	
Other	A willingness to travel both within the UK and overseas as required. Ability to develop innovative solutions and practical implementations for change.	

	Constructive and proactive team player who relates well to others. Strong motivation and resilience.	
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