	Last Updated: 11/11/2026		
Job Title	Research Community Manager (Deaf Communities)		
Faculty/ Department	FEPS / Computer Science and Electronic Engineering / Centre for Vision, Speech and Signal Processing (CVSSP)	**Legal Entity**	University of Surrey
Job Family	Professional Services	**Job Level**	4
Reports To	Principal Investigator (Professor Richard Bowden)	**Line Manages (role title(s))**	None

Job Statement

To build and sustain the relationship between the University's sign language AI research projects and the Deaf community. The post holder will plan and deliver community engagement, participant recruitment, user evaluation and British Sign Language (BSL) communication across the projects, so that Deaf people shape the research, take part in it, and can access its findings in their own language.

This is a 0.5 FTE post in Professor Bowden's sign language research group in the Centre for Vision, Speech and Signal Processing (CVSSP). The group leads a portfolio of collaborative research projects funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and others, with partners including the University of Oxford, University College London and Heriot-Watt University, and works closely with Deaf community organisations.

Key Responsibilities

This is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but the main responsibilities (5 to 8 maximum)

1. Build and maintain relationships with Deaf community organisations, Deaf-led groups and project partners, and promote the projects at community and public events, so that the projects are known, trusted and informed by the Deaf community.
2. Set up and run Deaf user groups and consultation sessions, working with the research team so that Deaf perspectives and accessibility needs are reflected in the projects.
3. Organise user evaluations of research prototypes with Deaf participants, working with researchers on their design, and collate and summarise feedback for the research team.
4. Carry out outreach and recruitment of Deaf participants for data collection, and co-ordinate recording sessions (scheduling, participant information and consent in BSL, interpreters and participant payments) in line with the projects' ethics approvals.
5. Produce informational sign language videos and accessible materials, and make project news and research findings available in BSL.
6. Manage the projects' Deaf-facing social media and outreach channels, in line with University communications policy.
7. Keep accurate records of engagement, participation and feedback, and compile them into reports for project management and funder reporting.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.

Role Scope and Impact

This is a summary of the post holder's role in delivering outcomes, making decisions, and the complexity of problem-solving involved in the role.

Accountability: The post holder plans and organises their own work across several projects, within agreed project plans, ethics approvals and University policy, with freedom to decide how to carry out tasks within those boundaries. They report progress to the Principal Investigator and seek sign-off from the research team for statements about the research. Decisions outside these parameters, including any ethical or reputational issues, are referred to the Principal Investigator. They handle participants' personal data and consent records in line with UK GDPR and the projects' ethics approvals, exercising discretion with confidential and sensitive information.

Problem solving: Most problems are practical and are resolved using established procedures, precedent and the post holder's knowledge of the Deaf community, for example low turnout, access needs or questions about consent at recording sessions. Where procedures do not fit, the post holder uses initiative and judgement to propose a solution, seeking advice from the Principal Investigator on the most complex issues. They review how well engagement and recruitment methods are working and make recommendations for improvement.

Supplementary Information

- 0.5 FTE post working across the group's sign language research projects.
- Co-ordinates spending on participant payments, interpreters and engagement activity within limits agreed with the Principal Investigator; the post holds no budget of its own.
- No line management responsibility.

- Works with a research group of around 15 staff and students, and with partner universities and Deaf community organisations.
- Hybrid working: based in CVSSP and expected on campus when required, including for user groups and recording sessions. Some community events and recording sessions take place in the evening, at weekends or elsewhere in the UK.
- Key internal relationships: the Principal Investigator, Project Manager, research fellows, research software engineers and PhD students; Faculty and central services (HR, Finance, Marketing and Communications); University research ethics and data protection teams.
- Key external relationships: Deaf community organisations and Deaf-led groups; the projects' Deaf advisory boards and user groups; research participants and the wider Deaf public; BSL interpreters and translators; partner universities and organisations.

Person Specification This section describes the knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships		
Degree, HND, NVQ 4 qualified or equivalent in a relevant subject or relevant formal training, plus a number of years' experience in similar or related roles. Or: Significant vocational experience, demonstrating development through involvement in a series of progressively more demanding relevant work or roles, and the acquisition of appropriate professional or specialist knowledge.		E
Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge) This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role (please refer to the Competency Framework for clarification where needed and the Job Matching Guidance). Level 1: basic level of understanding/experience and can apply it with guidance. Level 2: good level of understanding/experience and can apply it with little or no guidance. Level 3: expert level of understanding/experience and can apply, develop it and guide others.	**Essential/ Desirable**	**Level 1-3**
Fluent in British Sign Language, able to communicate directly with Deaf people and to present signed content on camera. Knowledge of other sign languages, including International Sign, is an advantage.	E	3
In-depth knowledge of Deaf culture and the UK Deaf community, its organisations and networks, and awareness of the issues sign language technology and AI raise for Deaf people.	E	3
Experience of community engagement, outreach or advocacy with Deaf communities, including organising and running groups, events or workshops.	E	2
Experience of producing accessible information, including signed video and social media content, with good IT skills (MS Office and online communication tools).	E	2
Understanding of research ethics, informed consent and data protection, ideally with experience of recruiting participants for, or supporting, research or evaluation studies.	E	1
Special Requirements This may include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, regular overseas travel, driving licence, shift work.		**Essential/ Desirable**
Willingness to work occasional evenings and weekends, and to travel within the UK.		E
Core Competencies This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade.		**Level 1-3**
Communication		3
Adaptability and Flexibility		3
Customer, Client service and support		3
Planning and Organising		3
Continuous Improvement		2
Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills		2

Managing and Developing Performance	n/a
Creative and Analytical Thinking	2
Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills	3
Strategic Thinking and Leadership	2

This Job Purpose outlines the core activities of the role. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder evolve, the duties and focus of the role may change. The University expects the post holder to adopt a flexible approach to work, including undertaking relevant training when necessary. If significant changes to the Job Purpose are required, the post holder will be consulted, and the changes will be reflected in a revised Job Purpose.

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.
- Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.
- Contribute towards broader university initiatives that have a positive impact on student experience, recruitment and campus operations. This may include participation in cross-functional activities such as open days, confirmation and clearing, welcome week, graduation.
- Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.
- Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.

Help maintain a safe working environment by:

- All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are, therefore, required to adhere to the University's Our Safety Policy Statement and associated Procedures.

Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

Background Information

Professor Richard Bowden's research group in CVSSP has worked on computer vision for sign language for over 30 years and now focuses on sign language translation. It leads a portfolio of collaborative projects, including SignGPT, a five-year EPSRC Programme Grant with the University of Oxford and University College London building the next generation of AI tools for sign languages; UMCS, an EPSRC and Japan Science and Technology Agency project on sign language translation in everyday conversation, with University College London and Heriot-Watt University; and a Google.org-funded project reducing the cost of sign language translation through AI. The projects are committed to working with and for the Deaf community, through Deaf advisory boards, community partnerships and co-creation of the technology with Deaf users.

The Surrey Institute for People-Centred Artificial Intelligence (PAI) is the founding pan-university institute at the University of Surrey, bringing together core AI-related expertise in audio-visual and signal processing, computer science and mathematics with domain expertise across engineering and physical sciences, human and animal health, law and regulation, business, finance, and the arts and social sciences. PAI's success builds on the University's strength in foundational AI over the past 38 years through CVSSP, which is ranked first in the UK for computer vision and in the top five for audio-visual AI.

CVSSP leads advances in core AI technologies such as computer vision, generative audio, natural language processing and signal analysis, bridging theoretical foundations and real-world applications.

The University of Surrey is a global university with a world-class research profile and an enterprising spirit, located within 35 minutes of London by train and minutes from the Surrey Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Department Structure Chart

