

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT (ncat)

# JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

## 1. JOB INFORMATION

Post Title: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Salary Range: Competitive  
Mode: Full Time, Fixed Term until 31/12/2029  
Ref No: 2736

## 2. JOB DESCRIPTION

### .1 Context

In February 2023, the UK’s first ever National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) was established, with £20M funding from the Motability Foundation. ncat is an evidence centre with a mission to influence the transport sector and shape the future to ensure that all travel systems are accessible for disabled people.  
  
ncat works with disabled people, disability organisations, transport providers and policy makers. It undertakes research to provide evidence to develop solutions, amplifying the voices of disabled people in decision making.  
  
The strength of ncat comes from its diverse partners, who each bring expertise, skills, knowledge, and passion to the centre. Coventry University are the lead partner in the consortium of six organisations, comprised of the Connected Places Catapult, Designability, Policy Connect, Research Institute for Disabled Consumers and WSP.

### .2 CEO Job Purpose

Reporting into the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, the CEO will lead ncat, managing a core operational team at the University. The CEO will be responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of the Board approved strategy for ncat, leading the consortium’s relationship with Motability Foundation (the funder) and with consortium partner organisations, as well as the relationship with a governing board for ncat (composed of an independent chair, six independent board members and senior representatives from consortium partners). The CEO will be responsible for operational delivery of all ncat key activities, ensuring that key milestones are met and that budgets are maintained and controlled. The role-holder will be an ambassadorial external face of ncat, promoting the work of the organisation and building relationships with external organisations to collaborate and translate the work of ncat into meaningful change. It is important that the CEO has credibility and authenticity, and as such will have experience in transport accessibility.

### .3 Main Duties and Responsibilities

ncat Leadership:

* Operational delivery of the ncat programme, directing and engaging the wider internal CU teams (finance, legal, Marcomms, GDPR, IP, etc) to ensure key activities are delivered on time.
* Ensure ncat is delivered within agreed budget.
* Deliver and meet planned KPIs, including regular monitoring and evaluation reporting to the funder (Motability Foundation) and ncat Board.
* Monitor, manage and report risks to the ncat board.
* Work closely with the ncat Board to ensure the voice of disabled people is embedded in the strategic direction and operational execution of ncat.
* Manage and foster relationships with consortium members. Lead and chair the senior leadership team (SLT) meetings and lead & chair the operational delivery group (ODG).
* Working with ncat partners to oversee and support the development of core ncat functions i.e., Community of Accessible Transport, Scaling Innovation programme and Policy Commission.
* Deliver the Board approved strategy for ncat and oversee the delivery of a strategic communications and external engagement plan, including the running of Accessible Transport Summit events to engage disabled people and disabled people organisations (DPOs).
* Ongoing development of the ncat brand. Mission and vision developed and reflected in branding (centre name and brand guidance).
* Engage with an Expert Panel to ensure the voice of DPOs and charities is heard within ncat, to help shape strategic direction and ensure ncat amplifies rather than duplicates the work of other organisations.
* Establish a network of key UK stakeholders to ensure effective dissemination of ncat activity to parties such as policy makers, industry, and transport operators in order to inform their work and instigate change. Foster relationships through meetings, 1:1 briefing, regular communications, talks, etc.
* Ensure reputational benefits to the university, Motability Foundation, and consortium partners through regular internal and external comms on the centre's successes, liaising with marketing as needed.
* Ensure all research is robust, based on evidence and with potential for high impact aligned to ncat’s theory of change.
* Recruit, manage and develop staff across the ncat team within Coventry University.

### .4 SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Reporting to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, the post holder will be a member of the Research Leadership Team within CU Research.  
  
Given the nature and scope of the post it is expected, on a day-to-day basis the post holder will work largely on their own initiative within corporate and specific frameworks and will be accountable for his or her actions.

### .5 SUPERVISION GIVEN

The CEO plays the pivotal leadership role in the Centre and in its ongoing strategic management. The post holder will provide leadership, management, and supervision, both direct and indirect, to a core team assigned to the delivery of ncat.

### .6 CONTACTS

The post holder will be required to build and maintain credibility and long-term trusted relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders both internally and externally, on a local, regional, national, and international basis, including:

* Group:
* Staff at all levels across the Group, in all related areas such as Colleges/School, CU Research and Enterprise and Innovation.
* Externals:
* Ranging from Board level relationships with Disabled Peoples Organisations, Charities, small businesses, and significant scale multinational corporates, as well as national and regional public sector organisations, policy makers and transport operators.
* Funders:
* Motability Foundation.
* Collaborators:
* External organisations ranging from consortium member organisations, as well as other private and public sector organisations working with ncat.
* Other:
* External organisations as necessary, including Media and Press.

## 3. PERSON SPECIFICATION for ncat CEO

What attributes are ESSENTIAL and what attributes are ADVANTAGEOUS

## Education and Qualifications

### Essential:

* Educated to degree level or equivalent experience.

### Advantageous:

* Relevant postgraduate management or research qualification.

## Personal Attributes

### Essential:

* Lived experience of disability.

### Advantageous:

* Identifies as disabled.

## Experience (Paid and Unpaid)

### Essential:

* Awareness of the wider social and economic challenges faced by disabled people in the UK.
* Experience collaborating with partners/stakeholders across multiple sectors (e.g., commercial, public sector, academia, and not-for-profit).
* Experience of working with Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) and support groups.

### Advantageous:

* Strong understanding of national transport issues and the accessibility needs of disabled passengers and road users.
* Experience working in or engaging with the transport sector on transport accessibility.
* Understanding of challenges faced by organisations in the transport sector regarding accessibility.
* Familiarity with government and transport operators as a customer base.
* Knowledge of best practices in accessible service design for disabled people.
* Experience managing large-scale accessibility programmes.

## Job-related Skills and Aptitudes

### Essential:

* Proven leadership in managing teams, strategy, HR, and financial oversight.
* Strong project management skills, including budgetary control and operational delivery.
* Experience leading and embedding transformational change, including structural and strategic developments.
* Track record of establishing long-term strategic partnerships across sectors.
* Experience securing sustained income streams, including from the private sector, and consistently achieving business development targets.

### Advantageous:

* Experience developing business plans and leading performance management of a business unit.
* Experience securing external funding from private sector organisations and funding bodies.
* Ability to draw on an extensive network of external stakeholders to promote the work of the Centre at senior levels across a range of sectors.
* Experience of working in a university environment and working collaboratively with academics.

## Interpersonal Skills

### Essential:

* Strategic thinker with the ability to translate vision into action.
* Entrepreneurial mindset, confident in challenging the status quo and introducing innovative ideas.
* Strong business development, negotiation, and stakeholder management skills.
* Proven leadership and people management skills, fostering high-performance teams.
* High-level communication and presentation skills across diverse audiences.
* Self-motivated, results-focused, and able to work autonomously.

## Other

### Essential:

* Demonstrative commitment to work collaboratively as a core member of the Executive team of the Centre, including to support the building and promotion of a high-profile national reputation and to achieve the targets and ambitions of the Centre.
* A strong affinity to the work, ethos and values of the Centre and commitment to its future success.
* Excellent organisational skills, including time management and deadline adherence.
* IT literate – Microsoft Office packages including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook.