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# R&D Project Manager

## About Bright Ascension

We are a fast growing, innovative company changing the way that software is developed in the space industry. With customers across the world, ranging from universities and space agencies, to commercial organisations and start-ups, our core technologies enable our customers to develop and operate space-based systems and services faster, cheaper and more reliably. Innovation is at the heart of what we do and it is our team which drives that innovation; this is reflected in our commitment to employee ownership, which gives all of us a voice, and a stake, in our current and future success. With offices in Dundee, Edinburgh and Bristol we now have over 40 members of staff and plans to expand to a team of around 60 over the next 12 months. We are at a very exciting time in our ambitious growth plans and have fantastic opportunities for talented individuals to join our team.

## Job summary

We are looking for an experienced and motivated R&D Project Manager to join our team. This exciting role will lead cutting-edge research and development projects in flight and ground software technologies, with a focus on innovation, technical excellence, and stakeholder alignment.

This role is central to translating research ambitions into viable software solutions that advance satellite operations, onboard systems, and ground segment technologies.

Acting as the bridge between engineering teams, research partners, funding bodies, and end-users, the R&D Project Manager will ensure that technical innovation is aligned with commercial viability, regulatory expectations, and mission-critical performance standards.

This is a key delivery role overseeing the full R&D lifecycle—from idea conception, feasibility studies, and prototype development to technology validation and transition to operational deployment. The role will require balancing scientific curiosity with structured project execution and financial oversight.

We see this role as being full time, although this is negotiable. Ideally, we would like this role to be on a hybrid basis based in Edinburgh, to allow for regular interaction with the teams responsible for product management, business development, sales and marketing. However, we're happy to discuss working arrangements with the right candidate.

As a member of the Technology and Product Futures team the key responsibilities would be:

**Research Leadership & Stakeholder Engagement**

- Lead collaborative R&D projects involving industrial, academic, and governmental partners in the space and aerospace sectors
- Serve as the primary liaison for research consortia, funding agencies (e.g., ESA, EU Horizon, Innovate UK), and strategic R&D partners
- Translate research objectives into actionable project work plans aligned with engineering capabilities and operational timelines

- Drive engagement in early-stage technology development, proof-of-concept demonstrations, and validation activities
- Represent the company in technical steering committees, working groups, and industry events

**Project Planning & Technical Execution**

- Develop structured project roadmaps, deliverables, milestones, and budgets aligned with grant requirements and internal governance
- Coordinate internal engineering (software, DevOps, systems) and external research contributors to deliver high-quality outcomes on time and within scope
- Oversee technical documentation, IP management, and compliance with R&D program requirements
- Proactively identify risks and unknowns in emerging technologies, ensuring mitigation strategies are in place
- Champion agile and iterative development cycles tailored to research innovation rather than pure product delivery

**Financial Oversight & Reporting**

- Manage project budgets including co-funding and reimbursement structures tied to grant-funded or subsidized R&D
- Ensure compliance with financial and reporting requirements of public or private funding bodies
- Track effort, cost, and financial KPIs across research streams; provide clear updates to both internal stakeholders and funders

**Innovation & Solution Shaping**

- Facilitate ideation and solution exploration sessions with engineers and researchers, promoting a culture of technical experimentation
- Align innovative R&D outcomes with future product roadmaps and commercial opportunities
- Navigate the tension between research ambition and practical implementation, ensuring project pivots when necessary to achieve strategic goals

## *Essential skills and experience*

We see experience with the following as essential to the job:

- Proven track record managing research or advanced development projects in aerospace, space systems, or complex software environments
- Hands-on experience with Agile or hybrid development approaches in an R&D context
- Proficiency in project management tools and grant management platforms
- Very strong financial management skills, particularly in tracking R&D budgets and aligning with grant requirement
- Project management accreditation (e.g., PMP, PRINCE2, SAFe)

## *Personal skills*

We're especially looking for someone with:

- Curiosity-driven mindset with the discipline to manage structured delivery under uncertainty
- Strong communicator and collaborator, able to engage researchers, engineers, and funders in a shared mission
- Comfortable navigating ambiguity and shaping direction in complex multi-stakeholder environments
- Proactive and pragmatic problem-solver who thrives in high-innovation, high-constraint environments
- Able to handle technical complexity while communicating clearly to non-technical stakeholders

## *Desirable skills and experience*

- Experience working with national or European research programmes (e.g., ESA ARTES, EU Horizon Europe, UKRI)
- Understanding of flight software architectures, mission planning systems, and satellite ground segment technologies
- Knowledge of IP management, technology transfer, or applied research in commercial contexts

## *What we can offer you*

- A competitive salary in the range of £40k-£50k depending on experience, with regular reviews
- A fantastic opportunity to join a growing, innovative, employee-centred business pushing boundaries in the space industry
- Flexible hours and hybrid working, enabling you to create your ideal work life balance
- 36 days paid holiday per annum
- 6% employer pension contribution
- Enhanced Company Sick Pay and Long-Term Sickness cover
- Death in Service payment
- Option to join our Share Incentive Plan after probation
- As a member of the Bright Ascension team, you would have a stake in the business through our Employee Benefit Trust which owns 13% of our business
- Enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay
- Opportunities for international travel for exhibitions and trade shows
- Investment in you and your skill development and the opportunity to attend relevant events and conferences to aid career / skill development
- Company events and regular activities for social engagement and team building
- An open, supportive, inclusive environment where you can explore your ideas and make a big difference to the products and business

To apply please send your CV along with a Cover Letter to careers@brightascension.com

All applicants should have the right to work in the UK.

Read more: **www.brightascension.com**