Executive Director (Designate)

Association of Industrial Laser Users (AILU)

Employer: Association of Industrial Laser Users (AILU)

Reports to: The AILU Committee, through the President & Board of Directors

Location: UK — hybrid, with regular travel to workshops, member sites and committee meetings, and occasional international travel

Employment type: Full-time, permanent [part-time or flexible arrangements considered]

Salary: £Negotiable depending on experience, plus pension contribution and 25 days holiday

Start date: 7 December 2026, with a handover period of approximately 3–6 months alongside the outgoing Executive Director

About AILU

The Association of Industrial Laser Users (AILU) represents, educates and supports companies, researchers, equipment manufacturers, service providers and end-users across the industrial laser community. The Association has approximately 165 corporate member organisations and is governed by an elected Committee of member representatives.

AILU is a small organisation with a wide reach. Its activities include a programme of technical workshops, the biennial Industrial Laser Applications Symposium (ILAS), a quarterly magazine, a monthly e-newsletter, special interest groups and representation of the sector to industry, academia and government.

The role

The Executive Director is AILU's senior operational leader. They manage the Association's day-to-day activities, ensure the delivery of high-quality member services, safeguard its financial and administrative health, grow its membership and income, and represent AILU within the UK and international laser community.

The post is offered as Executive Director (Designate). AILU's operations have until now been delivered under a secretarial services contract with an external company. The successful candidate will be employed directly by AILU, will work alongside the outgoing Executive Director through an agreed handover period, and will then lead the transition of events, publications, bookkeeping and administration to a new delivery model. The Committee keeps AILU's operating model and its partnerships with other organisations under review, and the Executive Director will be central to shaping how member services are delivered in future.

It is a broad role. The postholder will move between strategy and detail, and will work through volunteers — the Committee, honorary officers and special interest group chairs — as much as through staff and suppliers.

Key responsibilities

1. Governance, administration and financial oversight

- Manage and administer AILU's finances, ensuring sound budgeting, management reporting and the production of annual accounts.
- Support the AILU Committee and special interest groups, including preparing reports, scheduling meetings, maintaining documentation and bringing forward proposals that promote member interests.

- Organise the Annual General Meeting and ensure compliance with the Association's constitution and reporting requirements.
- Ensure statutory compliance, including Companies House filings, support to directors, data protection and member data stewardship, insurance, and health and safety at AILU events.
- Maintain accurate directories of members and of member products and services.

2. Membership, income and commercial development

- Lead member recruitment and retention, including renewals, lapsed-member follow-up and the recruitment of new corporate members.
- Secure and manage commercial income: workshop sponsorship and table-top exhibition sales, ILAS sponsorship and exhibition income, and magazine advertising.
- Ensure that the membership offer continues to represent clear value and advise the Committee on subscription levels and pricing.

3. Member services and communications

- Ensure timely and professional responses to member communications and enquiries.
- Oversee the production and distribution of AILU's quarterly magazine, maintaining high editorial standards.
- Oversee the production and distribution of AILU's monthly e-newsletter.
- Oversee the maintenance and continual improvement of AILU's website and social media presence, ensuring accessible and up-to-date content.
- Represent the Association at external events and manage AILU's presence, including staffing and promotional materials.

4. Events

- Lead the planning, promotion and delivery of AILU's technical workshop programme — typically four events per year — including programme development, speaker recruitment, venue management and administration.
- Lead the delivery of the Industrial Laser Applications Symposium (ILAS), AILU's biennial flagship conference and exhibition, working with the organising committee on programme, exhibition, sponsorship and budget. The next edition, ILAS 2027, takes place in March 2027.
- Build strong relationships with partner organisations, collaborators and affiliated groups in the UK and overseas.

5. Team and delivery model

- Lead the transition of operational services from the current outsourced arrangement to a new delivery model, ensuring continuity of service to members and proper stewardship of AILU's data and records.
- Build and manage the team — employed, contracted or a combination — that delivers event co-ordination, publications, bookkeeping and administration.
- Manage supplier relationships and contracts, including designers, printers, venues and IT providers.

6. Strategic development

- Propose and implement new initiatives that advance AILU's strategic objectives and enhance value for members.
- Strengthen AILU's position within the UK and European industrial laser community through advocacy, partnerships and thought leadership.

First-year priorities

- Complete a smooth handover and establish the new delivery model without disruption to members.
- Deliver ILAS 2027 and the workshop programme to the standard members expect.
- Meet a substantial proportion of the membership in person and report back to the Committee on what members want from AILU.
- Secure the Association's income base — membership renewals and event sponsorship — against an agreed budget.

Skills and experience

Essential

- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to build relationships across industry, academia and government.
- Excellent written and verbal communication in exchanges with members, committees and external partners.
- Sufficient technical literacy in manufacturing engineering to engage credibly with a technical membership. Demonstrable working knowledge of industrial laser technology, processes and market stakeholders is a strong advantage.
- Strong organisational and time-management capabilities.
- Competence in financial administration, budgeting and reporting.
- Experience of working with or through volunteers, boards or committees.
- The right to work in the UK.

Desirable

- Experience working in a membership-based organisation or trade association.
- Experience of generating sponsorship, exhibition or advertising income.
- Familiarity with technical communication, publishing or editorial processes.
- Experience with website administration or digital communication platforms.
- Existing connections within the industrial laser community.
- Proven experience in organisational management, events administration or association leadership.

Personal attributes

- Professional, approachable and confident when representing AILU.
- Self-motivated and able to work independently with minimal supervision.
- A strategic thinker with the creativity to introduce new initiatives that benefit members.
- Attention to detail and a commitment to delivering high-quality work.
- Comfortable in a varied role combining high-level oversight with hands-on delivery.

How to apply

Applications, consisting of a CV and a covering letter of no more than two pages, should be sent to Paola De Bono via info@ailu.org.uk by 28 September 2026. Interviews are expected to take place in November. Applications will be handled in confidence by a panel of Committee members.

Anyone wishing to have an informal and confidential conversation about the role before applying is welcome to contact Dave MacLellan at dave@ailu.org.uk or on 07473 121142.