BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF

CHIEF DATA OFFICER

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY – MARCH 2019
INTRODUCTION

Many thanks for your interest in this role.

As we approach our 50th anniversary, we are challenging ourselves to be as daring as our founders in order to sustain our great mission and reach more students with life-changing learning. The OU has so many of the assets needed: motivated students, committed staff, a spirit of innovation and complete dedication to its mission.

The OU plays a crucial and unique role in the social and economic life of all four nations of the UK by promoting educational opportunity and social justice through high-quality education for all who wish to realise their potential and fulfil their dreams. We are the most significant provider of part-time higher education. Around 40% of the UK’s part-time undergraduates are taught by us each year and more than 170,000 learners are currently studying with us.

This is an exciting time to join our CIO portfolio; a function we established in November 2018 to bring together areas of the University which we think will benefit from closer alignment. Further to a strategic review, we’re focused on improving the provision of service, assurance and governance across Technology and digital capability, Data management, Business change and Programmes and projects.

Collaboration, consistency, alignment and improvement will be key drivers across the widened CIO portfolio and our high value investment in our new core platform, SAP, will play a significant supporting role. As the OU’s Chief Data Officer, you will play a pivotal and highly visible senior role which will require significant personal commitment and high levels of energy, working in partnership with all areas of the University and our strategic partners to support consistently exemplary learning and teaching and underpin strong business performance through our collective ability to harness and maximise data.

If this sounds like a challenge you’d relish, we very much hope you will consider joining us."

Best wishes

Jonathan Nicholls,
University Secretary &
Chris Youles,
Chief Information Officer
The OU was established in 1969 with a unique aim. Our mission was to provide a new-style of university education that was truly open to people, places, methods and ideas, to improve lives and enrich communities in the UK and across the world. As we enter our fiftieth year, and with more than two million people who have studied with us, the commitment to our mission is as strong as ever. That’s why we continue to evolve and adapt our teaching methods and technology to support student success in a rapidly changing world.

A UNIQUE INSTITUTION
The OU is unique. A world leader in open access, supported open learning and open educational resources, our distance learning approach sets us apart from other universities. Our commitment to open entry requirements means the OU has an unrivalled reach and influence on today’s society. Our flexible approach supports people of all ages and backgrounds to study and achieve their potential. Through academic research, teaching innovation and partnerships, the OU constantly breaks new ground in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning.

OPEN, AMBITIOUS, INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE
We believe anyone, anywhere, can study with The Open University. Around 174,000 students are currently studying with us, and these include:
- Around 24,000 disabled students.
- 1,500 students in prison or other secure environments.
- Students sponsored by FTSE 100 companies and major public services like the police and the NHS.
- In excess of 1,000 students on apprenticeship courses.

Some other highlights include:
- An overall satisfaction rate of 90% in the latest National Student Survey.
- A unique partnership with the BBC since 1971 and co-production of approximately 35 prime-time TV and radio series every year. During 2017/18, OU-BBC TV and radio programmes were listened to or viewed 351 million times, including the flagship Blue Planet II series.
- Free-to-use courses and modules on our OpenLearn in-house platform received 7.8m views in 2017/18.
- Being one of the top three space science centres in the UK.
- Providing free educational resources to teachers and healthcare workers in sub-Saharan Africa and India, reaching over 2 million people.
- A Business School that is part of the top 1% of global business schools who are triple accredited by the world’s leading management education associations.
VALUES

Our c. 9,000 staff stay true to a clearly defined set of core values. First, we are inclusive, playing a unique role in society by making higher education open to all and promoting social justice through the development of knowledge and skills. Second, we are innovative, leading the learning revolution, placing innovation at the heart of our teaching and research, continuously seeking new and better ways to inspire and enable learning, and creating world-class research and teaching. Third, we are responsive to the needs of individuals, employers and communities, and dedicated to supporting our students’ learning success.

LOCATION

The University has its headquarters on a purpose-built campus of approximately 110 acres in the south-east of Milton Keynes. It also has national headquarters in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and Dublin, and bases in Manchester and Nottingham.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The University is a chartered institution and received its Royal Charter on 23 April 1969. It is an exempt charity registered in England and Wales and regulated on behalf of the Charity Commission by the Office for Students. It is also registered as a charity in Scotland.

The University’s governing body is the Council, which focuses on the University’s overall strategy, finances, property and staff, and is supported by a number of sub-committees. The Council has the ultimate authority within the OU, but it has to respect the views of the Senate in academic matters. The Senate is the academic authority of the University, responsible for academic strategy, policy, priorities and performance. The Vice-Chancellor is accountable to the Council for maintaining and promoting the efficiency and good order of the University.

The University’s Chancellor is Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho and its Pro-Chancellor (who also chairs the Council) is Malcolm Sweeting.

More information on the OU’s leadership and structure can be found here.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about The Open University may be found on its website. The website provides access to recent Annual Reports, Financial Statements, and information about Faculty organisation, research and courses. OpenLearn can be found here and FutureLearn – a private company wholly owned by The Open University, and a provider of a world-leading platform for online courses and degrees – can be found here.
MISSION AND STRATEGY

The Open University’s mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. Our key strategic priority is student success.

MISSION
We promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential. Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership, we seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning.

Most of our undergraduate courses have no formal entry requirements. We believe that the qualifications our students have when they leave are the only ones that matter. We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all, and close monitoring makes sure that we live up to our ideals.

Our Annual Reports provide a record of our work, events, projects and financial highlights year by year. More information on the OU’s Mission and Academic Strategy can be found here.

STRATEGY
Through our scale, reach and our ability to support students to succeed we achieve a positive impact on society and the economy. This includes:

- Understanding our students’ study goals and ensuring they get onto the right study path at the right level.
- Supporting our students successfully to progress through and complete their chosen module(s) or qualification.
- Delivering a high quality and flexible student experience with high levels of student satisfaction.
- Supporting students to achieve positive career and personal development outcomes.

The focus on student success is underpinned by a set of related objectives, which together will achieve our overall vision:

- Delivering excellent teaching and research to enhance our distinctiveness, reputation and, above all, student success.
- Enhancing our future growth and sustainability by diversifying our reach and sources of income and managing and challenging our cost base, to ensure our financial sustainability, headroom for re-investment back into the University, and value for our students.
- Investing in technology that enables success – both student facing technology and our own internal systems.
- Fostering a dynamic and inclusive culture by investing in staff to recognise and maximise their contribution to our success.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on the OU’s Strategic Objectives can be found here.
In 2018 the OU had 174,898 students (64,914 FTE). Total income was £424m, of which £271m came from tuition fees and education contracts, £101m from funding body grants, and £14m from research grants and contracts. The remainder came from other sources. The University has a strong balance sheet with substantial reserves. A programme of agreed cost-saving measures will provide current account surpluses from 2019/20. The reserves have enabled investment in strategic change to build for our future.
This year we celebrated with more than 8,000 graduates at 29 ceremonies in 14 locations. Those 8,000 were joined by over 26,000 guests – supportive family and friends who cheered, clapped, whistled and whooped during each event. And we conferred 34 honorary degrees.

OU students are represented by the OU Students Association. Run by students, for students, it ensures that the student voice is heard. The OU Students Association works with the University to ensure that students are involved as partners in shaping their studies. Although OU students learn at a distance, we work to ensure they all have the opportunity to be involved in giving their views on the curriculum or institutional change and development.

### STUDENT PROFILES

There is no typical OU student. People of all ages and backgrounds study with us, for all sorts of reasons – to update their skills, get a qualification, boost their career, change direction, prove themselves, or keep mentally active.

- 76% of directly registered OU students work full- or part-time during their studies
- 23% of OU UK undergraduates live in the 25% most deprived areas
- 34% of new OU undergraduates are under 25

We are the largest provider of higher education for people with disabilities:

- 24,709 students with disabilities studied with us in 2017/18

Our open admissions policy helps thousands of people who failed to achieve their potential earlier in life:

- 34% of students had one A level or a lower qualification at entry

### STUDENT STORIES

The OU’s students have some remarkable personal stories. For example:

**Fatema** fled from her home country of Bangladesh to Cyprus at 16 without finishing school. Investing all of her time in daily survival, she never had the opportunity to resume her schooling. Upon hearing about The Open University and its open to all policy, she enrolled on a Social Work course.

**John** grew up in Cardiff and was unable to read or write. He reached his mid-30s having never read a book, and it was later discovered he has severe dyslexia, ADHD, and Meares-Irlen syndrome. Despite these challenges, John graduated with an OU Science Degree at the age of 46.

Read more student stories [here](#).
The CIO Portfolio brings together areas of the University to improve the provision of service, assurance and governance across Technology, Data, Change, Information Security, plus programmes and projects. We are a highly-skilled, joined-up team, focused on bringing our resources together to serve the University and support our students better.

ROLE CONTEXT

As we approach our 50th birthday, student success remains our key priority. In light of this, we embarked on a major strategic change programme in 2017/18 with a clear focus on enhancing student success, improving operational efficiency and ensuring on-going financial sustainability. Moving forward, our ability to maximise our data and make it easily accessible to a broad range of stakeholders will be core to our success in all its forms.

To this end we’re committed to making further significant investment in our data analytics capability through the establishment of a central innovation hub that will serve as a centre of excellence and capability, enabling a consistently exemplary student and teaching experience and clarity of (and easy access to) information on which to base a range of decisions, from the strategic and operational to a broad range of student choices, (from course selection to the more practical logistics of distance learning).

Data analytics capability currently resides in numerous areas of the University. By bringing together these pockets of expertise into the centre, our aim is not to disempower previously self-sufficient Directorates, Schools and functions, but merely to harness and disseminate data science excellence, driving consistency of approach, improving capability and empowering a broad range of users through investment in sector leading products and services.

You’ll be responsible for bringing together, leading and inspiring the team, defining and implementing an iterative data strategy and roadmap in support of our data rich university of 174,000 students and 8,000 staff.
At the outset you’ll be required to organise the hub, deciding on required capabilities and domain areas and we anticipate that a team of 70 will come together, many of whom will continue to partner with and spend time in the business. What’s most important is that data science is recognised as a valuable, enabling profession at the University, enabling us to attract, develop and retain the best people to help us deliver against our strategic objectives, whilst offering an exceptional experience to all those with whom we engage.

We’re making significant investment in our core digital, data and technology infrastructure during the next ten years, implementing SAP as our core platform, so now is an exciting time to join us. As a member of the CIO’s Senior Leadership Team, you’ll also be required to contribute more broadly to decision making, ensuring digital, data and technology investments and changes are supportive of our data aspirations and provide a platform on which you and your team can build sector leading data products and services.

You’ll also need to establish first class relationships to maximise cooperation and establish an appetite for data and success in this role will result in university-wide recognition of data as a central, strategic asset and source of information for the organisation. Your work will establish the University as an exemplar for data science and analytics in the HE Sector, informing and shaping the Learning and Teaching Customer Experience and journey.
REPORTING TO:
Chief Information Officer

LOCATION:
Milton Keynes

OVERVIEW:
The Chief Data Officer (CDO) is responsible for delivering value from The Open University’s data and increasing the maturity of the organisation in its use of data. The role encompasses data strategy, data governance, technical platform development, business processes and development of skills and culture. The CDO will have oversight of platform development and technical data strategy, and responsibility for enhancing the effectiveness of data analytics while ensuring that regulatory and core business data requirements can be met.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Lead the data transformation of the OU by defining the long-term data strategy and roadmap;
- Actively promote the value of data and data analytics throughout the university to build a data-driven culture, including working with People Services to create constructive training pathways, and organising internal and industry-based events;
- Contribute to the establishment of a framework for enterprise Data Governance, ensuring high standards of data quality, compliance and metadata management, promoting transparency around data lineage and metric definition;
- Act as a data champion on a variety of project and steering groups, and potentially chair relevant groups;
- Manage the development and deployment of a new cloud-based Enterprise Data Hub platform to deliver institutional data needs and underpin digital experience capabilities;
- Define and own the technical data strategy by implementing a modular approach to Data Engineering, Data Science and Business Intelligence architecture that delivers best in class tools, whilst allowing for the integration of new, future capabilities on demand;
- Partner with key institutional business functions (Marketing, Student Experience, Faculties, Knowledge & Media Institute (KMI), Strategy Office) to optimise the use of data science and business intelligence in meeting institutional KPIs/objectives – e.g. student recruitment, satisfaction and retention, learning design and quality, research & scholarship, planning & forecasting, regulatory reporting;
- Drive new and innovative uses of data science that enhance the prospect and student journey, including the use of AI and Machine Learning techniques to personalise and maximise the impact of digital and offline student interactions;
- Work alongside broader data and data analytics stakeholders including the Data Protection Officer to ensure full compliance with data protection legislation, information security and other regulatory requirements;
- Contribute to major technology projects by advising on data considerations and best practice;
- Support the CIO in the development and delivery of wider technical strategy goals.
THE PERSON

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING
- Degree level or equivalent qualification in relevant subject, or equivalent, relevant data leadership experience.

KNOWLEDGE, WORK AND OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL
- A successful track record of improving organisational data maturity and data culture in a large, regulated organisation;
- Ability to work with multiple stakeholders simultaneously, as well as to effectively prioritise and manage stakeholder expectations;
- Proven ability to deliver against multiple transformational objectives over a fixed time period;
- Demonstrable experience of managing a large data function;
- Demonstrable experience of leading significant business transformation within the field of data;
- Ability to develop training pathways for staff skills development, including executive education, to support the transition to a data-driven culture;
- Experience of developing and implementing a data strategy, including the governance, technical and business processes that support the strategy;
- Understanding of Big Data and Cloud based technologies, and how a modern data architecture and platform are developed and maintained;
- Experience of delivering a data analytics strategy, including a broad knowledge of current data science and business intelligence tools, as well as the successful deployment of data analysis in a CRM, customer experience or marketing context;
- Experience of current data engineering tools and techniques, including data integration, storage, transformation, and modelling components as part of the end-to-end deployment of data science and business intelligence;
- Working knowledge or experience of how AI and machine learning techniques can be successfully deployed to optimise customer acquisition, experience and engagement.

DESIRABLE
- Knowledge of the higher education sector, how a university operates and current institutional challenges and priorities in the HE Sector;
- Experience of MS Azure technologies for data engineering, data science, business intelligence as well as Azure platform management;
- Experience of other cloud platforms – AWS, Google.

SKILLS, CAPABILITIES AND QUALITIES

ESSENTIAL
- Demonstrable experience in multiple roles of progressive leadership, with a track record in managing competing organisational and departmental priorities;
- A credible leader with demonstrable experience of building senior level relationships and influencing key decision makers in organisations;
- An interest in people and culture and a good understanding of the role they play in data maturity, with a willingness to take a people-centric approach to improvement;
- Demonstrable ability of successfully managing big projects, with demonstrated capacity to develop and implement practical strategies, plans and solutions to identified issues and problems;
- A good understanding of external regulation and the ability to deliver change in a regulated environment;
- Resilience and the ability to have difficult conversations and manage stakeholders at a senior level. This includes the ability to drive a culture of timely and honest feedback;
- Commercially focused and strategic thinking with a sound and up to date understanding of the challenges faced by immature data organisations;
- The ability to robustly sponsor initiatives and change being the ‘voice of the supplier’ at internal meetings;
- Demonstrable ability to establish relationships with people from a variety of backgrounds. Effective and sensitive communicator in different societies and cultures.

DESIRABLE
- The ability to operate within the HE environment whilst understanding the culture and success drivers of large private sector organisations.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
Regulation travel as required, to other OU sites and supplier sites within the UK and abroad.
Direct reports of CY link directly to him and report on their specific areas of focus. Strategy & Engagement function is portfolio-wide, currently reports into IT Director and will rotate around the various sub-unit leads on a 6 monthly basis.
PROCESS & TIMESCALES

For a confidential discussion please contact our recruitment adviser at GatenbySanderson:

Stephanie Wilson
Partner, Practice Lead – Technology & Transformation
T: +44 (0)7880 382745
E: Stephanie.Wilson@gatenbysanderson.com

Ella Milward Hamylton
Partner & Head of Client Delivery
T: +44 (0)7538 979416
E: ella.milwardhamylton@gatenbysanderson.com

TO APPLY
Applications should be made via www.gatenbysanderson.com. Please submit a current Curriculum Vitae and the following information:

- Supporting statement summarising career to date and key achievements applicable to the role;
- Your latest remuneration including any benefits and notice period;
- Daytime, evening and/or mobile telephone numbers as well as your personal email address (to be used with discretion);
- Contact details for two referees. Referees should be people who can comment authoritatively on you as a person and as an employee and must include your current or most recent employer or his/her authorised representative. Confidential references are taken up on candidates shortlisted for formal interviews. However, we will refer back to you for confirmation that referees may be approached before any contact is made with them;
- Confirmation of your availability for meetings on key dates as outlined in the next column.

KEY DATES
Closing dates for applications
Friday 29 March 2019
Longlist meeting
10 April
Preliminary Interviews
w/c 15 April
Shortlist meeting
26 April
First interviews at the OU, if required.
TBC
Final panel interview at the OU
10 May
The closing date for applications is Friday 29 March 2019

Please note that at first interview with GatenbySanderson, you will be required to provide proof of identity. You will also be required to provide these documents when you are invited to attend interviews at The Open University.
YOUR TIME IS NOW

Visit open.ac.uk