Job Description – Head of Data and Science and 
Strategic Analytics

About the role

The purpose of the role is to head up a team to increase our data science and strategic analysis capability within The Open University by combining a wide range of technical skills with business knowledge to turn vast quantities of data into value. The OU is going through a Multimillion data and digital transformation program to migrate its data capability to the cloud and build trust in the data as well as to transform the student digital experience through a test and learn approach.

The role holder needs to fully understand data science methodologies and techniques as well as manage key stakeholders and customer relationships, in order to ensure the effective application and development of data science models onto business and operational processes.

The role holder will work in conjunction with senior management in order to formulate mid- to long-term plans to meet business objectives and conduct analyses and supply information to support strategic activities across the business, using professional knowledge to develop and recommend appropriate internal business solutions.

The role holder will take decisions within the limits of the established policies and procedural guidelines, but also recommends changes to policies and procedures where appropriate.

Key responsibilities

• Lead and work with the Data Science and strategic analytics team which drives and delivers the Machine Learning agenda in The Open University as well as provide strategic actionable insight and data products to drive student recruitment and student success.
• Develops and delivers the annual departmental plan within agreed framework and to agreed budget, providing advice to senior management on the local impact of long-term plans and policies.
• Play a key role managing the data science platform that enables the team and other teams to build their own solutions.
• Lead the relationship between stakeholders and team members and the full end to end project delivery, which includes, business requirements, planning, design, development and implementation of Data Science and Analytics projects.
• Proactively identify the need for Proof of concept projects and rapidly move these from initial concept stages into production
• Monitor the external marketplace including changes in vendors and technologies in order to drive and maximise the value for the University by delivering to the data science roadmap.
**Skills and experience**

- A degree or equivalent in a numerical subject such as Data Science, Computer Science, Mathematics, Engineering
- A collaborative leader with strategic acumen and problem-solving skills, able to inspire and motivate colleagues as well as work alongside them as required
- A resilient and determined individual with the ability to scale up the usage of data science techniques and solutions to drive value and has track record in influencing the business to do so.
- Demonstrable creativity and a commitment to future-proofing service and delivery in a fast paced, ever-changing environment
- A forward-thinking individual with good knowledge of products and services available (vendors and technology) to help maximise the value possible through the combination of technology with data science and the internet of things
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal. Ability to present complex or highly technical issues in simple and easy-to-understand formats, for technical and non-technical audiences
- Experience of leading a team that have delivered Machine learning outputs and knowledge of techniques like random forest, gradient boosting, collaborative filtering.
- Experience of using R, Python, Java and SQL. The use of Databricks would also be desirable.
- Ability to build strong relationships and influence decisions with internal and external stakeholders at all levels
- A good understanding of project management methodology and how to implement analytical projects using these tools Proactive and innovative to anticipate risk and issues and mitigate accordingly; with previous experience building controls into every production process; able to work independently and to adopt agile working
- An ability to think and plan strategically and systematically while recognising the need to deliver to the business requirements