Job Description – Senior Platform Manager

About the Role

To be accountable for, and build capability in, the design and delivery of the technical infrastructure and systems framework that underpin the efficient delivery of content on OpenLearn.

To manage multiple technology systems, products and services including developing infrastructure to enable and improve micro-credentials and digital badging.

To collaborate with the LXT Team, OU IT and contracted offshore IT suppliers to ensure excellent performance, operating in line with University policies and procedures.

To promote and embody a positive transformation in attitudes and behaviours to encourage a customer-focused, innovative culture and to champion the values of the organisation.

Key responsibilities

Planning, managing and delivering services

- Assess requirements for OpenLearn technical systems taking into account learner, student and staff requirements, University policies and strategic considerations.
- Work with stakeholders and partners to translate business requirements into system designs, functional specifications and plans.
- Carry out forward planning to ensure that the OpenLearn team is appropriately technically resourced and skilled to enable them to deliver on current and anticipated projects and provide ongoing support.
- Provide advice and guidance to colleagues on the implementation and development of new systems.
- Develop and maintain robust and sustainable support processes and procedures to ensure the availability of OpenLearn’ technology systems, ensuring daytime and out of hours support is provided.
- Day to day management of the OpenLearn site performance, including managing Moodle and Drupal defects, and updating the IT roadmap.
- Managing issues with OU-hosted bespoke interactive assets (EUD / PHP) and liaising with IT and with VLE developers for best interactive performance.
- Ensure smooth-running of the link between OpenLearn digital badges and the student record; that this remains future-proofed; that performance of the display, export and sharing mechanisms of digital badges in the OpenLearn profile is robust.
- Managing planned and ad-hoc platform releases for feature improvements and defects fixing.
• Responsibility for Technical SEO to optimise OpenLearn site for crawling, indexing and site visibility.

People management

• Lead the relationship with the OpenLearn offshore IT contractor in line with current OU policies and procedures to manage and optimise performance. Ensure that knowledge is shared so that team members have appropriate skills and knowledge and disseminate good practice and innovation.
• Take on line management of individuals and teams as required.

Internal and external perspective

• Maintain awareness of relevant university, national and international developments, initiatives and technologies applicable to OpenLearn, in order to ensure that systems provide high-quality up-to-date services.
• Develop awareness of the VLE roadmap and capabilities offered, and ensure the OpenLearn roadmap align with the VLE roadmap.
• Ensure effective collaboration with central IT and in-house Moodle experts to ensure that new developments for OpenLearn are progressed to agreed timescales.
• Take the lead on engagement with external providers of OpenLearn IT systems to ensure appropriate contract management is in place and systems deliver contracted levels of service and performance.
• Lead on the procurement of new systems to meet OpenLearn technical requirements; ensuring that systems comply with all University IT policies.
• Liaise with Library staff responsible for IT systems and to manage any forthcoming projects scoping better interoperability between OpenLearn and IT student and public-facing systems.
• Build close working relationship with LXT Senior Product Development Managers to contribute to the development of the current learning systems, and to ensure OpenLearn is aligned with the OU Platform Strategy.
• Act as link between OU VLE developers, STEM and OpenLearn team to inform best practice and new developments (e.g. math’s notation)

Strategic Development

• Lead the development of systems strategy and related policy formation.
• Support change by regularly reviewing practices and developments to ensure ongoing improvements.
• Contribute to OpenLearn strategy formulation and implementation.
• Link with IMS Global developers/groups for digital credentials to investigate and implement new technology relating to digital badges.
• Reviewing site usability, data analytics and user comments and making suggestions as to site improvements, based on data.
• Responsible for development work that may be required if OpenLearn+ is re-initiated.
• Link with IMS Global developers/groups for digital credentials to investigate and implement new technology relating to digital badges.
• Reviewing site usability, data analytics and user comments and making suggestions as to site improvements, based on data.
• Responsible for development work that may be required if OpenLearn+ is re-initiated.
Skills and Experience

**Essential**

- Good communication and networking: communicates effectively and builds productive working relationships with a range of colleagues; adapts communication style to the needs of the audience.
- Ability to negotiate, persuade and influence: appropriately and effectively challenges others; influences effectively to shape realistic outcomes.
- Team working: collaborates with colleagues; is respectful of others’ views; shares information; collaborates across organisational boundaries to achieve common goals.
- Planning and organising: prioritises effectively; meets multiple and challenging deadlines; monitors progress against plans using project management techniques; identifies and manages risk.
- Problem solving: strong critical analysis skills; identifying and synthesises critical information; uses quantitative and qualitative information to inform decisions; identifies appropriate options; provides evidence-based recommendations; probes information; challenges assumptions.
- Embraces and adopts change: responds flexibly and positively to change; advocates for change; overcomes resistance to change.
- Delivers results: remains calm, effective and positive even when under pressure; takes responsibility for delivering outcomes; deals effectively with ambiguity.
- Continuous improvement: identifies opportunities for continuous improvement; shows commitment to own professional development; demonstrates enthusiasm, willingness and ability to learn new skills.
- Experience of budget management.
- Commitment to equal opportunities principles and practice.
- Experience of supporting and maintaining online learning systems, including, Drupal, Moodle, (CMS, LMS), online search and RSS feeds.
- Knowledge and experience of good web and user interface design, web standards and issues relating to web usability and accessibility legislation.
- Administration experience of configuring and supporting leading operating systems e.g. Linux and Microsoft Windows.
- Systems Administration and maintenance experience across a range of platforms.
- Proven experience of leading teams (including offshore suppliers), within a technical or project-based environment.
- Proven experience of managing projects and understanding of IT support methodologies and processes.
- Good understanding and experience of UX design.
- Higher education qualification or equivalent professional experience.

**Desirable**

- Experience of platform management in an HE context.
- Experience of HTML/CSS and JavaScript.
- Experience of SEO, data analyses and manipulation techniques and tools and search and indexing services.
- Knowledge and understanding of metadata standards.
- Prince2 or similar project management certification.
- Appreciation and understanding of the meaning and impact of OER.
• Degree or postgraduate qualification in a computer related discipline.
• A recognised relevant professional qualification
• Skills and experience of Open Badge specification and alternative formats and accessibility.