Job Description – Senior Manager, Strategy and Planning (Academic Services)

Grade 8
Full-time, permanent
Location: Flexible location, with occasional travel to Milton Keynes required

About the role

The Senior Manager, Strategy and Planning is a new role in the newly formed Strategy, Planning & Resources Team in Academic Services, which comprises of 3 functions: strategic planning, support services and business change. The post holder will report to the Assistant Director and will have one direct report (please see the team structure chart).

The post holder will be responsible for the strategic planning activity for the Academic Services (AS) unit, which includes unit planning, risk management, and performance reporting, all in alignment with the University’s strategy, student number assumptions and financial context.

AS is a large and complex unit, with more than 1,000 staff (located across Milton Keynes, Nottingham and Manchester) and a substantial budget. A key feature of the role is the ability to balance a high, varied workload involving competing perspectives and priorities with demands for both routine and short-notice, unanticipated tasks.

The post-holder works collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders, including the AS Executive Team, the AS Senior Management Team and members of the Unit Business Planning community. They will also be a member of the Strategy, Planning & Resources Leadership team.

Key responsibilities

*This is a list of key responsibilities and is not meant to be exhaustive.*

- Develops, manages, and reviews the Unit Business Planning process for Academic Services (AS) to aid proactive planning and resource allocation across the Unit as well as stakeholder engagement.

- Supports the development, planning and delivery of the AS Quarterly Planning meetings with a wide range of senior stakeholders across the University, including agenda setting, preparation of materials, facilitation, and logistics.

- Supports the planning and delivery of dedicated agenda items at the AS Executive Team meetings and the AS Senior Management Team meetings, including shaping agendas, preparation of papers, presentation, and facilitation.

- Produces and promotes guidance, templates and processes for individual AS sub-units to facilitate production of the AS Unit Business Plan and its quarterly reviews.
- Leads the development, delivery and management of the AS risk management approach in alignment with the University’s Risk Management Policy, Framework and Risk Appetite.

- Supports the delivery of accurate and timely reporting of Unit performance at executive level.

- Actively supports the AS Executive in the management and implementation of the AS People Plan.

- Maintains effective communication and engagement with key internal and external stakeholders and planning communities, which is customer focussed, collaborative, transparent and drives continuous improvement.

- Line manages the Strategy and Planning Manager, including responsibility for their Career Development and Staff Appraisal, managing their workload and providing appropriate coaching and support.

- Contributes to the development of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Team in terms of sharing skills and expertise, promoting good practice and contributing to specific projects across the team.

- Supports the Assistant Director in planning and resourcing activity for the Unit.

- Supports and works positively with team members, being prepared to review the allocation of activities within the team and picking up new tasks as appropriate.

- Any other duties as required.

**Skills and experience**

1. Educated to degree level or equivalent professional qualification
2. Appreciation of the University’s strategic context and current strategic plan
3. Experience of taking personal responsibility for the management and development of a discrete area of work
4. Experience of planning and managing multiple complex priorities and deadlines, and to remain calm under pressure
5. An analytical mind, able to think laterally to solve problems, make sound, evidence-based decisions, and work confidently on own initiative
6. Experience of identifying and implementing quality enhancements for making continuous improvements
7. Experience in numeracy and data literacy, ability to analyse and interpret data to support and enhance strategic decision-making
8. Exceptional organisational skills and attention to detail
9. Strong communication skills, oral, written, and presentational, ideally with sound experience in leading, chairing and facilitating group discussions
10. Experience of managing and motivating staff, including leading through a period of change
11. Experience of supporting the planning process and risk management for a complex organisation or department
12. High degree of integrity, credibility and resilience, coping with ambiguity and change at the last minute
13. Excellent stakeholder management skills, with the ability to use tact and diplomacy when dealing with a diverse group of people at all levels, and self-confidence to be able to influence and challenge at all levels