

Job Description

Director of AI Innovation	
Grade	9
Department	AI Skunkworks
Overall Purpose	
<p>The University is committed to leveraging the opportunities presented by Artificial Intelligence (AI) to transform its teaching, learning, research, and operations.</p> <p>The role leads and accelerates AI-driven innovation across the University. It involves identifying and delivering high-impact AI feasibility projects, engaging stakeholders, and developing business cases to scale successful initiatives. The role manages a substantial software licensing budget and supports sandbox projects.</p>	
About the Team	
<p>The role leads an agile 'Skunkworks' team, including a Senior AI Innovation Analyst, Skills Lead, Project Manager, and Software Engineers. It reports directly to the University Executive and engages with the University AI Strategy Group and its subgroups. It collaborates closely with the Director of AI and Ideas Adoption (University Library), the Director of Digital and Innovation (IT Services), the University's new innovation vehicle Unit M, online learning initiative Manchester Online, and the Communications and Marketing team to drive AI adoption.</p>	
Key Accountabilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading an agile skunkworks team to drive AI innovation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing a high-performing team to foster a dynamic and solution-oriented innovation culture. 2. Deploying the team effectively to accelerate AI-driven initiatives in teaching, learning, research, and operational areas. 3. Developing a strategic approach to maximise the impact and sustainability of the skunkworks team. • Engaging with stakeholders to identify and deliver AI feasibility projects <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding challenges in teaching, learning, research, and operations to identify AI innovation opportunities. 2. Collaborating with internal stakeholders to co-design AI feasibility projects with measurable outcomes. 3. Prioritising AI-enabled projects that align with institutional goals and provide significant organisational impact. • Developing business cases to scale AI feasibility projects successfully <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying quantifiable benefits, risks, and financial return on investment for AI initiatives. 2. Overseeing the creation of detailed implementation plans, resource requirements, and 	

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sustainability strategies.

3. Managing organisational change challenges to ensure successful long-term adoption of AI innovations.
- Monitoring AI trends and ensuring the University remains at the forefront of innovation
 1. Keeping abreast of emerging AI technologies and assessing their potential for higher education applications.
 2. Tracking AI adoption trends in the sector and drawing insights from successful case studies.
 3. Developing relationships with AI suppliers to anticipate and gain access to cutting-edge innovations.
 - Providing strategic reporting and communication on AI innovation progress
 1. Collaborating with the University AI Strategy Group and subgroups to align initiatives with institutional goals.
 2. Reporting on AI innovation progress, feasibility project outcomes, and strategic priorities to the University Executive.
 3. Communicating AI developments across the University to foster engagement and knowledge-sharing.
 - Ensuring best practices in ethical, regulatory, and risk considerations for AI deployment
 1. Evaluating AI risks, including bias, security, and compliance, to ensure responsible implementation.
 2. Advising on ethical AI adoption in alignment with sector regulations and institutional policies.
 3. Embedding ethical considerations into AI feasibility projects from inception to deployment.

Person Specification

Knowledge	<p>Have deep expertise in AI technologies, applications, and their potential for higher education transformation.</p> <p>Have a deep understanding of ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations in AI adoption.</p>
Experience	<p>Be able to demonstrate experience in preparing business cases and securing investment for technology initiatives.</p> <p>Be experienced in delivering and scaling AI-enabled projects with demonstrable institutional impact.</p>
Skills	<p>Possess excellent communication skills, with the ability to articulate complex AI concepts clearly.</p> <p>Possess advanced analytical skills, with the ability to assess opportunities and mitigate AI-associated risks.</p> <p>Be skilled in managing projects effectively, balancing multiple initiatives and ensuring timely delivery.</p>

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	<p>Have expertise in stakeholder engagement, with the ability to build effective partnerships across disciplines.</p> <p>Possess strategic skills in leading innovation teams within a complex organisational environment.</p>
<p>Qualification</p>	<p>Hold a higher degree in AI, computer science, or a related field, or have equivalent industry experience.</p>
<p>Key Behaviours</p>	
<p>One University: A ‘One University’ approach, whereby we break down silos and work collaboratively towards furthering the University’s strategic goals, vision and values.</p> <p>Service Excellence: Committed to prioritising service excellence and high performance to deliver great people-centred experiences.</p> <p>Agility: Demonstrate a commitment to agility and continuous improvement by embracing change, championing innovation, and being flexible and forward thinking to adapt.</p> <p>Sustainability: A sustainable approach that safeguards the University of the future by championing environmental practices, advancing digital capability, and supporting financial stability and philanthropic initiatives.</p> <p>Inclusion: A commitment to furthering equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing to create a positive work environment and culture.</p> <p>Social Responsibility: Promote and champion the University’s social responsibility ambitions to advance social inclusion, prosperous communities, better health, and cultural engagement.</p> <p>Continuing Development: Willingness and ability to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and stay abreast of developments in a rapidly developing field.</p>	
<p>People Leadership: Demonstrate effective leadership by empowering, motivating, and developing teams to achieve high performance. Build a collaborative and inclusive work environment and provide clear direction, support, and feedback.</p>	