

Job Description



Summary

Job title	Head of Communications- Digital and IT
Division	University Administration & Services
Department	IT Services
Location	Central Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 9: £55,636 - £64,228 per annum
Hours	Full time Part time at 80% FTE considered
Contract type	Fixed term for two years. Also considered for a secondment opportunity.
Reporting to	Deputy CDIO on a day-to-day basis, with a dotted line to the Head of Communications and Engagement for Professional Services in UAS
Vacancy reference	179121
Additional information	This role is hybrid working with an expectation of 2-3 days in the office per week, as business needs require.

The role

This new role offers an exciting opportunity to lead on the development and implementation of an integrated communications strategy covering Digital and Information Technology services; to lead a team through major change following the creation of a new unit in central UAS; and to establish a unified communications function for the services overseen by the CDIO.

Background

The University's central IT Services function (around 390 staff) will shortly be reconfigured into two units – the Digital Governance Unit (DGU) and IT Services. The Digital Governance Unit and IT Services will both report to the Chief Digital & Information Officer (CDIO), currently under recruitment.

This change has been driven by the University's adoption of a new digital governance structure which has shifted the focus of digital delivery to a partnership model, led by business need. Five portfolios for digital services and platforms have been created: Education, Research, Administration, Engagement & Dissemination, and Technology. The Digital Governance Unit will support alignment, coordination, and governance across these portfolio structures. IT Services will focus on service delivery in partnership with the business.



Your team will provide engaged and proactive support to ensure a high-quality experience for end-users as the new structure settles down, and parameters continue to be developed on responsibilities for portfolios, the DGU, and IT Services.

There are a significant number of projects and programmes underway in the current structure of IT Services at any given time (the 3-year IT capital plan is around £60m, and the annual revenue budget around £22m). There is a huge amount of complexity in terms of the audience and key stakeholders for different strands of information and activity. Programmes range in scale from pan-institutional initiatives such as the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programme, to smaller undertakings that will still have an end-user community that needs to feel engaged and well-informed, (but not over-informed).

A unified administrative support structure is currently in place in IT Services. This will be retained to support the two units in the new organisational structure (i.e., it will support the DGU, in addition to IT Services) and will be overseen by the Deputy CDIO.

However, the communications function in IT Services is currently embedded in different pockets of digital and technology services, in areas such as internal service communications, business as usual, the Programme and Project Delivery Group (PPDG), and digital transformation. The new post of Head of Communications- Digital and IT will assume professional line management of all communications staff in both DGU and ITS, who will retain a dotted line to their local area principal as appropriate.

As Head of Communications- Digital and IT you will ensure that communication and engagement support across the CDIO's teams is joined up and effective. You will develop the communication practice to ensure that existing resources are used flexibly and innovatively to deliver the best outcomes for end-users and key stakeholders in terms of clear, targeted, proportionate, and timely communication and engagement. Working closely with existing staff, you will shape, develop and implement the communications strategy, ensuring that departments, colleges, and end-users have a good understanding of the new organisational structure.

You will also review the resilience of the communications function given the likely demands on the team in the short to medium term, make recommendations to the Deputy CDIO and CDIO regarding optimal structure and resources, and implement any changes agreed.

Responsibilities

- Formulate and implement a comprehensive and integrated communications and engagement strategy that aligns with the University's digital and technology strategies mindful of priorities, diverse audience needs, channels, timescales and resources. Drive engagement with the agreed strategy.
- Ensure that the communications function across all units under the CDIO's aegis is joined up and effective and that existing resources are used flexibly and innovatively to ensure the best outcomes for end-users and key stakeholders in terms of clear, targeted, proportionate, and timely communication across different platforms.
- Manage change in the communications function as it transitions to working under unified professional line-management.
- Horizon-scan and review the resilience of the communications function, given future programmes and activities, and make recommendations to the Deputy CDIO and CDIO. Implement any changes agreed.
- Develop and sustain a deep understanding of departmental/end-user preferences for format and frequency of communications from central services, while tensioning this against the need to communicate change, manage institutional risk, and ensure robust governance.
- Working closely with HR and other administrative teams, ensure that communication to internal staff in the CDIO's teams is clear and engaging, ensuring that the staff feel connected and motivated.
- Ensure that awareness is maximised of the benefits delivered by change/transformation projects and programmes.
- Oversee the effective monitoring/evaluation of communications activities and provide meaningful and accessible indicators for key stakeholders that demonstrate the value of programmes and initiatives delivered.
- Take ownership of digital communications channels, and take a strategic approach to their use— ensuring they are actively reviewed and developed over time
- Develop and maintain a good understanding of the governance structures in place for digital and technology activities at the collegiate University.
- Work closely with other central colleagues in UAS Communications and act as the lead communications contact for the Office of the CDIO.
- Present to the CDIO's senior leadership team and portfolios (as required) on the communications strategy, to secure buy-in as required; and provide functional expertise to SLT and the portfolio leads as required.
- Lead, mentor, and manage members of the communications team supporting personal and professional development, establishing goals, and setting priorities and direction in alignment with strategy.
- Proactively identify and engage with key audiences and stakeholders, both internally and externally, to support relevant, timely and targeted communications in line with strategic priorities.
- Build strong professional relationships with key communications stakeholders across the collegiate University, to support a joined-up approach, identify areas of mutual interest and opportunities for resource sharing, and to promote the positive reputation of the University.
- Play a lead role in University-wide committees and professional networks, representing strategic interests.
- Participate in/chair working/discussion groups as appropriate, to contribute subject-matter expertise and facilitate effective communication.
- Work with the Head of Communications and Engagement – Professional Services to ensure IT and digital communications strategies and plans are aligned and coordinated with wider University communications teams.
- Act as the lead communications contact for other University teams in UAS Communications, Public Affairs Directorate (PAD) and Divisional Offices, and ensure the representation of the Digital and IT teams at internal events.
- Be an active member of the University's Communications Community of Practice and/or other relevant networks/groups, to share information, promote best practice and ensure a coordinated approach to cross-University communications, and encourage communications colleagues to do the same.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Significant relevant professional experience, especially in developing and implementing a communications strategy with measurable outcomes, and managing a diverse team.
- Educated to degree level or equivalent skills and experience
- Able to exercise highly effective professional and personal judgement.
- Demonstrable experience of assimilating complex information and ideas quickly, identifying the pertinent points and making them accessible for a wider audience.
- The ability to thrive in a complex operational environment and confidence in handling and interpreting complex data.
- First-rate written and oral communication skills, including superb written accuracy.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including diplomacy, confidentiality and the ability to inspire the confidence of colleagues at all levels.
- Proven ability to lead, mentor and manage a communications team, setting clear goals, aligning priorities with strategy, and fostering a culture of collaboration and professional development
- Resilient, calm and effective under pressure, with the ability to juggle priorities and meet tight deadlines.
- Experience of managing change, budgets and resources effectively.
- Outstanding organisational skills, with the ability to horizon scan and forward plan.
- An innovative and forward-thinking approach, constantly seeking improvement.
- Extensive familiarity with, and proficiency in, relevant software and systems.

Desirable selection criteria

- Familiarity with providing communications support in digital transformation or technology environments.
- Familiarity with the communications landscape in higher education and/or a large complex organisation.
- Change management experience.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit where you worked. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at:

<https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

If you currently work for the University please note that:

- as part of the referencing process, we will contact your current department to confirm basic employment details including reason for leaving
- although employees may hold multiple part-time posts, they may not hold more than the equivalent of a full time post. If you are offered this post, and accepting it would take you over the equivalent of full-time hours, you will be expected to resign from, or reduce hours in, your other posts(s) before starting work in the new post.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at:

<https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

If you would like an informal chat about the role please contact Rachel Meyrick, Interim Head of DGU

Rachel.meyrick@digital.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82** of 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, flexible working options, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see <https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/family-leave>). Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>. For information about how we support those going through menopause see <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>