

Candidate Information

Position: CSIT Director of Operations
School/Department: Centre for Secure Information Technologies
Reference: 24/111931
Closing Date: Monday 10 June 2024
Salary: £65,998 - £81,375 per annum.
Anticipated Interview Date: Monday 24 June 2024

CSIT Director of Operations

Queen's University Belfast (QUB) is at the forefront of delivering our Regional Civic Responsibilities through collaborative and cutting-edge Innovation Centres within the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). We are leading the way for Northern Ireland to be an exceptional region for innovation, bringing together great minds and creative thinking from across these islands to solve some of the biggest global challenges. Our vision is for Queen's to be recognised as an innovative and sustainable sectoral leader and our Innovation Centres include major programmes in Engineering, Deep Tech and Health & Life Sciences such as iREACH Health, Momentum One Zero (M1.0), and AMIC. These initiatives will not only contribute significantly to the economic and societal growth of Northern Ireland but also position Queen's as a leader in the global innovation landscape.

CSIT is the UK's Innovation and Knowledge Centre for cyber security based at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and sits as a core research centre within Momentum One Zero. Founded in 2009, CSIT has a strong international reputation for its work in coupling major breakthroughs in the field of secure information technologies with a proven model of innovation and commercialisation to drive technological advantage and resilience across industry sectors. CSIT has been a critical factor in establishing Northern Ireland as the UK's leading cyber security cluster by promoting 2,700 new cyber security related jobs through spinout activity, indigenous business scale-up and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region. The Royal Society recognised CSIT's major contribution to the successful development of this sector in its 2020 'Research and innovation clusters' report while the UK Research and Development Roadmap, published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in 2020 highlighted CSIT as a case study on how investment in research, development and innovation can deliver economic impact to the surrounding area and beyond.

CSIT and M1.0 will play a pivotal role in executing the strategic vision for Queen's University Belfast. M1.0 will apply its deep capabilities in cyber, wireless and AI ('Secure Connected Intelligence') to deliver economic and social impact through strong collaboration with other academic disciplines (e.g. in Health and AgriTech), businesses, and public sector and other stakeholders. CSIT and its 'Secure' capabilities and national and international reputation will be key to this impact, while also acting as a critical enabler in continuing to grow the Cyber Security industry in NI.

Job Purpose and Impact:

The primary focus of the CSIT Director of Operations will be to provide strategic direction and drive sustainability, industry engagement and operational excellence for CSIT

The candidate will be required to take overall responsibility for engaging with businesses and stakeholders to identify and secure opportunities for CSIT, both nationally and internationally, to make an economic and social impact, aligned with the broader remit of M1.0, sustaining relationships through and beyond the delivery of outputs and realisation of the impact.

The mandate of the role will be multi-faceted and influential including:

- Providing dynamic leadership for CSIT with a specific focus on enabling collaboration with business, public sector stakeholders and academia.
- Supporting and leveraging opportunities for CSIT and M1.0, Queen's University and stakeholders from private, public and third sectors, fostering delivery of innovation which has both local and global impact.
- Developing strategic partnerships on behalf of CSIT with industry nationally and internationally, facilitating successful technology transfer, supporting the creation of new start-up companies, and working with relevant agencies to promote opportunities for foreign direct investment in Cyber Security.
- Leading strategic approaches to generate new revenues derived from collaborations, the commercial translation of CSIT research, and a range of services to ensure the sustainability and growth of CSIT.

Major Duties:

Working in partnership with the CSIT (Academic) Director to develop and execute strategic plans, ensuring they are successfully translated into full operational delivery to meet the aims and objectives of the Centre's main stakeholders, including those in CSIT's role as the UK's Innovation & Knowledge Centre for Cyber Security.

Leadership of operational delivery including:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operations of CSIT and ensuring it is delivering against its business plan objectives and key performance indicators, while managing its finances, costing of proposals, resources and recruitment.
- Plan, monitor and control the administrative load resulting from successful initiatives and programmes, such as the Cyber AI project
- Managing CSIT's professional services team, including business development and marketing staff.

Responsible for development, management and co-ordination of a comprehensive and integrated approach to strategic partnerships with business, public (including Government Ministers and Senior Officials), academic and other stakeholders nationally and internationally (including university, government departments, labs and agencies) that will help to strategically position CSIT at the forefront of the critical, emerging and rapidly changing digital market sector; act as CSIT's key liaison partner with a range of internal and external stakeholders on regional, national and international platforms.

Being accountable for the management and probity of resources in CSIT, including budgets and outputs, people matters and recruitment.

Working with Queen's Strategic Engagement & External Affairs team Lead the creation and delivery of marketing, communications and engagement plans for CSIT (integrating these into those of M1.0, BRCD and Queen's) that determines CSIT's participation in impactful major exhibitions, conferences, discovery trips and related events.

Provide expertise and advice to the CSIT Director and the senior management team across M1.0 / CSIT to scan and influence the funding horizon, and secure major funding from national and international sources, both industry and Government (e.g. UKRI, DSIT, Shared Island, Horizon Europe, InvestNI, NIO), playing a leading role in the preparation and submission of high-quality business proposals and plans.

Own the contractual relationships and stakeholder commitments associated with substantial (+£1m) CSIT programmes and projects, including the Cyber AI Hub project, in conjunction with the M1.0 Engineering Director and relevant third parties, including reporting of performance on these projects to relevant stakeholders.

Identify, prioritise and address the key challenges, risks and opportunities in the external environment, and develop options and delivery initiatives for CSIT's response, including in areas of a sensitive nature.

Maximise and develop the industry membership of CSIT, ensuring members are actively engaging in its activities and benefiting from them.

Drive the exploitation of intellectual property developed as part of CSIT's research activities, including supporting the creation of spin-out and spin-in opportunities, creating an environment that promotes entrepreneurial spirit in developing research and growing impact through translational research and novel innovation initiatives.

To work with the M1.0 Executive Director and M1.0 Commercial Director to co-ordinate programmes relating to other means of income generation, such as rental of facilities to external organisations, rental of space to spin-in companies and specialised courses for industry. Related to this, support the M1.0 Executive Director in the strategic planning and delivery of the extension to the M1.0 facility.

To work closely with the senior management team to manage the structures necessary to encourage and support an interdisciplinary approach, leveraging CSIT, to ensure that M1.0's real world problem solving, and economic and social impact objectives are achieved.

Support the M1.0 Director, M1.0 Executive Director, and other BRCD innovation centre directors, Heads of Research centres, and School and Faculty leads to contribute to the achievement of wider BRCD objectives for Queen's University and ensure CSIT is an integral part of the support and development of key industry sectors by M1.0.

Essential Criteria:

1. An honours degree or equivalent in a science, technology or engineering discipline OR substantial professional experience of working at a senior level to apply these disciplines successfully in a business environment.
2. Significant senior management experience including operational and financial in a demanding, rapidly changing high technology environment (e.g. business, academia, research institute).
3. Demonstrable track record of fostering strategic relationships and partnerships with public and private sector organisations, including dealing with large international technology corporations and/or technology intensive SMEs.
4. A track record of commercial income or research income generation.
5. A proven track record of successfully delivering strategic outcomes with agility, flexibility and creativity.
6. Experience of leading high performing teams; developing team members through motivation and delegation.
7. Significant project management experience with evidence of delivering strategic outcomes, effective resource planning and risk management with agility, flexibility and creativity.

Essential Criteria (Personal Qualities):

1. Demonstrable commitment to the purpose and objectives of CSIT, M1.0, Queen's Strategy 2030 and the Belfast Region City Deal.
2. Excellent influencing and coalition building skills, with the ability to manage multiple stakeholders including academic, industry and government agencies.
3. Ability to build and sustain productive relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and to negotiate with, influence and motivate senior leaders.
4. Strong interpersonal and verbal and written communication skills.
5. Excellent leadership skills with a proven track record of driving change initiatives, including the ability to see the bigger picture without losing sight of the detail.
6. A team player who promotes and achieves teamwork among others.
7. Experience in mentoring and motivating more junior staff.
8. Willingness to work flexibly with international travel and to provide time commitments outside of normal working hours.

Desirable Criteria:

1. MBA and/or Masters Degree / PhD in a relevant discipline, including a business or marketing qualification.
2. Experience of working in the Cyber Security sector.
3. Experience of working with or within a university, a research environment or a knowledge or technology transfer environment.
4. Experience of working in a policy environment relating to technology or economic development.
5. Experience of R&D and product management, including the successful management and exploitation of intellectual property and 'know how' and/or experience of establishing a spin-out company or working with a spin-in company.
6. Understanding of sources of research funding and of venture and seed capital, grant and other business funding mechanisms.
7. Broad knowledge of relevant national and regional economic needs and priorities and how the University can address those needs and priorities through knowledge exploitation.
8. A strong knowledge and appreciation of a high technology industry and high technology R&D, preferably one with strong international links for example into Europe, the USA and/or SE Asia.