

Candidate Information

Position: Commercial Director (Momentum One Zero)
School/Department: Belfast Region City Deal
Reference: 24/111932
Closing Date: Monday 10 June 2024
Salary: £65,998 - £81,375 per annum
Anticipated Interview Date: Monday 1 July 2027

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 an exceptional Belfast region, 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.

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.

JOB PURPOSE AND IMPACT:

To help lead one of these groundbreaking initiatives, we are seeking a Commercial Director for Momentum One Zero to play a pivotal role in executing this strategic vision for Queen's University Belfast.

Reporting to the M1.0 Executive Director and collaborating within a dynamic, matrixed team in M1.0 and across the Innovation Centres, the primary focus of the Commercial Director will be to manage and take overall responsibility for engaging with businesses and stakeholders to identify and secure opportunities for Momentum One Zero (M1.0) to make an economic and social impact, 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 proactive commercial leadership for M1.0 with a specific focus on enabling industry participation and collaboration among all target sectors within these islands.
- Leveraging opportunities for M1.0, the university and stakeholders from private, public and third sectors, fostering delivery of innovation which has both local and global impact.
- Developing strategic partnerships with industry nationally and internationally, creating new business opportunities for NI companies and their partners through the facilitation of successful technology transfer, supporting the creation of new start-up companies, and working with relevant agencies to promote opportunities for foreign direct investment.
- Generating new revenues derived from collaborations, the commercial translation of research, the award of publicly funded research and innovation programmes, and a range of services to ensure the sustainability and growth of M1.0.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Responsible for developing and executing a sector-focused commercial and go-to-market strategy for M1.0 in line with its vision, purpose and overall strategic direction, setting and delivering on commercial targets.
2. Lead market and product development opportunities for M1.0, performing extensive market analysis and collaborating with industry partners and research directors to align research and innovation objectives with business needs.
3. Shape the M1.0 value proposition and its range of innovation services that will enable companies to adopt research-powered innovation for rapid and distinctive growth.

4. Being accountable for the management and probity of resources in the M1.0 Business Development and Marketing team including budgets and outputs, people matters and recruitment.
5. Design, promote and secure commercial partnership models for funding challenge-focused and translational research.
6. Grow strategic partnerships with companies and key technology vendors, building sectoral 'Hubs of Impact' where companies and academia collaborate to solve business and real world challenges.
7. Overall responsibility for the design, promotion and management of M1.0's Innovation and Accelerator programmes.
8. Provide advice and expertise to Momentum One Zero Executive Director and senior leadership, scanning and influencing the funding horizon, and leading pursuit of major funding from national and international sources, both industry and Government (e.g. UKRI, DSIT, Shared Island, Horizon Europe, InvestNI, NIO).
9. Leading the winning of new engagements from public and private (and combined) funding sources, and generating new revenues from collaborations, the commercial translation of research, and a range of services to ensure the sustainability and growth of M1.0 in line with targets.
10. Own the contractual relationships and stakeholder commitments associated with substantial (+£1m) M1.0 project, reporting of performance on these projects and managing expectations of stakeholders internally and externally. Taking the lead in developing commercial KPI reporting metrics and reports for M1.0 leadership, University governance forums, and BRCD partners and stakeholders.
11. Identifying major opportunities for the industrial and commercial exploitation of Queen's research outputs and its IP portfolio consistent with its longer-term research objectives., liaising closely with Queen's Research & Enterprise Directorate.
12. Developing new business models, mechanisms and contracts to ensure the rapid and smooth transfer of new knowledge and expertise to industry and/or relevant agencies. Managing the exploitation route inside and outside the university for example in terms licensing deals, company spin-off, knowledge transfer partnership, proof-of-concept programmes, company spin-off, working closely with QUB's Research & Enterprise team.
13. Developing close partnerships with Venture Capitalists, locally nationally and internationally, to facilitate and grow spin-out companies. Negotiation of contracts and licensing deals with industry nationally and internationally in partnership with the Research & Enterprise team.
14. Working closely with a range of local stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem to facilitate growth and with relevant agencies to promote opportunities for foreign direct investment.
15. Working with Queen's Strategic Engagement & External Affairs team to develop a marketing and communications strategy (including PR strategy) for M1.0 regionally, nationally and internationally, and then leading and coordinating the marketing and market communication activities.
16. Undertaking national and international travel and any other duties as may reasonably be expected from time to time in accordance with the needs of the University and the grade of the role.

Planning and Organising

1. Responsibility for stakeholder engagement.
2. Plan resource allocation for delivery of commercial / marketing activities including management of Commercial Team resource finances, and perform target setting in collaboration with the senior management team.
3. Plan in advance to meet deadlines as required by external stakeholders and funders.

Resource Management Responsibilities

1. Line Manage Business Development and Marketing teams to ensure relevant targets and goals are delivered and define performance standards and measures, in response to the strategic priorities.
2. Ensure effective use of budgets and value for money.
3. Manage risks associated with delivery of objectives.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

M1.0 is part of a highly collaborative ecosystem internally and externally, and therefore sits in a matrix arrangement within QUB, while having its own internal matrix arrangement.

The M1.0 Commercial Director will report to the M1.0 Executive Director (a senior professional services leader) but also work very closely with the M1.0 Director (a senior academic).

The M1.0 Commercial Director will also work closely and align with others in the M1.0 senior management team, especially the M1.0 Engineering Director and the CSIT Director of Operations.

CSIT is our Centre for Secure Information Technologies and is a critical Research and Innovation Centre which sits within Momentum One Zero while also being the UK's national Innovation and Knowledge Centre for Cyber Security, which is of international renown. The M1.0 Commercial Director and the CSIT Director of Operations will need to liaise and synchronise with one another in terms of marketing, external relationships and pursuit of opportunities.

The M1.0 Commercial Director will work proactively and collaboratively with a wide range of people to help to fulfil the purpose of M1.0, Queen's Strategy 2030 and the Belfast Region City Deal:

- Internally within QUB, e.g. City Deal personnel, the Queen's Strategic Engagement & External Affairs team, and other internal teams.
- Externally, including public, private, academic and not-for-profit.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. An honours degree or equivalent in a business / finance / sales or 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 in a demanding, rapidly changing high technology environment (e.g. business, academia, research institute), including experience of leading high performing teams; developing team members through motivation and delegation.
3. A clearly demonstrable track record in fostering strategic partnerships and engagements with industry and, where appropriate, government departments and agencies, including dealing with large international technology corporations and/or technology intensive SMEs.
4. Experience of successfully negotiating collaborative contracts and generation of commercial income.
5. Experience of successfully marketing, selling and project managing revenue generating technology-based services to business and the wider community including successfully conducting relevant commercial and legal negotiations.
6. Demonstrable ability to provide leadership and strategic direction and to inspire vision and confidence for change amongst partner organisations.
7. Demonstrable experience of managing large projects and/or a portfolio of projects with significant complexity, managing risks to deliver positive outcomes while achieving robust budget management.

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

1. Demonstrable commitment to the purpose and objectives of M1.0, Queen's Strategy 2030 and the Belfast Region City Deal.
2. Highly developed commercial acumen with the ability to find solutions by applying sound judgement and a strategic understanding of relevant issues, and the ability to bring discussions and negotiations to a successful conclusion.
3. Excellent influencing and coalition building skills, with the ability to manage multiple stakeholders including academic, industry and government agencies.
4. Ability to build and sustain productive relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and to negotiate with, influence and motivate senior leaders.
5. Interpersonal skills of the highest quality and demonstrable experience of having utilised those skills in leadership, marketing and sales negotiations.
6. Excellent oral and written communication skills, with the ability to build effective working relationships with university staff and external stakeholders.
7. Well-developed analytical capabilities and a proven track record of successfully delivering strategic outcomes with agility, flexibility and creativity.
8. Good team player with strong experience of leading high performing and highly collaborative teams, developing team members through motivation, delegation and mentoring.
9. Sound judgement and the ability to make difficult decisions in pressured situations whilst maintaining effective relationships.
10. A customer orientated approach to completing tasks and achieving objectives.

11. 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 AI, Cyber Security or Wireless sectors.
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.