

Candidate Information

Position:	Head of Strategic Projects
School/Department:	University Secretary
Reference:	24/112138
Closing Date:	Monday 26 August 2024
Salary:	£62,087 - £71,945 per annum
Duration:	Permanent

JOB PURPOSE:

Queen's Strategy Directorate provides strategic oversight and coordination across the University to enable informed, transparent, and collaborative planning, delivery, management and reporting in support of the University's ambitious strategic aims.

There is a need to drive a consistent and transparent 'Queen's approach' to Project and Change management, creating best practice, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, ultimately ensuring alignment to Strategy 2030.

Therefore, the Strategy Directorate is recruiting a Head of Strategic Projects to support the delivery of projects within each of the four Strategic Pillars (and Operational Excellence), as outlined in Strategy 2030.

This role will be responsible for establishing a Project Management Office (PMO) within the Strategy Directorate and ensuring long-term strategic projects are appropriately identified, prioritised and scoped. The postholder will also establish structures and a robust project management framework to enable efficient and effective delivery; generating project transparency and facilitating up-to-date data and reporting for the relevant Governing Bodies.

The Head of Strategic Projects will establish a central PMO to support the development, execution, and ongoing monitoring of Queen's Strategic Pillar's portfolio of projects.

The Head of Strategic Projects will work directly with the Strategic Pillar Lead / Project Sponsor(s) in defining the project outcomes and benefits to ensure the alignment to Strategy 2030, whilst enabling effective prioritisation and delivery of projects on schedule and within budget.

The Head of Strategic Projects will support a portfolio of projects, based on the University's strategic needs and priorities. The operational, day-to-day running of projects and completion of project support documentation will continue to be the responsibility of the project team, with strategic oversight being provided by the Head of Strategic Projects.

This individual will report directly to the Director of Strategy & Planning (as part of Strategy Directorate), to enable consistent reporting and use of business intelligence, whilst facilitating cross-functional collaboration and University-wide Integrated Planning.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Establish a central PMO to support the development, execution, and ongoing monitoring of Queen's Strategic Pillar's portfolio of projects.
2. Work with Strategic Pillar Leads and senior stakeholders to identify, plan and monitor a portfolio of projects which will deliver the objectives of Strategy 2030. Also work with Strategic Pillar Leads to measure, rank and prioritise projects against strategic aims.
3. Lead and manage the team. Coach and mentor project team members (as appropriate) to develop capabilities in line with the University's strategic needs, in particular, Project and Change management skills.

4. Develop and maintain detailed Programme/Project Plans and Integrated Delivery Roadmaps encompassing the prioritised projects within the relevant Strategic Pillar, taking into account the planning and business cycles of the University and the need for flexibility to accommodate ongoing requirements.
5. Maintain the Integrated Delivery Roadmaps, and critical path, implementing the standards and structures required to ensure university projects are delivered within time and budget to achieve key deliverables.
6. Provide best practice guidance and support on the development of projects, funding requests, business case development, project initiation documentation and key performance indicators / benefits realisation plans.
7. Recognise and track strategic interdependencies across change programmes within and external to each Strategic Pillar's portfolio. Recommend how resources are allocated across the portfolio to optimise delivery against the plan. This includes supporting the Strategic Pillar Lead to develop strategies to address resource gaps, such as capability or capacity issues.
8. Identify, assess, monitor and report programme risks, issues and opportunities, ensuring that adequate responses are in place.
9. Support the Strategic Pillar Lead in portfolio scenario planning, promoting the art of the possible through the assessment of market drivers and championing transformational change.
10. Input into the development of performance measures to assess the overall Strategic Pillar performance, implementing standards and structures for monitoring progress against the defined outcome metrics.
11. Prepare and deliver reports to leadership (including the Strategy Implementation Committee and University Management Board) outlining progress toward meeting strategic goals and objectives, for example performance related to finance, human resources, innovation and student retention and growth.
12. Establish ownership and responsibility within each Strategic Pillar for benefit realisation.
13. Build on and champion effective cross team working relationships across, embedding the new institution wide approach to Integrated Planning.
14. Provide overall quality assurance across the Strategic Pillar's portfolio of projects and support with wider business integration and transfer of ownership to core business ('Business as Usual').
15. Lead and manage existing team of project managers within the Strategy Directorate.
16. Any other duties that fall within the general ambit of the post.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. A degree and/or post graduate or professional qualification (or equivalent) in a relevant subject e.g. management, strategy, project management, finance OR substantial relevant experience in similar post(s) including extensive strategic relevant management and leadership experience.
2. A professional project/programme management qualification at Practitioner level e.g. PRINCE 2, Agile, MSP or PMP.
3. Proven track record (including recent experience) of establishing or leading or managing a Project/Programme Management function in a large and complex organisation including leading organisation-wide strategic and/or transformational programmes from definition/initiation to delivery. *A large/complex organisation is defined as one that matches 2 of 3 criteria: - Annual Turnover greater than £25.9 million – Balance sheet Total of more than £12.9 million – Average number of employees of more than 250.
4. Significant experience of working within a change management environment or organisation going through transformational change and proven ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and priorities.
5. A strong understanding of how to create and maintain a strategic programme/portfolio delivery plan, prioritise projects and ensure strategic alignment so that KPIs and benefits can be clearly defined and measured and projects are delivered on time and within budget.
6. Experience of identifying, managing, and resolving strategic risks and issues so that programme/project delivery remains on track.
7. Strong interpersonal skills including motivating, negotiating, influencing and effective partnership building particularly in a distributed decision-making environment and across senior stakeholders.
8. Proven ability to balance attention to detail while maintaining a broader strategic outlook.
9. The ability to work autonomously and manage own workload whilst also being able to identify opportunities for collaboration both across the Strategy Directorate and wider University.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Strong knowledge of a range of project and programme methodologies (such as Waterfall, Agile, PRINCE2, MSP, MoP).
2. Demonstrable well-developed understanding of governance structures and processes and the implications of non-compliance on other staff.
3. Experience of using a range of Business Intelligence systems to monitor and report performance against plans.

4. Experience of working with budgets and demonstrable understanding of financial budgeting procedures.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Informal enquiries may be directed to Laura Vannucci at: l.vannucci@qub.ac.uk