

Job Description

Job Title	Senior Project Manager – SCI
Department	Strategic Planning and Performance
HR Ref No.	RA4806-26
Role Code	SPM
Grade	OS9
Base location	Chester / Hybrid
Reports to	Director of Strategic Planning & Performance
Direct reports	
Date created	October 2026

Job purpose

1. The Senior Project Manager is responsible the transformation of business operations in the University, driving process improvement and business change.
2. The post holder will oversee the planning and delivery of a transformative project to transition the School of Creative Industries teaching spaces and facilities to the Exton Park Campus, a significant capital refurbishment project requiring academic portfolio redesign, and with significant implications for staff, students, and academic activity.
3. The postholder will project manage the full project lifecycle. This will include coordinating plans, risks, dependencies, governance, stakeholder engagement and communications across the project workstreams.
4. The postholder will manage the interfaces across project workstreams, including new course development, building and refurbishment, collection decant and storage, building closure, relocation, continuity and reopening.
5. The Senior Project Manager will have an excellent understanding of the project lifecycle and will work with business stakeholders to systemise the governance, reporting and prioritisation of the project and workstreams.
6. The Senior Project Manager will establish the use of common standards and methodologies to manage, assure and report progress. Continuously looking for innovative ways of operating and ensuring that the pace of delivery, considering availability of resources, meets the needs of the project and wider institution aims.
7. Subject to the needs and delivery demands of the refurbishment project, the postholder may also support other priority projects or contribute to coordination, assurance and reporting across the University's strategic portfolio.

Key duties and responsibilities

1. To provide leadership, coordination and constructive challenge to the cross-functional teams involved in delivering the project, workstreams and related business activity, ensuring effective collaboration and clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
2. To define and maintain an integrated project delivery plan across the workstreams, setting measurable goals, monitoring progress and readiness and forecasting delivery across future phases.
3. To identify key milestones and dependencies, manage risks and ensure projects are delivered to time, budget, and scope. Manage and identify risks and resolve complex issues that may arise within the project. Escalating risks, actions and decisions as necessary to the Senior Responsible Owner / Project Board. Delegating project level issues to the appropriate project manager.
4. To establish and maintain effective and proportionate project governance, decision rights, reporting and assurance arrangements, preparing high-quality recommendations and decision papers for the Project Board, senior leadership groups and other governance forums.

5. To work with supplier project managers, ensuring project plans are aligned and cross-dependencies mapped.
6. To manage, with colleagues and stakeholders, the prioritisation of resources to support project delivery, working closely with Estates, Faculty, Planning and other key stakeholders to ensure appropriate resources and support arrangements are in place for successful project delivery.
7. To identify and report on issues identified with project outputs, cost, risk, pre-requisites/dependencies, impact on current business activities and the strategic benefits to be realised.
8. To define and maintain an integrated view of project costs, funding, financial impacts and benefits, working closely with the Estates team and relevant Finance and business owners to support affordability, value for money and effective decision-making.
9. To engage and influence senior managers and stakeholders to ensure the live projects have the best possible chance of delivering to the agreed scope and business objectives.
10. To develop and maintain strong relationships across a complex stakeholder landscape to understand needs, manage expectations, and ensure effective collaboration, integrated communications and engagement, and coordinated decision making throughout the project lifecycle.
11. To facilitate decision-making across diverse stakeholder groups with competing priorities, utilise strong influencing and negotiating skills to ensure plans remain on track.
12. To provide inclusive leadership and management to the project team, responding dynamically and supportively to change. Motivate and develop staff and effectively manage performance.

Other:

13. To work with colleagues to develop and embed consistent approaches to project delivery, providing expertise, guidance and challenge where required, and support the development of project delivery capability across the University.
14. To be an agent of change, driving transformational change opportunities for the University, and lead and manage change effectively, focusing on the value to students and staff.
15. To represent the Director of Strategic Planning & Performance, when appropriate, at meetings at all levels across the Institution and represents the University of Chester at external meeting and conferences.

In addition to the above, undertake such duties as may reasonably be requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

General duties

- To uphold and comply with all University's policies and procedures, including those relating to:
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Health and safety
 - Data protection and IT security
 - Safeguarding
 - Sustainability
- To support the creation of a culture that is highly performance focused and built on a foundation of fairness, diversity, belonging and inclusivity.

Person Specification

Job Title	Senior Project Manager	Role Code	SPM
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The person specification details the qualifications, skills, experience or other attributes needed to perform the job.

Essential criteria are those, without which, a candidate would not be able to do the job. Applicants who do not clearly demonstrate in their application that they possess the essential criteria will normally be rejected at the shortlisting stage.

Desirable criteria are those that would be useful for the candidate to possess and will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.

Methods of assessment:

A = Application Form, I = Interview/Assessment Tests, P = Pre-Employment Checks

Selection Criteria	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Assessed via
QUALIFICATIONS		
Educated to degree level or equivalent level 6 qualification	E	A
Recognised qualification in project management	D	A
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE		
Significant experience of successful project management and delivery, of complex projects with multiple workstreams	E	A/I
Experience in process improvement and documentation of processes	D	A
Considerable experience in change management, ideally in a higher education setting	E	A/I
Experience of building strong relationships across complex, dynamic organisations, internal stakeholder and external partner groups	E	A/I
Proven experience in arranging, facilitating and leading workshops with a range of business stakeholders	E	A/I
Experience in influencing staff and stakeholders across all levels of an organisation	E	A/I
Experience of working with and managing 3 rd party suppliers	E	A/I
Experience of working in Higher Education setting	D	A
Experience of delivering estates and/or significant capital projects	D	A
Knowledge of financial management and forecasting	D	A
SKILLS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES		
Demonstrate ability to build trust, display integrity, and a personal commitment to the benefits of teamwork	E	I
Resilient, problem solving approach, able to respond quickly to change	E	I
Good analytical, strategic thinking, strategic planning and delivery skills	D	A/I
Good leadership skills with the ability to develop and communicate the project/change vision, inspire, motivate and develop staff at varying levels	E	A/I
Excellent written, oral communication and presentation skills with the ability to communicate using non-specialist language and reflecting the organisational context	E	I
Excellent numerical and analytical skills – able to research, gather and process data and information; analyse and interpret results; and determine appropriate action	E	A/I
Good business analysis and numerical skills including knowledge of methodologies and techniques used in Business Analysis.	D	A

UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER
TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

FINANCE
STRATEGIC PLANNING
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER
FIXED TERM – 18 MONTHS

SALARY SCALE

University Scale OS9, points 31 - 34, £40,704 - £44,352 per annum.

HOURS OF WORK

36.5 hours per week, to be worked within the University's core hours, detailed below:

Monday to Thursday	9:00am – 5:30pm
Friday	9:00am – 4:30pm (less one hour lunch break each day)

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT

22 days per annum (in the annual leave year in which employment commences annual leave entitlement will accrue on a pro-rata basis for each completed calendar month of service), rising to 27 days after five years' continuous service. Two extra statutory days per annum during the Christmas period.

PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT

The successful applicant may opt to be employed on a professional contract. Those employed on a professional contract have a holiday entitlement of 35 days per annum. As a minimum, they are expected to be present during the core hours of the roles, as outlined above, and they are not entitled to participate in the department's flexi time scheme.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Successful candidates will be required to complete an Occupational Health questionnaire, and may be required to undergo a medical examination.

ESSENTIAL CERTIFICATES

Short-listed candidates will be asked to bring to interview, proof of qualifications as outlined on the Job Description and Person Specification provided. Upon appointment, copies of essential certificates will be required by Human Resources.

PENSION SCHEME

The University operates two pension schemes for support staff:

- The default scheme is the Higher Education Defined Contribution Scheme (HEDCS), which is administered by Aviva.
- The Cheshire Local Government Pension Scheme, to which the University is an admitted body.

All support staff are entitled to participate in one of these schemes. Some staff will be automatically enrolled into a scheme, depending on their age and earnings, but if they do not wish to remain a member of the scheme, they will be entitled to opt out after enrolment.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The University has a policy of equal opportunity aimed at treating all applicants for employment fairly.

SMOKING POLICY

The University operates a No-Smoking policy.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A six-month probationary period applies to all University posts.