1. Job Details

Job Title: Head of Systems
School/Support Department: Student and Academic Services Group
Unit (if applicable): Registry
Line Manager: Head of Registry Operations

2. Job Purpose

To ensure effective and efficient delivery of business processes and integrated IT solutions to support the University’s strategic objectives and core activity in relation to admissions, curricula and student systems; to ensure high quality support for these; and to ensure integrity and continuity of, end-to-end business and IT processes. To lead and contribute to Registry, University and sector policy developments, and to represent the Registry and University in appropriate fora.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. Leading and programme managing diverse and complex IT projects within the Admissions, Curricula and Student (ACS) Systems business area to meet the University’s strategic objectives. This involves proactively identifying opportunities for new or changed business and IT processes, initiating business analysis and process redesign; undertaking impact analyses and resource estimation; ensuring implementation and on-going support, resulting in delivery of fully integrated and supported business and IT solutions.

2. Ensuring the quality and integrity of corporate systems, and in leveraging the investment made by the University in these systems. This involves ensuring the integrity and continuity of end-to-end business and IT processes that are ‘fit for purpose’ and that ‘work’, supporting the University’s business needs, including processes and statutory returns upon which major income streams depend.

3. Leading the Systems Development Group and Systems Operations Group in the Registry: directing the management of large scale activities, often governed by external agencies and deadlines; managing and directing overall activity and resources; leading business analysis and business process redesign; ensuring continual development, innovation and evolution of the service.

4. Planning and Organising

- Programme and project planning a range of complex IT and business change projects - with multiple inputs, often competing timescales and scarce resource - supporting critical University processes or to meet University strategic objectives (e.g. restructuring, Curriculum Project, RAE etc). Some lead-in planning is undertaken many years ahead of implementation e.g. 3 years in advance for HESA and RAE 2008; for internal University projects, 1 to 2 years planning in advance is the norm. Within each project, continual planning and revision of plans is required to implement changes and developments of business processes and supporting IT systems, usually to tight deadlines with no tolerance on quality or time. The postholder operates in a rapidly changing environment, with competing pressures for IT developments and business process change.

- Leading and contributing to institutional and sector policy developments - including contributing to influential committees - providing guidance and advice on systems and process implications of change.

- Leading, organising and managing the activities of a team of 9 staff across two Groups, Systems Development and Systems Operations on a yearly, quarterly and monthly basis, ensuring that agreed milestones are being achieved and that on-going service demands are being satisfied.

- Organising and prioritising own substantial workload with many conflicting high priority and high profile tasks, absorbing many non-planned developments/issues, often initiated externally to the University.

- Strategic and operational planning for the Registry as part of the senior Registry Management team, and for the EUCLID project as part of the EUCLID Management team.

- Devising contingency implementation plans in anticipation of the need to reschedule as a result of expected as well as unforeseen situations arising. Ensuring that contingency plans are acted upon.

5. Problem Solving

- Formulating and delivering challenging process and IT solutions to meet complex new University business requirements (e.g. RAE 2008, Curriculum Project etc) – both in terms of policy development and process delivery. This involves incorporating the analysis of business processes across many university business areas.

- Monitoring national initiatives and analysing new academic and administrative policies evolving in the Higher
Education sector, identifying and assessing their impact on and implications for the University, including providing the solutions to enable compliance.

- Identifying and analysing key strategic issues which must be addressed to enable projects to be successful, and finding solutions to ensure that these are resolved quickly. This involves using specialist knowledge to identify risks and assigning responsibility for necessary action.
- Proactively reviewing performance of Systems activities and identifying where enhancements are possible through new business practices or process re-engineering.
- Reacting quickly to changing demands and to handling different and often conflicting high priority tasks at once, while maintaining focus on objectives. This requires particular skill in the application of know-how and specialist knowledge to decide on the appropriate course of action and the ability to manage relationships effectively to ensure the best outcome.
- Writing and presenting strategy papers recommending an approach to enable senior committees to decide on appropriate courses of action.

6. Decision Making
- Making policy decisions in relation to Registry IT systems and business processes, and individual projects within the overall programme of projects.
- Developing institutional policy and process advice for various groups in relation to student administration and IT systems.
- Deciding on new business process solutions to improve the efficiency of, and levels of service to, customers of admissions, curricula and student systems.
- Consulting frequently with the Director of Registry and the Head of Registry Operations, on aspects of the project plans to ensure that timescales and resources are agreed, developments are engaged in and fully reflect strategy.
- Consulting with owners of downstream, dependent systems, both internal and external to the University, and approving the interface requirements between ACS and these systems.
- Prioritising, approving action and managing completion of high and other priority requests for bug fixes, minor system enhancements and software upgrades.
- Ensuring the integrity of major outputs, including those affecting income streams (e.g. fee invoicing, HESA, SFC Early Statistics etc).

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
- Significant negotiation, persuasion, and influencing is required across a range of stakeholders, often with competing demands and expectations, which involves developing positive working relationships with staff throughout the University for whom the jobholder has no direct responsibility. This includes:-
  - Staff such as the Senior Vice-Principal, Vice-Principals, College Deans and Associate Deans, Directors of Teaching Organisations, the Academic Registrar and the Director of Planning on systems policies/issues;
  - Administrative staff such as Deputy College Registrars, School Administrators, Teaching Organisation Administrators, etc and other key stakeholders within admissions, curricula and student systems on business process issues;
  - Staff within Management Information Services (policy, planning, development and support) and other business area staff who contribute to projects in various guises and time commitments, requiring organisation and co-ordination;
  - Other service providers within the University and with whose systems the student record interfaces, for example, Planning, Finance, Card Services, Library, EUSA, EUCS, Accommodation Services, CPA, Finance, Careers, Development and Alumni, Counselling.
- Provision of consultancy across the Registry and the University on business process and IT issues, in particular the Director of Registry and Head of Operations as part of the Registry Senior Management Group; Heads of Registry Groups in the context of new IT developments/amendments or new business processes; the Director of EUCLID and the EUCLID Project Manager, and members of the project team.
- Partnering relationships are needed with external colleagues, in order to promote and facilitate effective use by the University community of admissions, curricula and student systems, leveraging the investment and adding value. Examples of external organisations and suppliers of services to the University include SITS (provider of packaged software), UCAS, Student Loans Company, HESA, SFC, SAAS.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
- Educated to honours degree level with at least seven years relevant work experience, preferably within HE.
- Broad and in-depth appreciation and experience of project management, methodologies and tools, particularly PRINCE, with strong analytical and impact analysis skills.
- Understanding of issues currently facing the UK HE sector and of project management in the context of an academic environment.
- Substantial relevant administrative ‘hands-on’ experience, including directly managing staff and other resources.
Substantial experience of strategic planning and of initiating, managing and delivering organisational change through IT solutions.

Significant experience of business analysis, business process re-design and of implementing change.

Leadership skills to inspire and enthuse own staff and the wider stakeholder community.

Excellent communication (written, verbal and presentational), time management skills and the ability to communicate complex concepts to others and to successfully establish and manage complex relationships.

Ability to deliver to strict deadlines and under pressure, often with diverse and ill defined briefs.

Ability to manage a substantial workload with many conflicting high priority and high profile tasks.

Resilience and energy with excellent organisational skills, and a ‘can do’ approach.

### 9. Dimensions

- Direct management of one Head of Systems Operations and two Business Analyst Project Officers, with a further 6 indirect reports.
- Financial responsibility for payments to external package supplier, SITS.
- Admissions, Curricula and Student Systems have a staff user base of 1700 across a range of systems including: NESI, WISARD, USAD Admissions Database, PGDB, FEPS, SCS, STUDMI, STUDPROG, CAPAR, UCAS/GTTR Data Mart etc. Additionally, all students (over 22,000) access student record channels delivered via MyEd.
- USAD receives c35,000 applications per annum. The student record database contains over 100,000 students, 1,200,000 course enrolments, raises invoices for c£55M per annum, manages student exit/completion/ graduation for over 6500 students per annum etc. PGDB – the postgraduate database – contains over 65,000 student records. STUDMI contains approximately 95,000 student programme records (nearly 85,000 unique students), resulting in a total of 1,400,000 rows of data and 51,000,000 data items.
- The HESA Student returns are major institutional returns (c28,000 students per annum, over 230 items of data about each) upon which the University’s funding and student performance (including nationally published statistics such as Performance Indicators, newspaper league tables, Teaching Quality Information etc) are based.
- The Management Information datasets are used to inform and assess progress against the University’s strategic policies (intake, income, balanced scorecard, strategic plans etc) and to deliver funding (SFC Early Statistics, Teaching Load funding streams to Colleges/Schools etc).

### 10. Job Context and any Other Relevant Information

- Since 1998, the ACS systems business area has delivered an extensive range of projects, of multiple size and complexity, within a demanding resource and timescale environment. The last 2 years has included the purchase of an external Admissions package; development of Course Creation, Approval and Maintenance processes; delivery of changes to support the Curriculum Project and the Matriculation project; STUDMI and STUDPROG; revised interfaces with eFinancials; integration of visiting student admissions; HESA- SHEFC requirements; student elements of RAE return – all of which fundamentally underpin University activity.
- The multiple phases of the EUCLID Project already have, and will continue to have, a significant bearing on the postholder’s role and responsibilities. This job profile reflects responsibilities up to the early stages of the EUCLID Project.