

Job Description

Head of Operations

Department: Ear Institute

Grade: 9 (HERA: 5228)

Location: 332 Gray's Inn Road

Reports to

Head of Department (HoD) – Professor Jennifer Linden

Director of Operations (DoO) – Mr Geoff Dunk

Context

See appendix for faculty and department context.

Main purpose of the job

The Head of Operations (HoO) is a senior strategic leader of a large, complex department who partners with the Head of Department to translate academic vision into operational delivery, aligning departmental goals with faculty and university priorities. The HoO leads day-to-day operations, manages budgets, contributes to resourcing decisions, and ensures high-quality support for teaching, research, and strategy. This role anchors the leadership structure, working closely with the HoD day-to-day and ensuring operational consistency and strategic alignment during times when the HoD changes. The HoO fosters an inclusive, high-performing culture and drives collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement across the department, faculty and university. As a departmental leader, the HoO builds strong cross-university relationships and contributes to strategic initiatives.

Duties and responsibilities

1. Leadership and strategic planning

- Work in partnership with HoD to develop and implement the Department's strategic business and operational plans, ensuring alignment with institutional and faculty strategies.
- Work with the HoD and DoO or Deputy DoO to define, measure and report on departmental indicators of success.
- Analyse data and provide insights and management information to support strategic decision-making.
- Lead and contribute to strategic and operational projects and initiatives for the department, faculty and university.
- Collaborate with HoOs and other university leaders to achieve university objectives, building a culture where innovation that aligns with strategic priorities is encouraged and supported.

2. Financial management

- Develop the departmental budget and support integrated planning in collaboration with HoD and finance team, ensuring alignment with institutional plans and priorities. Collaborate with the HoD and finance team to provide accurate in-year forecasting and expenditure monitoring and implementing corrective actions to meet financial targets.
- Lead the long-term planning and allocation of financial resources, people, and space, navigating complex operational demands to meet departmental performance targets. Collaborate with faculty-level functional managers to shape sustainable resourcing strategies that balance immediate needs with future priorities.
- Ensure compliance with financial regulations, policies and controls/audits.

3. Operational management, governance and compliance

- Oversee and lead day-to-day operational running of the department and support decision making through advice and guidance to the HoD and other senior leaders on university matters. With the HoD, DoO, and Deputy DoO develop and maintain the department's organisational, operational and staffing structure.
- Influence and partner with relevant department, faculty and central staff to ensure the smooth provision of professional services support across research, education and all other departmental activities, monitoring progress against department, faculty and university objectives.
- Manage staff in partnership with functional managers across key professional services functions, to ensure staff are well-supported, motivated, and provided with meaningful development opportunities and align to departmental needs. In collaboration, allocate workload and support recruitment and appraisals.
- Manage departmental space, infrastructure, and facilities in collaboration with academic leadership and the Estates Property, Space and Strategy team ensuring any changes in use are reported and aligned with UCL's space governance processes.
- Lead departmental governance, ensuring adherence to governance frameworks and reporting requirements. May manage compliance across multiple units within the department. Ensure compliance with university policies and procedures and support complex regulatory compliance and audit readiness.
- With senior leadership team, lead departmental preparedness for risk and compliance, including business continuity and health and safety as a delegated responsibility. Oversee related planning, implementation and reporting.
- May be required to manage a department across multiple sites/campuses or geographic locations.

4. Culture, equity, diversity and inclusion

- With the HoD, lead and shape a departmental culture that values staff and students, supports wellbeing and delivers equality and diversity outcomes.
- Act as a role model, support staff wellbeing and cultivate a departmental culture where individuals who work to support the department feel a strong sense of belonging and connection, even when their roles sit within other teams.

5. Professional service management and service excellence

- Work collaboratively with faculty and university teams to ensure that the department delivers and receives the required professional services support, managing and influencing staff in a matrix environment in line with UCL's Ways of Working.
- Lead change initiatives and new ways of working, playing a leading role in designing relevant professional services. Promote a positive and high-performing work culture. Work within the department and across the university to evaluate and promote continuous improvement and innovation in service delivery.

6. Internal and external engagement

- Represent and advocate for the department in internal and external forums and initiatives.
- Network across faculties and have oversight of and support external engagement, partnerships, and alumni relations. May manage significant, complex external/philanthropic partnerships and contributions.
- Support departmental communications, working with the HoD to ensure that information is cascaded within the department and across the university.

General

- Follow and actively promote the UCL [Ways of Working](#).
- Takes responsibility to carry out duties in a way that embodies UCL's environmental and social sustainability values, actively supporting [UCL's Sustainability Strategy, policies and objectives](#) within the remit of their role.
- Carry out any other duties within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager.
- This job description may be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with the post holder.
- UCL is currently reorganising its functional teams. This may result in changes to some of the specific duties and responsibilities of this position and/or its reporting line(s). The post holder will be expected to implement change and support continuous improvement as this change process is undertaken, and on an ongoing basis after this.
- If applicable: UCL offers hybrid working where appropriate and the successful applicant may normally work remotely as per current UCL hybrid working policy.

Person Specification

Note to job applicant: copy and paste the following criteria into your “Statement in support of your application” and describe underneath each criteria how you meet it, giving examples. You will be scored on how you meet each criteria.

Essential Criteria	Assessment method (Application form/ Interview / Practical Test)
Qualifications, experience and knowledge	
Relevant professional experience with a high standard of education	Application
Proven success in business planning and project management, and in the development and implementation of institutional objectives. Experience working with external partners and stakeholders at all levels to achieve project outcomes.	Application/interview
Demonstrable experience of effective budgetary management and control, including achieving annual targets on a regular basis	Application/interview
Experience leading and delivering change in support of institutional and local objectives	Application/interview
Skills and abilities	
Interpersonal and relationship management skills, with the ability to build trust and to influence and persuade senior colleagues and diverse stakeholder groups. Ability to exercise tact, confidentiality and diplomacy whilst also influencing others	Application/interview
Demonstrated leadership skills and ability to motivate, manage and develop a team (both directly and in a matrix organisation)	Application/interview
Outstanding communication skills, including the ability to present information effectively to a wide audience (internal and external)	Application/interview
Ability to analyse and present data to inform evidence-based decision making and proactive problem solving	Application/interview
Resilience and adaptability in complex changing environments, with the ability to work independently and balance conflicting demands	Application/interview
UCL Ways of Working	
Proactively working with other people, teams, partners and functions for the benefit of the wider institution	Interview
Showing an active commitment to inclusion, diversity and (inter)cultural sensitivity	Interview
Being able to evaluate information and quickly identify key issues	Interview
Desirable Criteria	Assessment method
Postgraduate management degree or professional training or equivalent knowledge through experience	Application
Experience of leading strategic activities beyond the local level, i.e. institutional, faculty, intra-department, cross-institution or at national level	Application

