Position Description – Director Innovation Central Adelaide

Updated 14 October 2026

POSITION DETAILS	
College/Portfolio	**Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)**
Organisational Unit	**Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)**
Supervisor (Title)	**Chief Research Development Officer**
Classification	**Higher Education Officer Level 10**
Employment Type	**Full Time, Fixed term to 31 July 2029**

POSITION SUMMARY

The Director, Innovation Central Adelaide (ICA) is a senior strategic leadership role responsible for leading and scaling one of Australia's premier industry-university innovation hubs within the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN). This role operates at the high levels of strategy, business development, and international partnership, driving transformational outcomes for Flinders University, Cisco, and the broader NIIN ecosystem.

The NIIN Innovation Central Network (ICN) is expanding across the Asia-Pacific. Flinders University plays a pivotal role in this expansion as one of the most mature nodes in the ICN, providing a proven model for replication internationally.

The Director is expected to be a central figure in NIIN international growth; actively contributing to the growth of the Innovation Central Network, sharing operational best practice, and forging the regional industry partnerships that will underpin the network's commercial and research outcomes.

The Director will be responsible for unleashing the full activation and potential of the Tonsley Innovation District. Such efforts will include but not be limited to leadership of the local, national and international business development strategy for the Tonsley Innovation District program(s) of the University. The Director holds ownership of ICA's strategy, commercial pipeline, financial sustainability, and performance. In addition to highly effective internal stakeholder management, this is an outward-facing, relationship-driven leadership role requiring deep business development acumen, executive presence, and a commitment to growing ICA's influence both nationally and across the Asia-Pacific region in alignment with NIIN's international expansion agenda.

The Director reports to the Chief Research Development Officer, works in close alignment with the Cisco Research Chair, Industry Alumni and Innovation Central Network Program Lead, and represents ICA and Flinders University Research Portfolio on national and international forums. This role sits at the centre of a high-profile tri-sector collaboration and is expected to operate with exceptional independence, strategic agility, and entrepreneurial drive.

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UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES

All staff at Flinders are responsible for understanding their obligations and responsibilities as set out in the University's code of conduct and are expected to:

- demonstrate commitment to the University's values of Integrity, Courage, Innovation and Excellence
- demonstrate consistent alignment with the University's strategic priorities through daily decisions, teamwork and behaviours that reinforce the strategic intent.
- contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the team or work unit to meet the University's objectives. This includes demonstrating appropriate and professional workplace behaviours, providing assistance to team members, if required, and undertaking other key responsibilities or activities as directed by one's supervisor;
- promote and support an inclusive workplace culture which values diversity and embraces the principles of equal opportunity;
- perform their responsibilities in a manner which reflects and responds to continuous improvement; and
- familiarise themselves and comply with the University's *Work Health and Safety, Injury Management and Equal Opportunity* policies.

Flinders University is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment, free from gender-based violence. Appointment to this role is conditional on the completion of required pre-employment checks and declarations, each of which must be satisfactory to the University. This includes a Gender-Based Violence declaration, in accordance with the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence (2025), and a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check.

KEY POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director Innovation Central Adelaide is accountable for:

Strategic Leadership and Direction

- Lead the full strategic direction of Innovation Central Adelaide, ensuring alignment with NIIN priorities, the ICA operating model, Cisco's innovation strategy, and Flinders University's research, industry engagement and international objectives.
- Set and own the multi-year strategy for ICA, including horizon-scanning for emerging technologies, market opportunities, and partnership landscapes in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Work closely with Flinders Executive Director International Strategy on developing international strategic partnerships.
- Drive ICA's positioning as a recognised centre for industry-led innovation, securing national and international profile through representation at executive forums, conferences, and government engagements.

Business Development & Commercial Growth

- Develop and implement a strategy for full realisation of the productivity potential of the Tonsley Innovation District Program of the University.

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- Own all business development outcomes for ICA, including pipeline origination, partner identification, opportunity qualification, commercial negotiation, and conversion to funded projects and long-term partnerships.
- Build and manage a diversified commercial portfolio spanning corporate partners, government-funded programs, research grants, and international collaborations.
- Identify and pursue new industry partners nationally and globally.

International Outreach and NIIN Network Expansion

- Act as an active contributor to NIIN's Asia-Pacific expansion and support Flinders University's international partnerships across the Asia-Pacific region.
- In collaboration with Flinders Executive Director International Strategy, identify opportunities for joint international programs, cross-node research collaborations, and co-funded initiatives that strengthen the Flinders University and NIIN's global commercial position.
- Represent ICA and NIIN in international forums, trade delegations, and partner engagements.

Stakeholder Engagement and Representation

- Provide high-quality strategic advice, performance reporting, and risk updates to the ICA Advisory Board and Flinders University's senior executive team
- Establish effective business and communication processes to maximise participation of all colleges, research institutes and portfolios of the university.
- Build and sustain trusted senior relationships across Flinders, Cisco, NIIN member universities, government stakeholders and international partners.
- Represent ICA and Flinders University at the major events and conferences.
- Any other responsibilities in line with the level of the position as assigned by the Supervisor and/or the University.

KEY POSITION CAPABILITIES

- Postgraduate qualification in a relevant discipline such as business, engineering, technology, or applied sciences; or demonstrated equivalent executive experience in a commercial and research environment. Minimum of 10 years in progressive leadership roles in research or commercial environments.
- Demonstrated track record of securing and managing high-value, complex partnerships at a national and international level.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and execute multi-year strategic plans in complex, multi-stakeholder environments.
- Demonstrated experience building and sustaining relationships across Asia-Pacific markets, with an understanding of the innovation ecosystems, regulatory environments, and business cultures of key NIIN expansion markets.

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- Experience representing organisations at senior international forums, trade missions, or government-industry delegation. Cultural agility and interpersonal sophistication to operate credibly with diverse international stakeholders.
- Outstanding communication and presentation skills, with the ability to influence and engage C-suite, government ministers, board members, and academic leaders.
- Experience designing and delivering innovation programs such as accelerators, hackathons, challenges, and industry-research co-design initiatives.
- Demonstrated ability to lead lean, high-performing teams in fast-paced and ambiguous environments.
- Proven capacity to manage concurrent, complex workstreams with multiple stakeholders and interdependencies.
- Commitment to continuous improvement and organisational learning as a driver of sustained performance.

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