Job Information

Job Title: Assistant Director - Digital Design and Delivery

School/Service: ITS

Reports to: Chief Digital and Technology Officer

Grade: G10

Main Purpose of Job

1. Provide senior leadership across the University's digital, data and technology change portfolio, ensuring robust end-to-end governance, assurance and alignment with institutional strategy and priorities. Oversee and integrate the disciplines of IT business partnering, business analysis, project delivery and change enablement to ensure initiatives are well-defined and successfully delivered. Establish and embed consistent frameworks, standards and practices that drive quality, transparency and value, while fostering strong collaboration between ITS and academic and professional service stakeholders to enable confident, outcome-focused change.

2. Lead the planning, assurance and delivery of major programmes and projects, ensuring a coherent, controlled and value-driven portfolio of change. Champion a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and disciplined delivery, strengthening the University's capability to execute complex and enabling sustainable, user-centred change.

Key Duties & Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership

- Act as a senior adviser to the Chief Digital and Technology Officer on the planning, prioritisation and assurance of the University's digital, data and technology portfolio.
- Represent the function at leadership forums, governance boards and cross-university initiatives, influencing strategic decision-making and ensuring alignment between institutional priorities and change delivery.
- Champion a joined-up, outcome-focused approach across business partnering, analysis, delivery and change enablement disciplines.
- Represent the University externally within the HE sector as appropriate.

2. Business Partnering & Stakeholder Engagement

- Lead the IT business partnering function, ensuring strong, trusted relationships with academic and professional service leaders.
- Ensure effective demand shaping, translating business needs into clear, prioritised and deliverable initiatives aligned to strategic outcomes.

- Act as a senior escalation point for complex stakeholder issues, balancing competing priorities and driving consensus.
- Promote a collaborative engagement and ownership of change across the University.

3. **Business Partnering & Stakeholder Engagement**

- Provide strategic leadership to the architecture team and championing the application of the reference architectures and standards to guide investment decisions, design and delivery.
- Ensure appropriate and proportionate governance, architectural coherence across data and technology.
- Communicate and promote architectural standards and reference models.

4. **Business Analysis**

- Provide leadership for the business analysis capability, ensuring high-quality discovery, requirements definition and benefits articulation across all initiatives.
- Build organisational capability in understanding and defining change, driving clarity from concept through to delivery.

5. **Project & Programme Delivery**

- Lead the successful delivery of the University's portfolio of digital, data and technology projects and programmes.
- Ensure appropriate delivery methodologies are applied, balancing agility and control to meet the needs of different initiatives.
- Oversee programme and project performance, ensuring delivery to time, cost, quality and scope expectations.

6. **Change Enablement**

- Lead the change enablement capability, ensuring effective planning, communication, engagement and adoption of new services and capabilities.
- Ensure that change impacts are understood and managed, supporting staff and students through transformation.

7. **Supplier & Stakeholder Management**

- Manage strategic relationships with key suppliers and partners, ensuring alignment with portfolio priorities and delivery expectations.
- Work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to shape ideas and innovate, and options, and to resolve issues and risks.

8. **Governance, Risk & Compliance**

- Ensure portfolio-level risks and issues are identified, managed and escalated appropriately.
- Embed strong governance and compliance practices across all change activity, aligned with university policies and external standards.

Job Context

1. This senior leadership role is essential to delivering the University's ambitions under Sussex 2035: Creating Progressive Futures, specifically the Digital & Data Futures strategic theme and the Recovery and Rebuilding Strategic Plan (2025–2028).

2. The University is operating in a challenging environment with significant declines in student numbers and income resulting in a projected deficit for 2025/26 and a requirement to deliver £6m in-year (25/26) savings and £28m (26/27) cost reductions to restore financial sustainability. These pressures demand a relentless focus on efficiency, service optimisation and value for money in all areas of IT operations.

3. Within this context, the role provides strategic leadership across the University's digital, data and technology change portfolio, ensuring that programmes and projects are effectively shaped, governed and delivered to achieve institutional priorities. It brings together business partnering, business analysis, project delivery and change enablement to create a coherent, high-performing function that translates strategic intent into well-defined initiatives, with clear ownership, robust planning and strong stakeholder alignment.

4. The postholder will establish and embed a disciplined portfolio governance and assurance framework, providing independent oversight, challenge and support across all change activity. This includes ensuring that risks, dependencies and benefits are actively managed, that delivery is consistent with agreed standards and methodologies, and that stakeholder engagement and adoption are effectively led. Success in this role is critical to strengthening delivery confidence, maximising value from investment and enabling sustainable, user-centred transformation at scale.

Dimensions

1. Projects: Responsibility for assurance and leadership of digital delivery and design across programmes and projects.

2. People: Direct leadership of service leads covering Business Partnering, Demand Management, Architecture, Project Management, and Change Management, with matrix management of staff, contractors, and third party resources across concurrent initiatives

3. Decision making: Significant influence over investment prioritisation, solution design, delivery approaches, and long term digital capability development.

4. Governance: Membership of the IT Leadership Team, leadership of design and assurance forums, and active participation in relevant steering and governance groups.

5. Supplier and budget oversight: significant technology vendor portfolio across end-user compute services and systems.

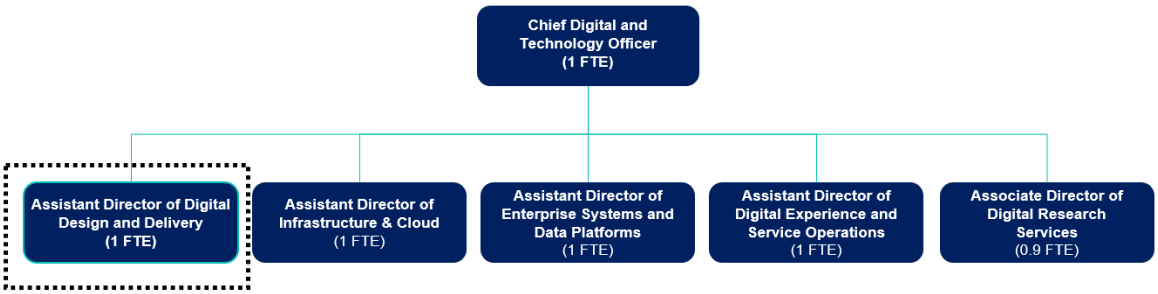
6. The postholder operates with a high degree of autonomy at both the immediate operational level and in shaping long-term strategy. Day-to-day, they have authority to make critical decisions on service delivery, resource allocation and issue resolution to maintain operational resilience and user experience.

7. At a strategic level, the role influences the University's digital roadmap and enabling technology adoption plans that will shape the institution for the next decade. This includes negotiating and managing major commercial partnerships, setting performance standards and ensuring value for money through supplier relationships. Decisions taken in this role have immediate impact on service quality and cost efficiency, as well as long-term consequences for digital and data transformation, institutional competitiveness and financial sustainability.

8. In addition to direct line management, the role carries significant influence across the ITS leadership team, working collaboratively with peer Assistant Directors at grade 10 and engaging with senior professional services colleagues at grades 9 and 10. This position requires strong leadership capability to foster alignment, drive cultural change and ensure cohesive delivery across multiple functions in a complex and evolving environment.

Organisational Structure

1. This role is shown below, in context with the reporting line to the Chief Digital and Technology Officer and peer relationships with the ITS leadership team. It should be noted that all the roles within the ITS Leadership Team are graded G10 which reflects the strategic level of this leadership cohort and their impact upon the university, its community and future success.



Internal and External relationships

1. Chief Digital and Technology Officer

2. Assistant Directors in ITS

3. Chief Operating Officer

4. Assistant Director Strategic Portfolio Management

5. Professional Services Directors and their leadership teams

6. University Executive Team Members, Heads of Schools and Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellors

7. Student Union representatives and other Student Voice representatives

8. Project SROs across the Institution

9. External Technology Suppliers

10. Technology Journalists and associated press

11. Other HEI IT Directors and CIOs

12. HEI representative groups such as UCISA and JISC

Other Contextual Information/Special Features

1. This role is pivotal to the discovery, design and delivery elements of digital, data and technology project change and therefore the overall experience of technology and digital services for students, academics and professional staff.

2. The postholder will enable a fundamental shift in institutional culture, ensuring projects commence delivery once discovery has been completed, and pre-requisites and assumptions have been validated. This change will require substantial leadership acumen, strategic vision and personal resilience to navigate complexity and deliver outcomes that matter for the University community.

3. Aligned with the Digital and Data Futures transformational theme of Sussex 2035, the role will contribute to creating a digitally empowered environment where services are intuitive, inclusive and reliable, and where staff and students feel confident and supported in their use of technology. Success will depend on embedding best practice in design, engagement and delivery IT driving adoption of modern platforms and ways of working.

Person Specification

Person Specification Element	Criteria

Skills	1. Exceptional leadership skills, with the ability to communicate a vision that inspires and motivates staff and aligns to the Sussex 2035 strategy. 2. Excellent stakeholder management and communication skills, with the ability to work and influence at senior and executive levels. 3. Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to explain complex technical information to non-technical audiences. 4. Strong analytical skills with experience using service data and metrics to drive improvement. 5. Strong vendor management and partner relation skills. 6. Ability to balance operational stability with strategic change.
Qualifications	1. Degree or equivalent professional qualification in IT, Digital Services or Business Administration. 2. Evidence of ongoing professional development aligned to senior IT leadership.
Knowledge	1. Deep understanding of programme and project governance, assurance frameworks and best practice, including the integration of business analysis, delivery and change disciplines. 2. Strong knowledge of demand management and business partnering models. 3. Strong understanding of organisational change, stakeholder engagement and benefits realisation in large-scale transformation contexts. *4.* Knowledge of risk management, financial governance and value management within a project context.
Experience	1. Significant senior-level experience leading digital, data and technology portfolios, programmes or functions in a large, complex organisation. 2. Proven experience leading and integrating multi-disciplinary teams across business partnering, business analysis, project/programme delivery and change enablement. 3. Strong track record of shaping and delivering complex transformation programmes, from early discovery through to implementation and benefits realisation. 4. Experience of influencing and engaging senior stakeholders, including executive-level leaders, to shape demand, prioritise investment and drive consensus. 5. Experience of managing competing priorities, resources and dependencies across a portfolio to optimise delivery capacity and value. *6.* Experience of working with third-party suppliers and partners within a governed delivery environment, ensuring accountability for outcomes and value for money.

Personal Attributes	1. Strategic, resilient and outcomes-focused senior leader. 2. Strong commitment to service excellence and user experience. 3. Collaborative and inclusive leadership style. 4. Comfortable operating in a complex, changing environment.