



Job Description

Post: Head of Academic Commercial Services

Employer: University of Birmingham Enterprise Ltd ("UoBE" [100% subsidiary of The University of Birmingham])

Salary: Depending on experience, but likely to be in the range of £60k pa, plus a bonus of up to 15% pa (half based on company performance, and half based on individual performance).

Responsible for which other posts: Administrator, Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Commercial Intelligence Manager, Development Manager and various project-based roles

Responsible to Chief Executive Officer

Main Duties:

Senior Management Team

- Contribute to the running of UoBE business through active membership of the Senior Management Team. This includes active participation in regular meetings, and cross-functional activities to address, for example, matters such as performance of the company, objective setting, talent management and development, and long-term strategy.
- Provide support to other Senior Management Team colleagues (and their teams) where required, e.g., during periods where there may be a number of high priority/urgent case-loads, or where capacity might otherwise be an issue.
- Support the CEO, Senior Management Team, and Board, with strategic matters as required from time to time: For example, on benchmarking, stakeholder engagement, performance measurement, SWOT analysis, data collection (e.g., for the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey) etc. Be aware of and keep abreast of national trends and policies.

Academic Commercial Services Team Management:

- Take responsibility for the management and delivery of academic consultancy support, facility and equipment access agreements, and operating divisions across the institution. Act as the University 'expert' in all aspects of the team's commercial services, and develop other experts and ambassadors in the team, developing close trusting relationships with colleagues, academic clients, business engagement professionals and senior leaders within the University. Meet often with stakeholders to seek feedback on services provided, opportunities to grow or build on activities, or to continuously improve to meet the changing needs of customers. This includes meetings with University Heads of Schools and Colleges, as well as other professional services, such as and in particular, the Business Engagement and Research Impact team.
- Lead the ongoing development of the Academic Commercial Services (ACS) team to continue to deliver an efficient and professional service whilst managing a multitude of concurrent complex activities, and to evolve and flex the team as needed to support wider UoBE objectives and stakeholder needs as they may evolve.
- Line Manage and develop the team ensuring that individuals continue to operate as a cohesive, efficient unit with high performance standards, and support other members of the Senior Management Team in developing the wider staff base of UoBE
- Ensure that enquiries continue to grow year-on-year by finding new ways to reach out to and engage the full diversity of our academics and maximise opportunities that may become available to grow exposure to our commercial offerings through relevant initiatives and programmes in the region or beyond.
- Provide regular reporting and other relevant information necessary to monitor the compliance, commercial and financial performance of the Academic Commercial Service

EnterpriseOD™ programme Leadership

- Take responsibility for the efficient management of new and existing operating divisions set up through the EnterpriseOD™ programme, including all financial and legal aspects and, depending upon the operating division, line management responsibility for employees and/or consultants.
- Working collaboratively with other UoBE teams, apply strategic vision to continuously develop the programme including the wider support offered, in particular its sub-programmes 'Spin-OD', Consult-OD and SHAPE_OD
- Apply strategic governance to the terms, conditions and processes that underpin the EnterpriseOD and continue to review and refine the EnterpriseOD governance, ensuring alignment with the strategic direction of the appropriate University Colleges.
- Act as an ambassador for this innovative and pioneering programme to other institutions, exchanging ideas and seeking out new approaches and partnerships to improve the model and enhance its impact.

Legal governance

- Where not directly negotiating agreements, be responsible for sense checking other agreements provided by team members. The post-holder will have delegated approval for signing off contractual agreements managed by the team.
- Use legal experience and problem-solving skills to solve complex issues encountered by the project team to ensure that all contracts are completed in accordance with the compliance, governance and legal requirements of UoBE and the University so that both they and the relevant academic are protected during and after the consultancy activity.
- Use commercial expertise to negotiate an appropriate fee rate for academics taking into account the prevailing factors of the work, the academic's depth of expertise, the research field, brand value, and being aware of the commercial requirements of each project and the external client.
- Ensure that risk factors are mitigated, reputational and ethics issues are considered and that any realisable intellectual property has been accounted for in each of the contracts that are negotiated. Take advice from, and in turn give advice to, colleagues within UoBE and the University on related matters.
- Maintain the high delivery standards expected of academics who use the services ensuring that contracts are arranged in a timely manner and that bid deadlines are met.

Financial management

- Take full responsibility for the >£3 million turnover per annum Academic Commercial Service including growing turnover and profit year-on-year.
- Ensure that all projects are costed and priced appropriately with due regard for maximising revenue and profit and that all transactions are undertaken in accordance with the UoBE and University financial regulations.
- Oversee financial transactions undertaken by colleagues within the University Finance Office and the efficient and timely distribution of funds to academics in accordance with the tax requirements designated by the contracts arranged on their behalf.
- Monitor and provide regular reporting of the financial performance of the Academic Commercial Service, including each of the Operating Divisions, to the CEO, Management Team, and Board. In cooperation with finance colleagues, take responsibility for the financial year-end revenue recognition process to ensure that the Academic Commercial Service contribution to UoBE's annual accounts is recorded correctly and in accordance with financial requirements.
- Lead the response from the Academic Commercial Service with respect to the annual external audit and ensure that the auditors' requirements are met and that record keeping throughout the year is undertaken to ensure the efficient delivery of both the services and the audit.

Other activities

- Engage with academics who may wish to offer new innovative services or undertake activities that are non-standard and provide guidance on their suitability and, once agreed, build a creative and compliant framework for their delivery as appropriate.
- Work with other UoBE and University teams to deliver presentations and workshops on consultancy, services and operating divisions, or wider UoBE offerings, internally and externally.

- Provide guidance to UoBE colleagues on related legal agreements and drafting or reviewing them as appropriate.
- Provide advice, guidance and support to senior leaders within the University on matters where expertise or 'independent' input may be sought.
- In addition to the above, the post-holder will be expected to carry out other duties as reasonably required by the CEO in accordance with the needs of University of Birmingham Enterprise as the organisation continues its current growth and/or the wider Finance Office of the University.

Person Specification

- Experience of managing and growing a comparable commercial business unit. The individual should be able to demonstrate the leadership skills they have, with examples. The individual will need to show experience of innovative problem solving and an ability to grow turnover and profit (or other key measures) year-on-year whilst continuing to deliver outstanding service to the benefit of clients.
- Demonstrable experience with commercial legal agreements coupled with the aptitude to manage the financial aspects of the role. Ability to arrange, negotiate, and draft contracts in accordance with compliance and governance requirements and show aptitude for finding solutions to issues with a creative, entrepreneurial and proactive mind-set. The individual should have creative and deep analytical skills and will need to show strong legal and commercial judgement. The individual will need to show that they can immediately establish themselves as the University expert on academic consultancy with capability for delivering on the existing contracts and projects underway whilst building on the achievements to date.
- A resilient, tenacious self-starter with the ability to prioritise workload and to manage a number of competing complex projects simultaneously and navigate time pressures that often require an immediate change in focus. The individual will need to maintain attention to detail and a strong work ethic whilst dealing with a wide variety of issues on a daily basis and particularly during the busiest times of the financial year.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to establish credibility with academics, the University's senior management and the buying and legal teams at the companies being contracted with. The individual should be a natural leader who is able to bring multiple parties together and align them around a common goal through effective questioning and listening and persuasive communication where appropriate. Tolerance, patience and diplomacy will be required to work effectively with strong-minded individuals who may have views on how contracts should be arranged.
- Demonstrable strong people management skills to get the best from the Academic Commercial Service team who work in a fast paced, complex and demanding but rewarding environment. The individual should have and be able to demonstrate and articulate examples of empathy they have shown in managing a comparable team.
- Marketing skills: The individual should have experience of reaching out to a wide variety of potential clients with examples of how they have targeted those most appropriate in an inclusive manner.
- Reporting skills: Experience of and ability to report legal and financial matters clearly and with appropriate consideration of risks and the internal and external environment. Financial planning and an understanding of accounting practices would be advantageous.
- Understanding of the academic environment and how technology transfer organisations operate in leading universities is beneficial. An appreciation of the demands of business and how their objectives and timelines vary from those of an academic environment would certainly be helpful. The individual should be able to understand and bridge the gap between the demands and expectations of business and the time commitment and resources of academics, and the strategic interests of the wider University.
- Credibility amongst the academic and business community. Whilst it may help if the role-holder is at least degree educated, consideration will be given to other ways in which the individual can demonstrate credibility within the academic community. Legal and/or financial qualifications could also be advantageous, but not essential.
- Willingness to think 'outside the box' in problem solving and having the openness to be a driver for positive engagement by academics with the strength of character to say no when required.

- Gravitas and the political acumen to navigate through the complexities of a University environment and to manage a diversity of sensitivities.
- An appreciation of equality, diversity and inclusivity. The postholder will need to ensure that the Academic Commercial Service is as inclusive and accessible as possible.

Our values and behaviours

