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Job description and person specification

Service Design Lead

Job description

Job title	Service Design Lead
College/Service	University Secreta
Department/Team	Strategy Risk and Planning
Accountable to	Associate Director Strategic Change
Contract	Fixed Term - 18 months
Term	35 hours per week, 52 weeks per year
Grade	Grad
Salary	£60,484 -£73,058 per annum
Location	Hybrid - UAL High Holborn/ Home
Job family	Professional & Administrative
HERA reference	002471

Purpose of the role

University of the Arts London (UAL) generates and inspires the creativity the world needs for a better future. Since 1842 our Colleges have been defining creative education. With curiosity, imagination and intent we make work which creates lasting change for people and our planet.

Under the leadership of our new Vice-Chancellor, we are embarking on an ambitious strategic refresh to shape the next chapter of UAL’s impact. One of the five core pillars of this refreshed strategy is the development of a future-fit Operating Model - one that reflects our values and supports our ambitions.

Our goal is to design a joined-up, student-centred, and sustainable operating model that enables a high-performing and inclusive community, supports academic and professional excellence, and ensures our systems, structures and spaces are aligned to deliver world-class creative education.

As Service Design Lead, you will play a pivotal role in shaping and delivering user-centred design approaches that enable these operation model changes. Working closely with professional services, academic teams, and students, you will design and prototype new services, roles, and processes that are both innovative and implementable.

Key duties and responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Design

- Provide strategic leadership of the Service Design workstream within UAL's operating model change programme, ensuring all designs align with institutional priorities, high-level design principles, and emerging service archetypes.
- Act as a strategic adviser and thought partner to senior leaders, translating UAL's long-term ambitions into actionable, innovative service design models that shape the future of professional and academic services.
- Establish, champion, and embed service design principles, standards and methodologies across the programme and wider institution, ensuring consistency, quality, and sustainability of new ways of working.

Research and Co-design

- Lead institution-wide user research with staff, students and external stakeholders, ensuring diverse voices are heard and insights are rigorously analysed to inform design choices.
- Design and facilitate high-level engagement processes (e.g., cross-college workshops, design sprints, scenario planning) to co-create future service models with broad organisational input.
- Translate research findings into authoritative personas, user journeys, service blueprints, and experience maps that directly inform decision-making at governance and executive levels

Design

- Lead the co-design and prototyping of future service concepts, ensuring solutions deliver measurable improvements in efficiency, user experience and organisational resilience.
- Drive innovation by introducing new service models, methods and digital approaches, ensuring alignment with sector-leading practice and UAL's strategic direction.
- Provide expert guidance to colleagues and leaders on embedding redesigned processes into organisational culture and practice

Delivery & Oversight

- Work in close partnership with programme and project managers, process leads and operational leaders to translate service designs into robust implementation and transition plans.
- Oversee testing, piloting and evaluation of new services, ensuring that learning is captured and improvements are embedded institution wide.
- Exercise strategic accountability for service design deliverables, ensuring they achieve targeted benefits and support long-term institutional objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Lead cross-institutional engagement, collaborating with Executive Board, academic leadership, colleges, professional services, governance bodies, students and external partners.

- Build and sustain high-trust relationships with senior stakeholders, influencing strategic decision-making and enabling alignment across diverse functions.
- Champion a culture of user-centred and inclusive service design, acting as a visible advocate for new ways of working and embedding them across UAL.

Key working relationships

- Strategy Risk and Planning Team
- Design and Technology (User Experience (UX), Digital Learning, and Technology Enhanced Learning)
- College Executive Groups
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team
- Directors of Professional Service functions and wider stakeholders across those departments in the University
- Academic staff stakeholders in departments across the University

General duties

These duties below are in addition to the duties and responsibilities listed above:

- Perform duties and tasks consistent within the scope and grade of your role as reasonably may be expected and assigned to you from anywhere within the university.
- Undertake health and safety duties and responsibilities appropriate to the role.
- Work in accordance with the University's Staff Charter and Dignity at Work Policy and anti-racism plans, promoting equality diversity and inclusion in your work.
- Undertake continuous personal and professional development, and to support it for any staff you manage through effective use of the University's Planning and Review Conversations (PRC) scheme and staff development opportunities.
- Make full use of all information and communication technologies to meet the requirements of the role and to promote organisational effectiveness.
- Conduct all financial matters associated with the role in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, as laid down in the Financial Regulations.
- Contribute to the University's Climate Action Plan and Social Purpose Strategy which sets out our principles, commitments and goals towards climate justice and our socio-environmental purpose.
- You may be required to work such additional/different hours as may from time to time be necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of duties which may include evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.
- You may be required to regularly travel to other sites and internationally as necessary.

Person specification

This section provides a list of up to 10 essential criteria (and up to 2 desirable criteria if specified) that you will need to demonstrate you meet as part of the recruitment process.

Experience, Knowledge and Qualifications

- Extensive professional expertise in service design, operating model development and organisational transformation, with a track record of leading complex, cross-institutional change.
- Deep understanding of operating model and organisational design principles, including the ability to critically evaluate and define service archetypes that improve efficiency, effectiveness and financial sustainability.
- Demonstrated success in applying advanced service design and business improvement methodologies (e.g. design thinking, Lean, Six Sigma, Kaizen, service blueprinting) to deliver measurable institutional benefits.
- Significant experience of working in large, complex, multi-stakeholder environments, with the ability to navigate organisational politics and competing priorities.
- Desirable: In-depth knowledge of the Higher Education and/or creative education sectors, including regulatory, financial and cultural contexts.
- Desirable: Expertise in digital transformation and the application of emerging technologies to service redesign.

Communication & Influence

- Outstanding communication and facilitation skills, with the ability to engage, influence and inspire stakeholders at all levels, including executive leadership, academic colleagues, professional services staff, and external partners.
- Skilled in articulating complex design concepts and evidence through compelling narratives and visual communication, ensuring clarity and shared understanding across diverse audiences.
- Confident and credible in senior governance and decision-making forums, providing authoritative advice on service design and change implications.

Leadership & Management

- Demonstrated ability to combine strategic vision with operational detail, ensuring that service design outputs are ambitious, feasible and aligned to UAL’s long-term objectives.

Stakeholder engagement

- Established track record of leading user-centred research and evidence-based design in complex organisational contexts.

- Strong portfolio demonstrating expertise in user research, service mapping, co-design, prototyping and evaluation.

- Commitment to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility through service design, ensuring that outcomes meet the needs of diverse students and staff.

Teamwork & Collaboration

- Proven ability to build coalitions and partnerships across functional, disciplinary and organisational boundaries, enabling alignment and collaboration at scale.