

Post Details		Last Updated: 18/03/2025	
Faculty/Administrative/Service Department	Education Office		
Job Title	Director of Online and Digital Learning		
Job Family	Professional Services	Job Level	7a
Responsible to	Pro-Vice Chancellor Education		
Responsible for (Staff)	Surrey Online Learning Manager, Surrey Online Learning Programme Leaders, and the Digital Learning team		

Job Purpose Statement

The Director of Online and Digital Learning will lead the development and delivery of the University of Surrey's high-quality online learning portfolio, addressing both individual and business needs in B2B and B2C markets. This includes overseeing Surrey Online Learning (SOL) and driving strategic partnerships with regional, national, and international businesses to increase student numbers and generate income against agreed financial targets.

The SOL portfolio will encompass:

- Full online postgraduate degree programmes
- Online CPD courses enabling professionals to upskill in new skills or subjects
- Micro-credentials—small, credit-bearing modules that are 'stackable' and can form the foundation for postgraduate qualifications

In addition, the Director of Online and Digital Learning will lead the Digital Learning Team in positioning the university at the forefront of UK higher education through the innovative use of digital technologies and generative AI (GenAI) to enhance teaching, learning, and student experience. The postholder will be responsible for developing, implementing, and supporting the use of contemporary educational technologies, systems, and practices to advance the university's education strategy. They will also provide pedagogical leadership, both within the institution and across the sector, by engaging in networks and communities of practice, as well as contributing to staff development at university, faculty, and school levels.

Key Responsibilities This document is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but an outline record of the main responsibilities

The postholder will work closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, senior colleagues in IT, the Library, Student Services & Administration, Academic Quality Services, and Faculties to:

1. Provide strategic leadership for SOL, driving the development and implementation of its growth strategy to expand online portfolio.
2. Maintain and oversee partnerships with external organisations, including the OPM provider, ensuring efficient systems, financial sustainability, and high performance.
3. Lead the design, development, and evaluation of high-quality online programmes and digital learning initiatives, ensuring they align with the university's strategic priorities and commercial viability.
4. Establish and oversee quality assurance processes for SOL, including chairing the Board of Studies and overseeing Continuous Enhancement Plans to ensure excellent quality and standard of SOL programmes.
5. Drive faculty engagement and collaboration, leveraging insights and expertise to ensure online courses and digital learning innovations meet educational needs and financial objectives.
6. Drive the university's AI and digital learning strategy, leading the integration of GenAI, learning analytics, and emerging technologies to transform student learning experience and outcomes.
7. Develop and deliver staff training and CPD programmes, embedding digital pedagogy and GenAI in teaching, learning, and assessment to equip academic staff with the skills to integrate GenAI into their practices.
8. Lead and manage the Digital Learning Team, ensuring its effectiveness and alignment with institutional goals by expanding its remit to support both on-campus and online learning through strategic leadership, staff development, and performance management.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.
- Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.
- Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.
- Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.

Help maintain a safe working environment by:

- Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand.
- Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy.

Elements of the Role

This section outlines some of the key elements of the role, which allow this role to be evaluated within the University's structure. It provides an overview of what is expected from the post holder in the day-to-day operation of the role.

Planning and Organising

- The post holder will lead, recruit, and motivate the SOL team, creating a culture and working environment to drive growth and facilitate high performance.
- The post holder will work with the Pro-Vice Chancellor Education, Pro-Vice Chancellor Deans, and Heads of School to identify opportunities for new courses.
- The post holder will work with Faculty Leadership to ensure the thorough evaluation of the design and delivery of programmes, including academic quality and student experience.
- The postholder will negotiate, advise on, and lead commercial arrangements with partners including the OPM.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Problem solving and decision making are integral to many elements of the work undertaken by the post holder.

- The post holder will resolve any major problems which arise in SOL's delivery of online programmes.
- The postholder will work with the Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and CFO to develop budgets and financial plans for the SOL programmes.
- The postholder will negotiate, advise on, and lead commercial arrangements with clients and partners, including the OPM.
- The post holder will work with Faculties to make sure the right courses are selected, taking into account workload and existing priorities.

Continuous Improvement

- The post holder will lead and support the development of a longer-term strategy for SOL which will include an assessment of market conditions, resource implications and potential risks.
- The post holder will lead the optimisation of SOL's operating model for the development and delivery of online programmes, ensuring continuous improvement in response to learner, business partner, and academic feedback, and product innovation in response to new technology and market trends.
- The post holder will work with Pro-Vice Chancellor Education to lead the identification of new opportunities (products and target markets) for developing SOL programmes, preparing detailed business cases to support additional investment when required.
- The post holder will own the relationship between the SOL, the Academic community, and the OPM, maximising the benefit for Surrey by liaising at senior levels to develop and grow the partnership, ensuring the OPM and Surrey deliver their contractual obligations and resolving problems as they occur.
- The post holder will be expected to deliver excellent customer service to both internal and external customers. As part of this, the post holder will be expected to develop or improve upon existing processes where this will improve the overall service to stakeholders.

Accountability

- The postholder has responsibility for delivering the SOL growth targets, providing strategic leadership to drive the implementation of the growth strategy, while leading the design, development, and delivery of high-quality online programmes.
- The post holder will drive and take responsibility for coordinating the university’s AI and digital learning strategy, leading the integration of GenAI, learning analytics, and emerging technologies to transform the student learning experience and outcomes, in alignment with the university’s overall strategy.
- The post holder will develop a public presence in the industry and network at a senior level among peers and clients, through business development, networking, and public relations activities, client meetings, professional networks and events, and School events and public conference.
- The post holder has responsibility for ensuring academic colleagues are informed of institution-wide developments in and requirements for digital learning, and has responsibility for ensuring that the University complies with Digital Accessibility Legislation. This will require the provision of suitable support and training where applicable.

Dimensions of the role

- The post holder is responsible for a sizeable budget that reflects the University’s ambition in this area.
- The post holder will have an immediate and long-lasting impact on the University as they lead the thinking and strategic delivery of the growth of SOL, the AI and digital learning strategy

Person Specification This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships

Professionally qualified with a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification, plus a significant number of years’ relevant leadership experience, or substantial experience and proven success in strategically important broad function/specialist

Or:

Substantial and extensive vocational experience demonstrating professional development and achievement in a series of progressively more demanding, influential and broad work roles, backed by evidence of deep and broad knowledge of the whole functional work area.

E

Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge) This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role

**Essential/
Desirable**

**Level
1-3**

Financial and commercial awareness (or the ability to develop this to the required level)

E

3

Excellent knowledge of the global online learning market and how it’s evolving

E

3

In-depth knowledge of the HE Sector and key challenges

E

3

Knowledge of contemporary issues in the fields of GenAI, distance education, online/blended learning, and learning analytics, with experience of provision in some or all of these areas

E

3

Extensive experience in developing and implementing IT and Digital strategies to support and underpin the Digital learning agenda and organisational goals.

E

n/a

Experience of leading a University’s online portfolio

D

n/a

Experience in providing technology solutions in a Higher Education environment.

D

n/a

Commercial drive and proven ability with an entrepreneurial approach.

D

n/a

Special Requirements:

**Essential/
Desirable**

The post-holder will be required to work outside normal start and finish times on occasion

E

Core Competencies This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade.

**Level
1-3**

Communication	3
Adaptability / Flexibility	3
Customer/Client service and support	3
Planning and Organising	3
Continuous Improvement	3
Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills	3
Managing and Developing Performance	3
Creative and Analytical Thinking	3
Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills	3
Strategic Thinking & Leadership	3

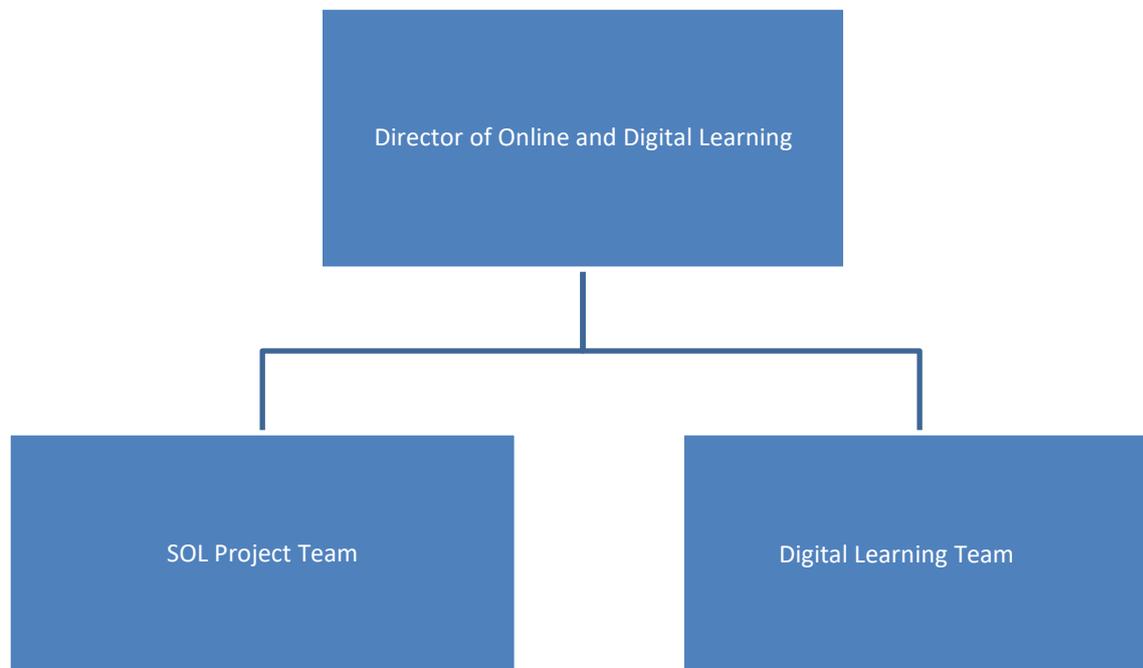
This Job Purpose reflects the core activities of the post. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder develop, there will inevitably be some changes to the duties for which the post is responsible, and possibly to the emphasis of the post itself. The University expects that the post holder will recognise this and will adopt a flexible approach to work. This could include undertaking relevant training where necessary.

Should significant changes to the Job Purpose become necessary, the post holder will be consulted and the changes reflected in a revised Job Purpose.

Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

Background Information

The University of Surrey is a leading teaching and research UK Higher Education institution, ranked 12th in the recent Complete University guide. The University currently has a small online provision but an ambition to grow this considerably. We want our reputation for world-leading teaching and research to reach a global audience of lifelong learners.



Relationships

The post-holder will report directly to the Pro-Vice Chancellor Education. This role has Line management responsibility for Surrey Online Learning Manager, Surrey Online Learning Programme Leaders, and the Digital Learning team. They will work closely with other senior stakeholders, for example but not limited to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Deans, the Chief information Officer, Vice-President (Strategic Growth), the Chief Student Officer, and Director of Academic Quality and Governance.

The post holder will liaise on technical matters internally with central IT services and externally with contractors and/or service providers.

The post holder will engage with other universities to share good practices in order to enhance online learning design and delivery.

The post holder will work with professional and academic staff based in the Faculties and help develop university-wide understanding of how innovative approaches to online and digital learning can best be used to enhance the students' academic experience through technological environments.

The post holder will liaise with technical and support teams from across the University to ensure coordination and integration with other relevant business processes and initiatives.