

# Senior Project Manager

## Job Specification

Date created: March 2025

### JOB DESCRIPTION

Employment status: Permanent, full time

Hours: Full time hours at UCEM are 35 per week, Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and this role follows this pattern

Location flexibility: The place of work for this role is **Split** between the Horizons office in Reading and your home; the exact split of days/hours is negotiable but must include a minimum of **two** working days per week spent at Horizons (you may work more in the office should you wish)

Please note the following:

- When you work at Horizons you must attend on core office days only
- Core office days are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- The building is closed to staff on Fridays
- On a Split contract you cannot attend the office on a Monday, unless you have worked a minimum of 3 other core days in the office
- Working at home is only possible if your environment meets certain conditions – see the **Attachment** to this Job Specification document – and if not, you need to work at Horizons

Department: Chief Operating Officer

Line manager: Hannah Al-Katib, Director of Strategy & Planning

### Role summary

We are seeking a Senior Project Manager to lead a diverse portfolio of projects that align with UCEM's strategic priorities and drive transformative efficiency. This role is central to delivering impactful change across the institution, with a focus on strategic initiatives that support UCEM's expansion into new areas, such as new degree programmes and developing research capability and the student experience. You will work closely with the Director of Strategy & Planning to identify, define, and execute projects, adapting to the organisation's evolving priorities, which may also include projects to increase efficiency through process and system enhancements.

As a key leader within the Strategy & Planning Office and across UCEM, you will foster strong relationships with senior management, guide project managers, and ensure effective project delivery within UCEM's framework. Your leadership will span overseeing project portfolios and directly managing projects, ensuring all aspects of the lifecycle are meticulously executed. From driving progress to providing updates for senior stakeholders, you'll be instrumental in developing UCEM's project management capability and promoting seamless collaboration across departments. This role offers the opportunity to make a significant impact as UCEM continues to enhance its project delivery framework.

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## Role accountabilities and responsibilities

- **Portfolio management:** Plan and oversee projects to deliver the strategic plan, providing mentoring and oversight for other project managers as well as management of your own projects.
- **Leadership:** Demonstrate a high degree of leadership through the management of your projects, manage within a matrix project environment and influence a range of stakeholders. Supervise and mentor project teams, provide guidance and input into decision-making.
- **Project Delivery:** Lead all stages of assigned projects, ensuring delivery within time, budget, and quality parameters, in line with UCEM's project management framework.
- **Business justification:** Develop business cases, define and evaluate project benefits, and ensure outcomes align with organisational goals and impact can be demonstrated.
- **Project planning:** Develop, monitor and maintain project plans which identify the critical path and required resources, guiding and managing teams to deliver against the project plan.
- **Resource Management:** Manage budgets, resource allocation, and supplier relationships to support project success and achieve agreed cost parameters.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Build effective relationships with stakeholders and project sponsors to achieve project outcomes, ensuring excellent communications to support delivery.
- **Governance and reporting:** Ensure project governance is in place so that decisions are taken appropriately and in line with organisational delegations of authority. Report project progress and risks to the Director and other senior stakeholders in line with project governance arrangements and the UCEM project management framework.
- **Risk and issue management:** Communicate progress, risks, and outcomes, addressing challenges collaboratively. Identify, assess and manage project risks, working with stakeholders to ensure full understanding of the risk portfolio. Manage issues and problem-solve to overcome barriers to project success.
- **Process Improvement:** Contribute to the development and continuous improvement of UCEM's project management framework.

## Other Responsibilities

- Support the wider aims of the Strategy & Planning Office by actively championing and representing the team across the organisation where needed.
- Proactively develop skills and knowledge to support the continual improvement of project delivery.
- Deputise for the Director of Strategy & Planning if required.
- The role may, as the team grows, include line management responsibilities.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Line management responsibility:   | Not initially but may be required in time and salary reflects this |
| Budget responsibility:  | YES  |
| <u>In this role you will liaise with:</u><br>All UCEM staff involved in Project Delivery, including Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team; Wider UCEM Departments |  |

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Assessment Criteria: A = Application I = Interview T = Test

X denotes both essential and desirable requirements plus how these will be assessed

| Qualifications and training   | Essential | Desirable | A | I | T |
|---|-----------|-----------|---|---|---|
| Bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience                                     | X         |           | X |   |   |
| Certification in a recognized project management methodology (e.g., APM, PRINCE2, PMP etc.) | X         |           | X | X |   |

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| Additional certifications such as Agile Certified Practitioner or Lean Six Sigma  |           | X         | X | X |   |
|---|-----------|-----------|---|---|---|
| <i>Please be aware that as part of onboarding processes, we will seek original documentary evidence of the relevant academic and/or professional qualifications which you include within your job application</i> |           |           |   |   |   |
| Previous experience   | Essential | Desirable | A | I | T |
| Extensive experience in leading and managing complex strategic and business improvement projects  | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Developing business cases and delivering measurable project benefits  | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Delivering organisational change  |           | X         | X | X |   |
| A background in Higher Education or Not-for-Profit sectors  |           | X         | X | X |   |
| Experience in line management and/or mentoring  |           | X         | X | X |   |
| Experience in supporting the development and improvement of project management processes  |           | X         | X | X |   |
| Skills, knowledge, and aptitudes  | Essential | Desirable | A | I | T |
| Leadership and mentoring capabilities for managing project teams and influencing stakeholders in a matrix environment   | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Organisational and prioritisation skills to manage diverse portfolios   | X         |           | X | X |   |
| Problem-solving and decision-making abilities   | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Adaptability and resilience; able to work on varying projects and handle complex challenges in a fast-paced environment   | X         |           | X | X |   |
| Digital skills: We use MS Office which includes Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint   | X         |           | X |   | X |
| Emotional intelligence for stakeholder management and team leadership   | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Understanding of project management frameworks and methodologies (e.g., PRINCE2, Agile)   | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Knowledge of risk management, stakeholder engagement, and governance processes  | X         |           | X | X | X |
| Financial acumen for managing budgets and demonstrating project value   | X         |           | X | X |   |
| Procurement and supplier management   | X         |           | X | X |   |
| Awareness of regulatory compliance and trends in Higher Education   |           | X         | X | X |   |

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| Process development and improvement   |           | X         | X | X |   |
|---|-----------|-----------|---|---|---|
| Proficiency in project management tools and software, such as Microsoft Project   |           | X         | X | X |   |
| Other requirements or special requirements  | Essential | Desirable | A | I | T |
| Alignment to the UCEM core values of Passion, Integrity, Excellence and Support; all employees are expected to demonstrate our values at work:<br><a href="https://www.ucem.ac.uk/core-values/">https://www.ucem.ac.uk/core-values/</a> | X         |           |   | X |   |
| Commitment to delivering positive outcomes for our students; we want our students to be successful  | X         |           |   | X |   |
| You must be prepared to undertake compulsory online training should you be appointed; this includes Data Protection, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Prevent, EDI, and Anti-bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct                   | X         |           |   | X |   |

## PAY & BENEFITS

- Salary range £55,000 to £65,000 per annum.
- 26 days paid holiday (rising to 28 with service) plus paid bank/public holidays plus up to 5 paid closure days (typically between Christmas and New Year); all per holiday year Full Time Equivalent. Our holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July. We also have a holiday buy and sell scheme in place. Sometimes UCEM does not need to close for 5 days per year and any balance, for example 1 day, can be used as a paid Wellbeing Day to take time out for your own physical or mental health.
- Pensions auto-enrolment to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (this is not a salary exchange/sacrifice scheme). You may opt out.
- Policies in place for all types of family-friendly statutory leave with enhanced pay available from day one of employment (in addition to statutory pay, where applicable).
- Wellbeing support and full access to the Employee Assistance Programme, as well as the Thrive Mental Wellbeing app. Several UCEM employees are trained Mental Health First Aiders and can support staff.
- Cycle to Work and Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice schemes and access to Tax-Free Childcare (Government scheme).
- For Horizons based roles, we may in the future be able to offer parking on site however you must not assume this will be possible. Every now and then we may have a spare parking space become available and you can ask to join the waiting list. UCEM is keen wherever possible, to encourage staff to commute as sustainably as possible.
- Life assurance cover.
- Employer-funded Health Cash Plan (Simplyhealth) and voluntary dental insurance (Unum).
- Charity giving options available including one voluntary paid day, per annum.
- As a UCEM employee you will have access to Microsoft Office 365 applications for personal use. You will also have access to range of lifestyle discounts (savings on everyday purchases) and access to two learning platforms.

*On the Join the team page of our website, you will find the full list of employee benefits at UCEM*

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**IMPORTANT!** All job applications must be sent to [recruitment@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@ucem.ac.uk) and if you apply via a jobs board, please make sure you have sent all required documents otherwise we will be unable to consider your application. In addition, if you apply for this job on the recommendation of an existing UCEM employee, please make sure to mention their name within your application.

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To apply for this role, please send the following to [recruitment@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@ucem.ac.uk) (you will receive an auto-response):

1. Your up-to-date CV;
2. A covering letter or email message outlining your suitability\* for the role; AND
3. A completed **Recruitment Check Form** which is available from the *Current vacancies* page of our website.

The above items constitute a **complete** job application.

\*We hope you take time to consider the UCEM values when you prepare your job application. You may also wish to consult our vision and strategy document: <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/our-vision/>

We are committed to driving forward our sustainability agenda to secure a sustainable future and our long-term ambition is to be the world's most sustainable university. We recommend you visit our website to find out more about our **Sustainability Strategy**: <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/sustainability/>

If you are an existing UCEM employee, we request you inform your current line manager of your intention to apply for this role.

**NO AGENCIES:** We are not using agencies for this vacancy, and we cannot accept any CV submissions. Please do not contact us as we can only repeat this message.

## Informal discussion

If you are unsure whether to apply, perhaps because you do not meet all essential criteria, we encourage you to call the hiring manager to discuss this further (details below). If you are excited by this vacancy do not rule yourself out; it still might be worth applying.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Hannah Al-Katib on 0118 467 2317 or email [h.al-katib@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:h.al-katib@ucem.ac.uk)

For any other enquiries please contact HR on 0118 467 2454 / 2433 or email [recruitment@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@ucem.ac.uk)

## Closing date and next steps

Monday 14 April 2025 at noon.

HR will screen all applications in person and all applicants will receive a response confirming the status of their application. We value the time taken to make a job application and the interest shown in UCEM.

## Interview details

Initial interviews are scheduled for week commencing 28 April 2025.

Please indicate on your Recruitment Check Form any dates that you cannot make, up to 4 weeks from the closing date. This helps us to plan interviews should you be shortlisted, prior to contacting you.

Applications may be reviewed prior to the closing date and occasionally, you may be invited to interview ahead of the closing date.

Interviews are normally carried out over Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and we may invite you to visit our Reading office, especially when this is your place of work.

Please be prepared for a two-stage interview process, held on different dates. As part of the interview process, you will meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Sometimes we may conduct a telephone interview at first or second stage. You should expect to prepare a presentation for the interview, a briefing will be provided when you are invited to interview.

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## **Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

Here at UCEM we champion equality, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce. We celebrate diversity and the strengths it brings to our staff body, our student community and our Board of Trustees, recognising that people are key to our success. Our aim is to attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce, therefore we welcome and encourage applications from all backgrounds.

## **Pre-employment checks**

UCEM undertakes thorough pre-employment screening as part of its recruitment process. Given we have contracts with Government offices, we make sure our checks comply with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). Checks will include identity, right to work, basic disclosure criminal record check, and three years of employment history.

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## Attachment – homeworking environment

UCEM is a **flexible employer** and flexibility is built into different places of work location. As such, it is reasonable to ask employees to adhere to some **general principles and ways of working**, in order to make sure flexibility offers value to everyone, including UCEM.

In addition, if all or part of your working week involves working at home, your home environment must meet certain conditions. Otherwise you will be required to work in the office at Horizons.

### General principles

- All employees regardless of place of work will be required to take an online Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment and repeat this at such intervals as may be instructed by the Facilities Management Team. The purpose of this is to look after your health and safety at work.
- All employees must adhere to UCEM IT Security and Data Protection policies in their place of work.
- All employees will be expected to be accessible to colleagues during their normal working hours and ensure their Outlook Calendars reflect the accurate place of work.
- All line managers will be expected to be accessible to their team and will be responsible for ensuring the performance of their team.

### Remote (Home) requirements and conditions

- Where your place of work involves working at home, you must have suitable conditions in which to work.
- As a minimum, your UK home location must be able to accommodate the UCEM technology and equipment. What this means in practice is that you must have sufficient space in which to house the technology and equipment safely and securely.
- In all cases, UCEM technology and equipment can only be handled and used by you, the employee. It must not be accessible to any other household member, at any time.
- When you are working remotely as part of the DSE assessment, you will be required to provide evidence that your working environment meets DSE requirements, such as providing a photo of your workstation setup.
- You must also provide a secure and reliable internet connection which allows you to work as effectively as if you were in Horizons, **including undertaking video and audio calls and connecting permanently to the VPN.**
- In the case of known broadband outage you should plan to work at Horizons or elsewhere – noting that elsewhere must still meet the place of work requirements. Should you be unable to do either of these options, you will be required to take holiday. In the event of unexpected outage, you should discuss with your line manager whether you need to find an alternative place of work or take holiday.
- For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of the required broadband, will be self-funded.
- It is expected that you will house technology and equipment at a suitable work desk, which gives you the space needed to work safely and confidentially. This space in your home must be away from other household users, such as space in a room which is not frequented by other household members.
- Your work environment must remain professional at all times. This means you must be able to work remotely without interruption from household members and noise, and your surroundings should mirror what an office environment would look like (clean/tidy, free of clutter and distractions).
- It is not appropriate to work from a sofa or other location which is not in keeping with presenting a professional work environment. Opting to use the blurring function on Teams/Zoom is not an acceptable workaround.
- If you do not have space to accommodate these requirements or your circumstances change, you are not permitted to work at any location other than Horizons.