



**Birkbeck**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

# JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

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# CONTEXT OF THE JOB

## About Information Services

Information Services (IS) incorporates Library and IT Services.

Information Services provides the systems and services that are relied upon by Birkbeck's students, staff, wider community and other commercial customers to deliver and engage with the life-changing educational opportunities that are central to the institution's mission, conduct internationally recognised research, and manage the smooth running of the administration. These range from provision of library facilities and support; digital education platforms, consultancy and support; fundamental infrastructure including a fast and secure data network; commodity technologies like telephones, printing, email system and file storage; to the College's web presence and systems that hold corporate data, supporting teaching and learning and administrative processes.

Our services are fundamental to the institution, and requirements to develop and extend our use of technology and the wider services we provide are ever present.

The directorate consists of the following units:

- » **Information Services:**
  - IS Operations Team
    - User Services
    - IT & AV Support
    - Infrastructure
    - Technology Liaison
    - Architecture
  - Information Security & Governance Team
  - IS Projects Team
  - IS Business Support Team
  - Academic Services Team
  - Content & Delivery Team
  - Digital Product Development Team
  - Enterprise Resource Planning Systems Team
  - Student Information Systems Team
  - Digital Education Team
- » **Library Services**

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## ABOUT THIS ROLE

Information Services is led by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and their Management Team. The department is relatively large both in terms of staff and budget (c. £13M annual total revenue budget), but also in terms of the number and scale of ongoing services being provided, projects being undertaken, goods and services being procured at any one time.

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# JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job title:** Chief Information Officer

**School/department:** Information Services

**Reports to:** Vice-Chancellor

**Supervises:** Information Services (c. 100 FTE staff) -

**Line manages:** Head of IS Operations, Head of Digital Product Development, Chief Technical Architect, Head of ERP Systems, Head of Student Information Systems, Head of Digital Education, Head of IS Projects, Head of Information Security & Governance Director of Library, IS Business Manager

**Post reference:**

**Grade:** 10

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## PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To ensure the effective provision, development and maintenance of comprehensive and reliable Information Services to (a) enable the College's day to day business operations, and (b) support strategic developments.

To develop effective working partnerships with the Faculties and Professional Services to proactively identify and deliver improvements to College Information Services.

To prioritise on-going work demands faced by individual teams, deciding on the choice of appropriate solutions and technologies to meet specific requirements, resolving outstanding operational issues and problems and initiating and overseeing key development and change management projects.

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## MAIN DUTIES

### Service Management

- To provide visible and accountable leadership to the staff in Information Services ensuring the delivery of effective, responsive and high quality services with the focus on customer satisfaction.
- To provide visible and inspiring leadership of IT and Library service across the College and develop strong working relationships with the senior management team, academic and professional service heads and appropriate external bodies and partners.
- To lead the Information Services teams, including setting and monitoring performance targets, budget accountability and professional staff development.

## **Strategy Development and Delivery**

- To articulate and champion a transformational vision for the use of information and technology as an enabling element of the College's strategy and objectives across research, education and administration.
- To work with stakeholders across the College to implement and continue to develop the strategy to deliver this vision.
- To ensure that the College takes an integrated approach to the use of technology more across all of its activities.

## **Project and Change Leadership**

- To provide leadership for major projects, programmes and other information and technology initiatives and play a key role in developing and prioritising the College's major systems and processes investment programme.
- To develop and own process review and business change implementation best practice at Birkbeck, provide Business Process Review practice and guidance for practitioners.
- To act as 'business change architect': ensuring that different projects compliment (rather than contradict or hinder) one another and to provide a point of ongoing challenge to the status quo in the College's operations, generate new ideas for improvement in terms of the most effective combination of people, processes and systems.
- To act as an advocate for process review initiatives, promoting and demonstrating the benefits of this approach to different audiences across the College.
- To provide leadership and co-ordination across multiple college-wide projects; to directly lead specific high priority, College-wide change projects.
- Work effectively across organisational boundaries to ensure delivery of tangible benefits from IT projects and investments.

## **Horizon Scanning**

- To anticipate trends and developments in information technology and associated disciplines and to provide expert guidance to the College in the use and exploitation of technology in alignment with Birkbeck's strategy and vision.

## **Risk Management**

- To anticipate and manage strategic and operations risks associated with the College's reliance upon information technology.
- To ensure that College manages, exploits and safeguards information assets to the best effect across all of its activities.

## **Procurement & Supplier Management**

- To act as the lead in managing relations with strategic suppliers and partners.

## Representation

- To represent and promote the College on relevant regional, national and international bodies.

## Broader Duties

- Take on roles and responsibilities across the College as required as a member of the College wider senior management team.
- Undertake other duties as required by the Vice-Chancellor.

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## WORKING RELATIONSHIPS & CONTACTS

The role of Chief Information Officer will involve managing a large number of internal and external relationships:

- Vice-Chancellor – *line manager*
- IS Management Team – *as line manager*
- Other IS Staff – *to provide overall strategic direction*
- External Suppliers – *management of the relationship with external suppliers of software and or consultancy, to ensure that contracts meet requirements, that best value is achieved when contracting with suppliers, and that suppliers deliver against contract terms*
- Senior Colleagues – Deputy Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellor, Executive Deans, Directors of Professional Services, Directors of Operations – *senior 'customers' of services provided by IS*
- Faculties and Professional Services – *as owners of business processes, and users of processes and systems provided by IS*

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## DIMENSIONS

Responsible for Information Services relied upon by all of Birkbeck's circa 12,000 students, 15,000 applicants (e.g. online applications), 100,000 enquirers (e.g. online query submission and course listings), and 2000 staff.

Non availability of critical systems such as the network, file storage, printing, classroom AV, corporate website, student record, finance, HR and payroll systems would seriously impact upon the day-to-day work of a large number of College staff. Any problems with the functioning or accuracy of corporate information systems could potentially have an adverse impact on the College's reputation and finances (e.g. problems with returns to HESA).

Responsible for ensuring the effective management of the department's financial and human resources (combined annual revenue budget c. £13m).

Responsible for the delivery of capital projects (annual spend varies - average c. £1m).

Responsibility for the delivery, to time, budget and specification, of College-wide projects which are mission critical, including major systems procurement, evaluation and purchasing decisions that have long term impact on the successful working of the College.

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## **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES - These are standard to all Birkbeck Job Descriptions**

- To adhere to the College's Equal Opportunities policy in all activities, and to actively promote equality of opportunity wherever possible.
- To be responsible for your own health and safety and that of your colleagues, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and relevant EC directives.
- To work in accordance with the Data Protection Act and to ensure that all new systems are reported to your Data Protection Controller.
- To undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected.

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## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Knowledge**

- Demonstrable understanding of the UK Higher Education sector and in particular how IT can support future requirements and developments.
- A good understanding of issues relating to the management of an IT function within a complex organisation.
- A good understanding of business process improvement methods.
- High-level analytical and problem solving skills.
- A sound knowledge of preparing proposals, reports and system specifications.
- An understanding of the purpose and operations of libraries in Higher Education institutions
- A clear and broad knowledge of higher education business processes and how IT systems can support changing business requirements.

### **Technical/Work-based Skills**

- An ability to lead, manage and motivate a team in an environment of change.
- High level project and programme management skills.
- Ability to work with directors and senior operational staff in identifying business issues and opportunities for improvement and specifying appropriate systems developments. Ability to work collaboratively and across organisational boundaries.
- Strong skills in translating business improvement objectives into concrete, implementable projects.

- A pro-active attitude in identifying, diagnosing and resolving problems and issues.
- An ability to determine priorities and to set and meet objectives in the light of College needs and plans.
- An ability to represent the College both locally and externally.

### **General Skills/Attributes**

- Ability to develop and articulate a clear strategic vision for technology and information and to lead in an environment of constant change.
- Highly developed team working skills with the ability to direct the efforts of a team of diverse information and technology professionals.
- Flexible, self-motivated, resilient and creative approach to work.
- Strategic thinking combined with confident, rational and objective decision making.
- A strong communicator with the ability to explain technical matters in a way that can be clearly understood by a range of stakeholders. Highly developed influencing and persuasion skills to engage key stakeholders and win support for change.
- A demonstrable innovator prepared to challenge the status quo and think from the customer's point of view. Excellent people skills, in both management and communication.
- A clear commitment to service improvement and quality.
- Empathy and engagement with the aims, values and culture of the College.

### **Experience**

- Experience of driving through transformational change in a complex organisation with many stakeholders with disparate ideas.
- Significant senior management experience of a similar information services role with HE or knowledge intensive organisation.
- Experience of financial control and resource management.
- Experience of contributing to strategic leadership and management of an organisation - developing strategic and operational plans and of effective delivery against the plans.
- A proven track record of promoting innovation in service development and customer service.
- Proven ability to develop pragmatic approaches to solving problems in a medium sized organisation where resources may be constrained.
- Experience of working in a university.

### **Qualifications**

- First Degree or equivalent work experience
- Evidence of CPD
- Master's degree or equivalent in a relevant subject

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Salary:**

Competitive

**Hours:**

35 hours per week (1 FTE)

**Working pattern:**

Monday - Friday

**Probation period:**

6 months

**Duration of post:**

Open-ended

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### HOW TO APPLY

**Closing date:** Monday 28 April 2025

To apply, please send a CV and cover letter to [birkbeck@minervasearch.com](mailto:birkbeck@minervasearch.com)

For further information on the role, please visit <https://www.minervasearch.com/current-opportunities/birkbeck/>

**Interview date:** Thursday 5 June 2025

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### RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

Applications from candidates who require sponsorship to work in the UK will be considered alongside other applications. Applicants who do not currently have the right to work in the UK will need to satisfy UK Visa & Immigration regulations before they can be appointed. Further information about Sponsorship and eligibility to work in the UK, can be found on the gov.uk immigration webpages.

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### HELP AND ASSISTANCE

If you are having difficulties accessing the recruitment portal, please email [jobs@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@bbk.ac.uk).

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### OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The College is committed to providing the highest quality academic and working environment where all staff, students, visitors and contractors are welcomed respected and treated in a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory manner. The College is proud of its diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. No one will be treated unfairly because of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, carer status, political belief,



pregnancy/maternity, social class, gender identity or marital/civil partnership.

Birkbeck is a member of the 'positive about disability' Disability Confident scheme and will interview all candidates who both declare a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and meet the minimum essential criteria for the post, subject to any limits on the overall number of interviews.

Birkbeck is a member of Advance HE, holds an institutional Bronze level Athena SWAN award, is a Mindful Employers Charter signatory and subscribes to Stonewall's Diversity Champions.

**MINERVA**