
IDENTIFICATION

Position Title: Director Strategic Projects

Position Number: LVA006

Section: Office of Chief Operating Officer

Department: Office of Chief Operating Officer

Location: Laucala Campus

Category: Professional

Reports To: Chief Operating Officer

Supervised by: Chief Operating Officer

ORGANISATION

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is the premier dual sector University serving the Pacific region and only one of three regional universities of its kind in the world. Uniquely governed by its twelve member countries, USP is not only a higher education and research institution, but also a regional integration organisation that provides services within communally agreed structured regional mechanisms geared towards benefiting the lives of the Pacific people.

The University, guided by its ethos of continuous improvement has strived to provide the best possible value for money to its member countries, while constantly improving the quality and breadth of its academic offerings, facilities, educational and pastoral support, community projects, and regionally relevant research. It has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1968.

The University's regional leadership and contribution of academic knowledge and policy advice, in particular its guidance and resource-sharing have contributed greatly to USP's overall contribution to the Pacific region.

PURPOSE

The Director Strategic Projects will develop, implement and drive a suite of strategic projects, initiatives and activities through the office of the Chief Operating Officer, providing institutional direction and leadership to support cross-functional coordination and implementation, ensuring effective partnership engagement with external stakeholders.

The position holder will foster ongoing relationships with engagement project leads, planning for and scoping projects and opportunities, advising on solutions to key business problems, and effectively overseeing assigned projects to ensure successful completion and stakeholder satisfaction.

NATURE AND SCOPE

The Director Strategic projects will drive specific transformational strategic projects of institutionally strategic significance as identified by the Chief Operating Officer. Such projects are likely to require direction and management from feasibility to execution, often over extended timescales, and will require management of complex and significant financial and reputational risk. At points, single projects and change programmes may require significant allocation of the postholder's time. They will require confidentiality and effective communication and networking with senior external stakeholders. The nature of the institutional projects which this role will lead is likely to be of high priority to the senior management team and require initiation outside of any specific function or portfolio due to either the scope or cross-cutting nature of the project. As Strategic Project Director, this role may include:

- Responsibility for initiating ideas, hypotheses and scenarios as well as shaping them into formed proposals for project development, co-ordinating discussions with members of the senior management team as appropriate.
- Leading initial research and analysis to assess project feasibility, including commissioning external research, due diligence and expert advice in liaison with relevant University officers; development and achieving formal approvals of the scope of the project and associated business plans; expert and complex project management to ensure all approvals, regulatory compliance and risks assessments are planned and implemented effectively;
- Designing the project objectives and implementation plan, aligned with the University's strategic objectives; direct effective implementation through co-ordination and allocation of responsibilities to senior staff, including Directors, Heads of Schools and Sections and other officers and co-ordination with members of the Chief Operating Officer's portfolio leaders.
- Leading and directing Project/Steering Groups which will include senior membership across functional teams and identifying, establishing and agreeing necessary resources;
- Ensuring effective communication and monitoring of progress, leading the Project Steering Group to determine milestones for implementation; advising the Chief Operating Officer or his delegate on issues or barriers arising and making recommendations on ways forward;
- Ensure effective relationships and communication with any partners or external stakeholders, including negotiation on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer or delegate on specific objectives, initiatives, governance or financial arrangements to ensure that the University is compliant with the regulatory and statutory environment and that business objectives are optimised.
- Ensuring effective communication and reporting to the senior management team, Council and other governance bodies on progress and key issues for consideration.
- Execute and implement the projects within agreed timelines and achieving project objectives, including associated business plans, using effective change management, project management and business process management approaches and techniques.

POSITION SPECIFICATION

Qualifications (or equivalent level of learning)

Essential

- An undergraduate and postgraduate qualification

Knowledge / Experience

Essential

- 10 years of relevant management experience
- Proven expertise in the management of significant human and material resources, experience in the management of people and operations requiring execution of multiple complex tasks while responding to multiple priorities;

Preference will be given to applicants with: Work Experience in the Pacific regional countries at a tertiary institution level and has worked with diverse people and cultures.

Key Skills / Attributes / Job Specific Competencies

- A proven record of successful relationship building at senior and middle management levels, across diverse stakeholders in the school, public and not-for-profit sectors;
- Ability to work with complex data and in a fast-paced environment.
- Good judgment and the ability to effectively prioritize
- Leadership experience in coaching and developing others;
- Excellent communication skills as well as the ability to present professionally to diverse sets of stakeholders;
- Proficiency and experience in delivering digital tools and resources to lead scale activation;
- In-depth understanding of the tertiary environment, especially in relation to the experience of students from underserved communities.