

Head of Analytical Data

Basic information

Band: B

Job family: Analysis

Terms: Permanent position

Location: Cheltenham

Reports to: Director of Analysis and Research

Team: Analytical Data

Business unit: Analysis and Research



Role purpose:

UCAS runs a key part of national operational systems infrastructure – the centralised admissions service to higher education, and its supporting search and communication channels. Data flowing through these systems has always been critical to our operations. More recently, it has become clear that, correctly captured and handled, these data are intrinsically valuable for understanding the system, and creating data services to connect students to opportunities.

In the role of Head of Analytical Data (in the Analysis and Research business unit), you will develop and execute UCAS' strategy for:

- how analytical data is created from operational and other data sources
- how we structure, run and optimise our analytical software and data
- the design and delivery of our high stakes public and stakeholder data services

Key responsibilities:

First and foremost, you will have a deep, native understanding of what operational and analytical data is, and what it is capable of. You will make this potential a reality, through your expertise in analytical coding and data structures, informed by knowing how data scientists carry out research and service creation in a code-based environment, and what they need to be successful. We use multiple, multi-user SAS installations on high powered servers – you will need to be expert in leading the work on their configuration, supporting code and data assets, and controlling access to these resources.

You will also have an understanding of modern information technology, and use that to work collaboratively with our technology experts in coming up with solutions to systems interfacing, platform development, and service support. You will lead a team with experts in analytical data and analytical reporting, together with data scientists from our internship programme, inspiring and developing them to build capability and capacity.

You will work closely with the Director of Analysis and Research to set the direction of travel on analytical data and create the strategy to achieve this. Overall you will be a key figure in setting the agenda for how UCAS thinks about analytical data and ensuring the organisation has the right analytical data and resources for achieving its strategic objectives.

Responsibilities to also include:

- Provide technical and strategic leadership for analytical data and set the agenda for this across the organisation.
- Lead and develop a team of five to ten data scientists, including participants on our internship programme.
- Identify data needs and potential, including the recovery of analytical data from complex system or unstructured operational data.
- Design, create and maintain efficient, flexible analytical data structures.
- Run and improve our analytical processing environment, and create the strategy for its development in collaboration with technology experts.
- Create and operate a class-leading set of data reporting and data resources, covering all our admissions services, including the operation of high stakes, short deadline, commitments.
- Play a leading role in cross function business projects and engage the organisation in your team's work.
- Lead on the building of skills in data methods and structures across the unit.
- Be part of the senior management team for the unit, and help shape and create the unit's plans, culture and professional standards.

Accountabilities:

- The quality and availability of analytical data.
- Lead a team of data scientists to develop to their maximum potential, by creating a culture of learning, challenge and continuous development.
- Act as a role model, demonstrating the UCAS values.
- Contribute across the organisation as an active senior manager.
- Manage your budget in an effective way to deliver organisational objectives.

Person specification:

- Strong personal values for committed and collaborative leadership.
- High level abilities to conceptualise and strategise around analytical data capture, storage, security and presentation.
- Deep knowledge and experience of using analytical coding in SAS (or near equivalent), to create and control data structures and structured reporting, typically gained from extensive working experience.
- Track record of creation and management of complex data resources, automated code-based reporting systems, and the operation of analytical platforms for data scientists.
- Focus on customer needs and experience.
- Evidenced ability to build strategic capacity in teams, including developing new staff.
- Appreciation of technologies and methodologies around analysis, data and software development.
- Able to connect with colleagues across the business, building productive relationships to achieve organisational objectives.

This role profile sets out the scope and main duties of the post at the date when it was drawn up. Such details may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the level of the post. All UCAS employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their role and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of their role and their level of responsibility.

Our values in action

Customer – We always look through the customer lens. The logic of the customer is the logic of UCAS.

Commitment – When we commit, we deliver on time, quality, and budget, or we negotiate changed commitments for good reason. We never leave commitments uncovered.

Team – We work collaboratively. When we commit, we commit as an individual and as a team. We strive for and support team success as well as individual success.

Outcomes – We plan and do things to achieve outcomes. We define them, aspire to them, and deliver them.

Agility – We know we need to be agile when we look through the customer lens, when we make commitments, when we work in teams, and strive for the right outcomes.

Extraordinary – We are ambitious for our customers, for UCAS, and for our teams. We want more than ordinary outcomes – we strive to achieve extraordinary outcomes, extraordinary customer focus, and an extraordinary culture of high performance and quality of focus.