

Product Owner

Basic information

Band: C

Job family: Customer Experience

Terms: Permanent

Location: Cheltenham

Reports to: Head of Service Development

Team: Service Development

Business unit: Technology



Role purpose:

To be responsible for representing the needs of the customer to the internal technical teams, and to be accountable for delivering products and services that add value to the business and the customer.

A driving force behind product delivery whose presence must be visible, vocal, and objective.

To accurately represent real customer need, and able to communicate the product and project vision using clear, elevating goals.

Bring together key representatives from across UCAS to develop product solutions, and define clear priorities based on business value.

To be a champion of user-centred design by actively engaging with customers, including facilitating user groups and user testing, to ensure the product delivered meets customer needs.

To work across teams in the business, and with external suppliers/contacts, facilitate internal engagement and communication throughout projects, and obtain business sign off through demonstrations of work completed.

Key duties and responsibilities:

- Based on internal and external customer needs, describe, prioritise, and communicate the requirements that really matter, ensuring recommended change is aligned to product roadmaps.

- To write customer-centric items (typically user stories), prioritise these items, and manage them in the product backlog.
- To work with the strategic product managers to establish a vision for delivery, and to inform and engage them throughout delivery and implementation.
- To work alongside the strategic product managers to develop business cases for product enhancements/continuous improvement.
- To be aware of benefits, realisation, and overall customer product satisfaction, and use this to influence change to ensure the needs of the customer are met.
- To conduct a product handover back to business teams at the end of delivery, which may include presenting benefits and key messages/deliverables by audience, as well as facilitating training.
- To be involved in and actively manage product development, and provide regular updates to all stakeholders (internal and external).
- To identify and highlight risks and issues, and be able to articulate the impact of these on the product or project delivery.
- Undertake product planning and review meetings across internal teams and ensure availability for daily scrum meetings.
- To set achievable goals and always be prepared to listen, negotiate, and compromise.
- Liaise with the Scrum Master to ensure product delivery is on schedule.
- To make informed decisions about appropriate changes and new opportunities for products and services, based on market intelligence and internal collaboration.
- To manage relationships with internal and external stakeholders, setting realistic expectations and ensuring communication of progress.

Accountabilities:

Non-financial:

- Authority to negotiate timescales for product delivery with relevant key stakeholders.
- Authority to make key recommendations for products.
- Authority to set product workload for agreed IT resources via backlog management and sprint planning.
- Authority to prioritise change requests to project scope and the minor enhancements process for future product change, in consultation with stakeholders.
- Authority to represent UCAS internally and externally.

Primary stakeholders:

Internal:

- Operational managers
- Other internal business units/SMT/BDT/SDT
- UCAS Executive
- Portfolio office
- IT delivery resource management
- Steering groups

External:

- Third party suppliers/technology partners
- Key customer groups
- Advisory groups
- Sector representatives

Person specification:

This broad skillset implies that ideally, the Product Owner would be a hybrid: someone who is able to look outwards, understanding the end customer needs, and someone who looks inwards, managing the value stream that transforms the customers' needs into solutions, ready to be used by the customer.

- Demonstrable experience of agile and scrum development methodology.
- Demonstrable experience in developing products.
- Strong customer focus.
- Exposure to development of product/market strategies.
- Ability to drive continuous improvement throughout UCAS' services, using well informed market intelligence and research.
- Exposure to business analysis and project management techniques.
- Risk management.

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.