

Job Description – Project Manager – Digital Innovation/Computer Science

Role Reports to Director of Projects- Science and Engineering

Innovation Factory Overview

*‘Commercialising The University of Manchester’s innovations and IP
to create global social, environmental and economic impact’*

The University of Manchester is committed to generating world class innovation that will create major social and economic benefit across the globe. The Innovation Factory is The University of Manchester subsidiary responsible for identifying and leading the commercialisation of its innovations and intellectual property.

The University of Manchester currently ranks 8th in the league table of European Universities and 4th in the UK ratings for the commercial impact of its patents (*Reuters Index of Europe’s most Innovative Universities 2019*).

The Innovation Factory works with academic inventors from the University to identify opportunities that have the potential to create social, environmental and economic impact. It then translates these into a form where they can be used by industry and society as a whole. Access to innovations may be created via technology licensing or the formation of spin-out companies.

The Innovation Factory aims to provide a world class service to academic colleagues and to attract and engage with important external stakeholders including industry, entrepreneurs, licensees and investors, and corporate venture partners.

The Innovation Factory organisation is structured to deliver its mission through three main functional groups: Operations, Business Development and Corporate Services. These groups work closely together in an integrated process which begins with the identification of an idea and cumulates in the creation, exploitation and management of a high-value asset such as a commercially valuable patent or spin-out.

The Operations group - Overview

The Innovation Factory’s Operations group is responsible for pro-actively identifying, evaluating and building opportunities which have the potential to create value, either as a successful spin-out or valuable licence. The group is responsible for the development and delivery of early-stage business plans, IP creation and the production of product demonstrators. It also plays an important role in identifying sources of investment and grant funding, developing lists of potential customers for new technologies, sizing accessible markets, identifying areas of competitive advantage and evaluating the commercial value of University patents. In some cases, projects may be considered unsuitable for commercialisation or need further development to be taken forward. If this is the case, justification for the decision and constructive feed-back and advice will be given to the academic.

Project managers are the core of the Operations group. These project ‘champions’ are responsible for owning and driving opportunities through the Innovation Factory’s stage gate process from discovery through to a point at which they are ready to be handed over to the Business Development team.

To ensure a good understanding of the underlying technologies the Project Management roles are organised into teams with technology specialists aligned to one of the University’s faculties,

- i) Biology Medicine and Health (FBMH) ii) Science and Engineering (FSE) and iii) Humanities (FAH).

The Operations group actively engages with the University's cultural institutions and Professional Services teams and project managers work in close coordination with other units in the University, particularly the Business Engagement group.

The project manager is responsible for leadership of a project, but they will gain cross-functional input and support from colleagues in the Innovation Factory as well as external insight from specialist advisors.

When a project is considered ready for commercialisation, the Operations teams will pass ownership to the Business Development group which will then take the lead in developing the commercial proposition, marketing and then transacting the opportunity.

Project Manager – Digital Innovation/Computer Science

Key Accountabilities

- Responsible for the identification of new opportunities linked to the Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Responsible for a portfolio of projects, ensuring their timely progression to key decision points.
- Responsible for writing well-structured analysis of each opportunity. This will include-
 - At stage 1: a critical assessment of the technology, intellectual property, value, competition and recommendations for next steps.
 - At stage 2: Detailed analysis of the above including, if appropriate, protection of the Intellectual Property.
 - For potential spin-outs: an early-stage business plan covering technical, commercial and market validation aspects of the project. The plan must form a clear picture of the business and is the basis for a compelling argument for investors. For license opportunities: Outline of route to market, analysis of market and value to potential licensee – reasons why they should license this IP.
- Regularly engage with the University's innovators across the whole breadth of Life Sciences to promote new commercialisation initiatives and ensure that innovative ideas are captured leading to a flow of new projects.
- Assess the costs of protecting IP vs. the potential value of opportunity, make recommendations on filing and risks of filing/not filing.
- Carry out prior art and freedom to operate searches for projects, interpret the results and use this to inform IP strategy. Where relevant, manage the production of a product demonstrator: Including specification, budget, engagement and management of suppliers, ensuring production deadlines are met, validation of quality and performance.
- Ensure that the Innovation Factory's processes for opportunity evaluation are fully implemented.
- In conjunction with the wider project management team, work to expand, enhance and maintain a network of internal and external advisors able to add value to our projects.
- Ensure that all work is completed within defined budgets
- Ensure that the quality of external interactions, project documentation and internal project management procedures are consistently high.
- Pro-actively seek support and advice from the Director of Projects and others in the Innovation Factory and beyond to develop own knowledge and skills

Desirable Skills, Experience & Qualities

- Demonstrable experience of successfully managing software products, with previous work experience in a startup being a plus.
- Experience in the identification, development and management of intellectual property opportunities in digital space
- Excellent critical analytical skills
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Proven ability to create future value and deliver results from early-stage science
- Actively research and keep up to date with new developments relevant to role
- Pro-actively contribute to the development of strategies across your team and support the longer-term strategic objectives of the organization.
- Consider all facts and think broadly about the organisational/commercial impact before making decisions
- Ability to see, and embrace opportunities for improvement
- Bring fresh insights to senior leader and peer discussions
- Able to build strong and authentic relationships with a variety of internal and external stakeholders
- Excellent role model, demonstrating personal and professional integrity at all times
- Promote collaborative behaviors, encourage, support and motivate other team members and peers
- Demonstrate determination and commitment to achieving excellent performance across the team

Qualifications:

- Higher degree in a Science and Engineering related subject is preferred with experience in computer science
- A business, or project management, qualification is an advantage, but not essential.