

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title:	Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President, Operations
Business Unit:	Operations
Appointment Level:	Executive
Reporting To:	Vice-Chancellor and President
Number of Direct Reports:	8
Delegation Band:	Band 2
Position Number:	58233

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

The University of Canberra is a young University anchored in the national capital and works with government, business, and industry to serve our communities and nation. The University of Canberra challenges the status quo; always pursuing better ways to teach, learn, research, and add value – locally and internationally.

Our purpose is to provide education which offers high quality transformative experiences; to engage in research which makes a difference to the world around us; and to contribute to the building of just, prosperous, healthy, and sustainable communities.

The University is now entering a bold new chapter with its refreshed strategy, *Reconnected: 2025–2027*. This plan reaffirms our commitment to being a modern, inclusive and student-first university—one that is built around the individual, not institutional ego. Reconnected sets out a clear and actionable framework to deliver lifelong learning, impactful research, and deep community engagement. Through its three strategic objectives—Connected to Canberra, Connected for Life, and Connected UC—we are focused on place-based impact, lifelong learning pathways, and a digitally connected, inclusive university environment. Our ambition is to be the most accessible and practical university in Australia, and a global leader in driving equality of opportunity.

OUR PURPOSE AND VALUES

Our [purpose and values](#) are the heart of this university. They describe our core identity: who we are and how we behave at the University of Canberra. They were developed by our people for our people.

GALAMBANY

Together we work to empower, connect and share knowledge with our people, cultures and places



PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

The Operations Portfolio is fundamental to the University's success in delivering academic and professional excellence across teaching, learning, and research. Operating as a centralised function, the Portfolio works in close partnership with all areas of the institution to optimise the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of key services that underpin the University's strategic and operational performance.

With broad responsibility for enabling core infrastructure, digital capability, governance, workforce strategy, and market engagement, the Portfolio ensures that the University is well-positioned to meet current demands and future opportunities. It plays a critical role in supporting institutional resilience, driving service innovation, and enhancing the overall experience for students, staff, and stakeholders.

POSITION PURPOSE

The Chief Operating Officer plays a pivotal role in shaping the University of Canberra's operational and commercial future. As a key member of the Executive Team and Leadership Group, and reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer is accountable for the performance, efficiency, and commercial effectiveness of the University's core corporate services and student recruitment pipeline.

Working collaboratively across the institution, the Chief Operating Officer leads strategic initiatives to unlock new revenue opportunities, modernise systems, and ensure corporate services are aligned to support long-term financial sustainability. This includes leveraging the University's resources, infrastructure, and capabilities to maximise value, drive sustainable growth, and strengthen competitive positioning in support of its academic and research missions.

The Chief Operating Officer champions the University Strategy through the development and oversight of governance frameworks that guide the work of the Portfolio's business units, including but not limited to:

- Campus development, campus master plan, commercial and leasing, space plan and facilities management of physical assets
- University network and IT infrastructure
- Cybersecurity
- Workforce capability, talent management
- Workplace health, safety and wellbeing
- Emergency management and business continuity plans
- Governance frameworks
- Student pipeline management
- Branding and marketing of UC's services and assets

The Chief Operating Officer is also responsible for ensuring the organisational structure and financial resources are effectively aligned to deliver these outcomes. As part of the Executive and Leadership Team, the COO contributes to the University's commitment to environmental, social, and economic sustainability, and drives progress toward its strategic objectives.

In addition to leading the Portfolio, the Chief Operating Officer holds several key institutional appointments that reflect the strategic scope of the role, including:

- The University's Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) Lead
- Liquor Administration Officer
- Privacy Officer
- Public Interest Disclosure Officer
- Chief Audit Executive

- Chief Security Officer under the Defence Industry Security Program

The Chief Operating Officer also serves as a director on university-controlled entities, including UC Global, and is an active member of key governance committees, including the Finance, Audit and Risk Management, and Planning and Development Committees, as well as attending University Council meetings.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific responsibilities of the Chief Operating Officer include:

Strategic leadership

- Drive an engaged and collaborative workplace culture through strong leadership and effective management practice, empowering Portfolio staff within their roles to achieve the University's strategic priorities and outcomes.
- As a strategic advisor to senior leadership, maintain oversight across all key organisational and management issues of the Portfolio business units, and broader University strategy.
- Lead the development and delivery of key commercial initiatives and new opportunities, including campus development, digital experience, University of Canberra Group entities and third party arrangements.
- Drive strategic planning and implementation, contributing to the design of strategic programs, budgets, and policies that enable efficient and effective corporate service delivery in support of the University's Strategy.
- Maintain and regularly review the effectiveness of the University's Planning framework for setting of strategy and operational delivery, including that it reflects the University's needs now and into the future.
- Represent the University externally including at legislative committees and other forums, as required by the role or on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.
- Oversee a continued commitment to enhancing the University's workforce capability, ensuring University-wide organisational changes are achieved in a timely, collaborative, and effective manner.
- Ensure appropriate structures, systems and processes are in place to grow capability, capacity and drive a high-performance culture to maximise productivity and employee recognition.
- Provide strategic advice on the use of university resources, including digital infrastructure, physical assets, and workforce deployment, to optimise institutional performance.
- As the leader of the Critical Incident Management Team, support the revision and implementation of business continuity and emergency response.
- Direct major institutional projects as assigned, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and timely, high-quality delivery.

Portfolio leadership

- Provide executive oversight of the functions of the Portfolio to ensure the provision of efficient, effective and responsive corporate services to support all activities of the University of Canberra Group, with a clear emphasis on measurable outcomes and high levels of user satisfaction.
- Ensure commercial and operational compliance by embedding business principles consistent with the University's mission and meeting all contractual, legislative, and regulatory obligations—including Work Health and Safety, audit standards, and risk management frameworks.

- Ensure that all major contracts (including capital works, infrastructure initiatives, digital, commercial and as required, research contracts) entered into by the University are financially and commercially viable in the interest of the University.
- Champion a customer-focused service culture within the Portfolio, ensuring responsiveness, accountability and value creation for students, staff and stakeholders.
- Provide strategic oversight of campus infrastructure initiatives and project, ensuring design and delivery meet institutional needs and support long-term growth and sustainability.
- Drive student recruitment and enrolment growth across domestic and international markets, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and operational effectiveness across admissions, outreach, and recruitment, including the systems to support improved recognition of prior learning.
- Strengthen the University's brand and reputation by ensuring marketing and communications activities are audience-led, strategically positioned and compliant with regulatory frameworks.
- Drive forward the experience of the University's digital environment, including the student experience, delivery of major enterprise systems, advancement of cybersecurity and AI governance, and strategic reform of IT infrastructure, services and data capabilities to support operational efficiency, compliance, and user experience.

KEY COMPETENCIES

- A relevant degree and post graduate qualifications in a relevant discipline.
- Extensive financial and commercial literacy, with experience representing financial and commercial issues to a broad range of stakeholders.
- A successful track record of managing diverse corporate functions in a large and complex organisation, including innovation, change management, and project skills.
- Extensive experience in leading large-scale capital (physical and virtual) developments designed to return on investment and build communities.
- Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills with a demonstrated capacity to work collaboratively and adaptively in a rapidly changing environment.
- Understanding and experience of legislative, policy and funding issues affecting higher education.
- Experience in leading teams in responding to critical incidents.
- High order communication skills with capacity to:
 - Represent the University to government, the media, and the wider community, within the framework of agreed University policy.
 - Communicate to University Council, students and staff of the University.
- Demonstrated leadership in safety, equity and diversity.

KEY CAPABILITIES

Key Capabilities	Descriptors
1. Leadership	<p>1.1 Proactively addresses challenging issues and takes responsibility for seeing issues through. Assist team members to recognise barriers and overcome them.</p> <p>1.2 Connects the University Strategic Plan with the Portfolio and reinforces connections with other staff.</p> <p>1.3 Builds and communicates a clear and compelling path for others to choose to be committed and engaged.</p> <p>1.4 Champions and role models effective change while working to engage and enthuse others to embrace a vision of change.</p>
2. Effective Communication	<p>2.1 Adjusts message and delivery appropriate to audience.</p> <p>2.2 Listens to others and effectively communicates ideas.</p> <p>2.3 Produces accurate and effective information in a timely and efficient manner.</p> <p>2.4 Influences and negotiates persuasively.</p>
3. Collaboration	<p>3.1 Creates opportunities for communities of work colleagues.</p> <p>3.2 Looks beyond self and immediate team to add value to the whole University.</p> <p>3.3 Develops relationships with external parties. Seeks and acts on opportunities to connect external parties and partners to the University.</p>
4. Delivers results	<p>4.1 Delivers on agreed outcomes and escalates issues as appropriate.</p> <p>4.2 Identifies opportunities to improve processes and takes opportunities to problem solve to deliver outcomes.</p> <p>4.3 Responds effectively to changing circumstances and priorities.</p>
5. Business Acumen	<p>5.1 Understands the purpose of own position and how this contributes to the objectives of the University.</p> <p>5.2 Manages resources effectively.</p> <p>5.3 Understands the commercial context the University operates in.</p>
6. Service	<p>6.1 Delivers seamless customer focused service underpinned by simplified and efficient processes.</p> <p>6.2 Understands and anticipates the needs of our students and partners and can convert these into commercial outcomes.</p>
7. Digital Literacy and Innovation	<p>7.1 Demonstrates the ability to work fluently across a range of tools platforms and applications to achieve complex tasks.</p> <p>7.2 Demonstrates the capacity to adopt and develop new practices with digital technology in different settings; to use digital technologies in developing new ideas, projects, and opportunities.</p> <p>7.3 Incorporates digital literacy skills into own learning and the learning of others e.g., students, peers, supervisees.</p> <p>7.4 Appreciates the legal, ethical and security guidelines in the management, access and use of data.</p>

While at work, you must take reasonable care that your actions or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. This includes:

- comply, so far as you are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the University to comply with the WHS Legislation
- cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the University relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers
- assume any additional duties as outlined in the WHS Procedure: Resources, Responsibility and Accountability