Dean, School of Applied Technology and AI

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Reporting to	Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Leadership level	Senior Academic Leadership
Location	United Kingdom; travel across Arden locations and partner sites as required
Direct reports	Academic leaders and professional leads assigned to the School
Role status	Full-time, substantive leadership appointment

Role purpose

To provide strategic, academic and commercial leadership for the School of Applied Technology and AI, securing excellent student outcomes, rigorous academic standards, distinctive industry-relevant provision and sustainable growth. The Dean is accountable for the School as an integrated academic and business unit and will establish it as a recognised leader in applied technology, responsible AI and digitally enabled education.

1. Strategic context

Arden University serves a diverse population of learners through blended and distance learning. The School will be central to the University's ambition to make applied AI a defining graduate capability while expanding high-quality provision in technology disciplines that respond to employer, societal and economic need.

The Dean will combine academic credibility with disciplined execution. Growth is expected, but it must be achieved without weakening entry standards, student support, academic quality, regulatory compliance or graduate outcomes. The postholder will work across faculties and central services so that expertise developed within the School benefits the wider University.

2. Principal accountabilities

Strategic and institutional leadership

- Translate the University strategy into a clear School plan, operating model and annual delivery priorities, with explicit accountabilities and measurable benefits.
- Act as a senior academic leader of the University, contributing beyond the School to institutional strategy, academic governance, transformation and external reputation.
- Develop a distinctive identity for applied technology and AI that is credible to students, employers, professional bodies and the academic community.
- Advise the Provost and Executive on emerging technology, AI capability, portfolio opportunities, delivery risks and investment priorities.

Academic quality, standards and regulation

- Hold significant accountability for academic standards, quality assurance and the student academic experience across all School provision, wherever and however delivered.
- Ensure compliance with the Office for Students conditions of registration, the UK Quality Code, consumer protection requirements, data protection, equality duties and relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements.
- Maintain rigorous oversight of validation, modification, periodic review, assessment, external examining, academic integrity and the timely closure of quality actions.
- Use leading and lagging indicators to identify risk early, intervene decisively and ensure that growth never outpaces academic capacity or student support.

Student outcomes and experience

- Own the School's continuation, completion, attainment and progression performance, with particular attention to differential outcomes between student groups, study modes, locations and programmes.
- Set clear expectations for teaching quality, inclusive curriculum, assessment and feedback, learning engagement, academic support and personal academic coaching.
- Ensure students develop applied technical competence, AI literacy, ethical judgement, professional confidence and the ability to use technology responsibly in authentic contexts.
- Engage meaningfully with student voice and close the feedback loop through transparent, evidenced action.

Portfolio, innovation and growth

- Lead a coherent portfolio strategy spanning undergraduate, postgraduate, degree apprenticeship, short-course, professional and lifelong-learning opportunities, subject to institutional approvals.
- Use labour-market intelligence, competitor insight, student demand, regulatory evidence and unit economics to initiate, reshape or close provision.
- Accelerate responsible curriculum innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence, data, cyber security, cloud, software engineering, digital transformation and emerging technologies.
- Ensure every proposal has a credible academic model, target market, resource plan, delivery capacity, teach-out position and evidence-based student-outcomes case.

Applied AI leadership

- Provide academic leadership for Arden's applied-AI ambition and contribute to the institutional commitment that every student becomes appropriately AI literate.
- Embed responsible, transparent and discipline-appropriate use of AI in curriculum, assessment, staff practice and student support, aligned to University policy and academic integrity.
- Build demonstrable expertise in applied AI pedagogy, professional practice and industry collaboration, ensuring that innovation is evaluated for educational impact rather than adopted for novelty alone.
- Sponsor scalable staff and student capability-building, including relevant certifications, practical projects, showcases and communities of practice.

Employability, partnerships and external profile

- Build wide relationships with technology employers, professional bodies, public-sector partners and leading platforms to co-design curriculum, create live briefs, work-based opportunities and progression routes.
- Strengthen graduate outcomes through embedded careers learning, portfolio development, employer engagement, industry certification and work-related learning.
- Represent Arden externally and develop the School's profile through thought leadership, sector engagement, events and high-quality collaborative activity.
- Ensure partnerships are academically sound, commercially clear, operationally deliverable and subject to effective due diligence and oversight.

People, culture and academic performance

- Lead, inspire and hold to account the School leadership team, establishing a culture of high expectations, inclusion, collaboration and evidence-led improvement.
- Ensure the School has the right disciplinary expertise, leadership capacity, workforce plan and succession pipeline for its portfolio and modes of delivery.
- Raise teaching capability and professional recognition, including delivery of the University target for at least 90% of eligible teaching staff to hold a HESA-returnable teaching qualification or recognition.
- Manage individual and team performance promptly and fairly, recognising strong contribution while addressing persistent underperformance.

Financial and operational stewardship

- Own the School budget and delivery of agreed income, contribution, cost and efficiency targets, working with Finance, Recruitment, Marketing, Academic Resourcing and Timetabling.
- Align staffing, module allocation, teaching capacity, specialist facilities and technology investment with validated demand and the academic calendar.
- Maintain accurate forecasts and a clear line of sight from recruitment assumptions to cohort viability, teaching cost, student support and academic outcomes.
- Deliver value for money without using cost reduction as a substitute for sound academic design or adequate student support.

Research, knowledge exchange and responsible innovation

- Develop a focused and credible plan for applied research, scholarship and knowledge exchange that supports teaching, reputation, partnerships and external income.
- Promote ethical, secure, inclusive and environmentally responsible technology practice, with clear governance for higher-risk AI activity.
- Create opportunities for staff and students to collaborate on applied problems and disseminate outcomes through appropriate academic and professional channels.

3. Leadership relationships

Reports to	Provost and Chief Academic Officer.
Internal	Vice-Chancellor, Chief Executive Officer, Executive and senior leadership colleagues; Deans; Quality and Standards; Student Experience; Registry; CELT; Academic Resourcing and Timetabling; Finance; People; Recruitment; Marketing; Careers and Employability; Digital and Technology; and campus and distance-learning leadership.
External	Employers, professional and statutory bodies, validation and delivery partners, technology organisations, government and sector bodies, external examiners, alumni and relevant academic networks.
Governance	Member of relevant University committees and boards as determined by the Provost; accountable for high-quality School reporting, assurance and action closure.

4. Person specification

Qualifications and standing

- Doctorate or equivalent high-level professional standing in technology, computing, AI, data or a closely related discipline.
- Teaching qualification or recognised fellowship of an appropriate professional body, normally at Senior Fellow level or above, or a clear commitment to secure equivalent recognition.
- Evidence of continuing professional engagement with developments in technology and AI.

Senior leadership experience

- Substantial successful leadership at Dean, Head of School/Department or comparable level in a complex higher-education or closely related environment.
- A demonstrable record of improving student outcomes, academic quality and the student experience across a significant portfolio.
- Significant experience of leading AI-enabled transformation at institutional or enterprise scale, including strategy, use-case prioritisation, governance, operating-model and workforce change, implementation, adoption and benefits realisation.

- Significant change-management experience in a complex, multi-stakeholder environment, with evidence of building commitment, overcoming resistance, sustaining adoption and delivering measurable outcomes.
- Experience of leading growth, portfolio development and organisational change with clear academic and financial accountability.
- Experience of leading leaders, building effective teams and addressing underperformance.

Academic and sector expertise

- Strong understanding of UK higher-education regulation, academic governance, quality assurance, assessment, external examining and consumer protection.
- Credible knowledge of contemporary applied technology and AI, including responsible use, academic integrity, data ethics and the implications of generative AI for curriculum and assessment.
- Evidence of successful employer, professional-body or industry partnership and a practical understanding of graduate employability.
- A record of applied research, scholarship, knowledge exchange or professional practice appropriate to the role.

Capabilities and behaviours

- Combines educational judgement with commercial acumen; able to distinguish sustainable opportunity from growth that creates unacceptable academic or regulatory risk.
- Uses data critically, asks incisive questions and converts analysis into timely intervention and measurable improvement.
- Communicates with authority and clarity to students, academics, executives, governors and external partners.
- Works across organisational boundaries, influences without relying solely on hierarchy and remains accountable for delivery.
- Demonstrates integrity, inclusion, sound judgement and the confidence to challenge constructively.
- Operates effectively in ambiguity and at pace without compromising due process, academic standards or staff and student wellbeing.

5. KPI scorecard

The Dean's objectives should be confirmed annually against an approved baseline and School plan. The measures below are recommended for the first full performance cycle. Targets must be disaggregated where material by programme, level, study mode, location and student characteristic; aggregate improvement must not conceal pockets of weak performance.

KPI	Core measures	Recommended standard
1. Student outcomes and equity	Continuation, completion, attainment and progression; module pass and credit achievement; outcome gaps between student groups.	Meet or exceed approved School targets and regulatory thresholds; deliver agreed year-on-year improvement; no programme below threshold without an approved recovery plan, named owner and monitored milestones.
2. Academic quality and student experience	NSS and internal student-experience measures; teaching quality; assessment and feedback; external-examiner assurance; closure of quality actions and complaints themes.	Achieve approved improvement targets; 100% of material quality actions closed by deadline or formally reprofiled; no repeated major finding; demonstrable improvement in agreed priority survey measures.
3. Portfolio health and sustainable growth	Recruitment, conversion, retention, portfolio viability, new-product delivery, course performance and evidence-led closure or redesign decisions.	Deliver the approved student-number and net-growth plan within agreed academic capacity; launch approved provision to time, quality and business case; complete annual portfolio review and act on underperformance.
4. Employability and external relevance	Graduate outcomes, highly skilled employment/further study, embedded employability, live industry learning, placements/projects, professional recognition and industry certification.	Deliver agreed progression improvement; ensure every course has current employer input and authentic applied learning; expand measurable student participation in industry projects, certification or work-related learning.
5. Applied AI leadership and innovation	Contribution to Arden's AI-literacy commitment; responsible-AI curriculum and assessment; staff capability; evaluated educational innovation and external profile.	Deliver agreed institutional AI milestones, including the Summer 2027 commitment where applicable; 100% of School courses map and assess relevant AI capability and ethics; evidence adoption, evaluation and impact rather than activity alone.
6. People, teaching capability and culture	Staff engagement, leadership effectiveness, performance management, workforce stability, succession, workload compliance and teaching qualifications/recognition.	At least 90% of eligible teaching staff hold a HESA-returnable teaching qualification or recognition within the agreed timeframe; all staff have objectives and timely performance reviews; sustained improvement in identified engagement priorities.
7. Financial and operational performance	Income, contribution, budget control, teaching cost, staffing efficiency, forecast accuracy, timetable and delivery reliability.	Deliver approved income and contribution within agreed tolerance; remain within budget; maintain credible forecasts; meet agreed utilisation and delivery standards without deterioration in student outcomes or quality.
8. Partnerships, scholarship and reputation	Strategic partnerships, external income, professional engagement, applied research/knowledge exchange outputs and profile-building activity.	Deliver an agreed portfolio of active, value-creating partnerships and measurable outputs; secure planned external income or in-kind value; demonstrate benefit to curriculum, students, staff or reputation.

6. General responsibilities

- Act consistently with Arden University's values, policies, academic governance and delegated authorities.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion, wellbeing, freedom of speech within the law, and a safe learning and working environment.
- Protect confidential, personal and commercially sensitive information and ensure appropriate information-security practice.
- Undertake other duties commensurate with the seniority and purpose of the role, as reasonably required by the Provost.

This job description defines the principal accountabilities of the role. Objectives and measures may be refined annually to reflect University priorities, regulatory requirements and the maturity of the School.