

Technical Specialist

Basic information

Band: C

Job family: Technical

Terms: Permanent

Location: Cheltenham

Reports to: Technology Delivery Manager

Team: Technology Development

Business unit: Technology



Role purpose:

The Technical Specialist should act as a conduit and ambassador between architecture and development to develop and drive standards across the function, and ensure solutions are fit for purpose. The Technical Specialist will work alongside the technology development leadership and management team, to ensure technical solutions are aligned to the Technology Strategy, UCAS' architectural principles and designs, and deliver value to our customers.

Oversee the design process for application software

Through product design, development, testing, and transition into operation, Technical Specialists are involved in every step of the application software development lifecycle. This involves creation of models and prototypes, evaluation of risks and defects, analysing specifications, and customising applications for specific customer needs. With a focus on agile methodologies, test automation, and continuous integration, technical specialists are expected to review and make suggestions to improve and enhance the delivery and deployment process.

Technical authoring

It is the responsibility of the Technical Specialist to produce and maintain artefacts relating to application design, integration processes, testing procedures, and deployment approach, relating to each product developed. The Technical Specialist will work with the technology development leadership team to produce and maintain the function development standards, guidelines, and pattern catalogue.

Technical subject matter expertise, support, and leadership

The Technical Specialist acts as a subject matter expert, technical coach, and mentor, and ensures that designs, standards, and best practices are understood and followed by the development community. The Technical Specialist will act as a technical lead and authority across a range of technologies, and work to establish reusable patterns and approaches. They should act as a point of escalation for resolution of technical issues and function best practices, with a view to raising the standards and capability of the team.

Innovation

Technical specialists drive technical innovation within the function. This includes improvements to existing processes and practices, and the adoption of new technology and tooling. Where appropriate, new tooling, technology, or designs should be documented and presented for review at the Technical Design Forum or Architecture Review Board, as appropriate.

Key duties and responsibilities:

The Technical Specialist reports into a Technical Delivery Manager.

- Support alignment and adoption of UCAS' Technology Strategy.
- Drive adoption and implementation of strategic UCAS technologies and architectural principles.
- Develop and define design pattern catalogue, best practices, and coding standards.
- Self-organise to address cross-cutting technical concerns, through proactive engagement with development teams and collaboration with other technical specialists and solution architects.
- Work with architecture and technical SMEs to ensure that the technical service landscape collateral is maintained and consumed by the scrum teams.
- Work with technical roles across the department to drive evolution of the dev-ops toolchain, promoting improvements to streamline the software delivery process.
- Maintain a detailed knowledge of relevant existing UCAS applications and systems.
- Build innovative prototypes and lead development teams to develop quality solutions, by translating architectural designs into lower level implementation details, helping implement user stories if required.
- Build, demonstrate, and critique working prototypes as enablers for future increments of work.
- Improve capability across development teams to produce complex software, aligned to the technical roadmap.
- Act as a trusted technical subject matter expert for development teams, TDMs and other individuals across the business for specialist technologies.
- Solve problems faced and introduce the best technical solution.
- Streamline the software delivery process by defining the dev-ops toolchain, continuous integration, and a continuous deployment model. Work to define common, reusable practices that can be applied to multiple delivery streams.
- Collaboration across UCAS teams and functions and our IT partners.

Accountabilities:

- Develop technical service landscape collateral, and ensure understanding and acceptance across teams.
- Identify and own cross-cutting technical concerns.
- Provide expert consultancy of the development framework and domain expertise in assigned workstream.
- Provide technical feedback in the relevant UCAS technology forums.
- Lead technical assignments, which may involve several teams or technologies.
- Participate in the development/review of standards, documentation, and ways of working.
- Perform preliminary investigations or PoCs, which will lead design and specification for systems.
- Lead technical activity in significant projects on behalf of the Technical Delivery Manager, for the delivery of quality technical deliverables.

Person specification:

- Strong leadership skills and experienced in people management, with proven influencing skills to ensure teams are aligned to design patterns and design collateral.
- A very strong communicator, able to lead and facilitate discussions across many tiers at UCAS, including functions like architecture, business analysis, team leaders, senior management group, and executives.
- A highly organised individual, comfortable working with and influencing peers at a high technical level.
- Educated to degree level in relevant computing discipline, or equivalent professional experience.
- Three+ years' experience of enterprise integration.
- Five+ years' experience in software development for high-scale, resilient, secure web applications.
- Experience of developing patterns and standards for development community, act as technical authority, and technical authoring.
- Experience integrating COTS, internal/external data providers, legacy systems, and other API led connectivity.

Our values in action

Customer-focused – We understand what our customers want, and we act on their changing needs.

Collaborative – We collectively create an engaging and positive work environment.

Accountable – We take ownership of our individual and organisational performance.

Service excellence – We realise, grow, and maximise our potential.

Trusted – Individuals are trusted to make informed decisions and take appropriate risks.

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.