

Job Description

Executive Chair of Warwick Innovation District

Role description

We are seeking an inspirational leader with international standing, credibility in innovation policy and industrial strategy and a proven track record to be the first Chair of Warwick Innovation District.

Warwick Innovation District is a new entity founded by the University of Warwick. The creation of this new organisation is part of the University's wider efforts to facilitate a step-change in our economic and societal impact through the scaling up of our research and innovation activities, and collaborations with the public and private sectors.

This pioneering Warwick place-based development company will deliver innovative places that enable cross-institutional clusters-of-convergence, addressing global sustainable development goals, and enhancing the innovation culture at the University. This initiative aims to attract inward investment and create jobs in the West Midlands. By devising a holistic strategy for innovation at Warwick, the company will promote the commercialisation of technology through spinouts and licensing, as well as the incubation and scaling of new, technology-focused businesses in the regional economy. It will also focus on delivery high impact innovation to large corporates, and aim to help develop foreign direct investment. The objective is to support transformation in the regional and national economy through the exploration of commercial applications for new technologies, the development of new business models, and leveraging skills, knowledge, and talent from across the entire breadth of the University faculties.

As the executive chair, you will serve as the primary driving force behind the establishment of this new organisation, providing vision and leadership for a small team tasked with establishing the organisation. You will be instrumental in creating and securing new business opportunities. You will be responsible, supported by a chief operating officer, in ensuring effective governance and oversight of the organisation and its subsidiaries.

You will also act as a key ambassador for the University of Warwick, representing the organisation to key national and international stakeholders.

About the University of Warwick

Born in the 60s with a mindset of boldness, imagination and collaboration, the University of Warwick is a world-leading research-intensive university with the highest academic and research standards. We're one of the world's top universities, ranked 67th in the world and top 10 in the UK*, with 92% of our research assessed to be 'world leading or internationally excellent'**.

Warwick is an inspiring place to work, teach and research. Valuing independent thinking and focused on social relevance, we enable our staff to find new ways of achieving.

Sustainability plays a big part in our planning - our outstanding facilities keep us at the cutting-edge, but we're just as committed to making sure our campus integrates well with our natural surroundings.

We have an acknowledged reputation for excellence in research and teaching, but it's our close links with business and industry that set us apart.

Businesses work with us to develop their strengths and ensure that they remain at the forefront of their industries. In return, Warwick benefits from the acumen of a business, investing wisely in every area of staff learning and development through to the wider student experience.

Our success is underpinned by innovation, entrepreneurialism and academic excellence. We're driven by the exceptional talent of our staff, students and alumni.

*QS World University Rankings 2024

** Research Excellence Framework 2021

Reporting to: Professor Stuart Croft, University Vice-Chancellor & President

Time Commitment: Flexible, subject to negotiation.

Main Responsibilities

1. External relations

- a. To develop and maintain strong relationships with Government ministers and senior officials in relevant departments, funders, professional bodies and other relevant organisations.
- b. To develop and maintain strong relationships with leaders and investors in, and performers of R&D, and any other organisation relevant to Warwick Innovation District.
- c. To identify and secure external major business and research opportunities that can be developed using Warwick Innovation District's capabilities and expertise.
- d. To act as the lead for Warwick Innovation District both nationally and internationally, in raising the profile of the brand, which includes the University of Warwick.
- e. To influence governments and industry internationally in order to attract engagement with the organisation.

2. Strategic Leadership

- a. To proactively align our activities with key government initiatives and engage with top-tier stakeholders to influence future policy decisions.
- b. To drive innovation and investment initiatives within the Warwick Innovation District and the University of Warwick, fostering a culture of creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration.

3. Board Responsibilities

- a. To oversee the development and leasing of innovation spaces, both current and future, to foster creativity and collaboration.
- b. To engage external board members with expertise in investment and innovation to provide valuable insights and guidance.
- c. To represent internal perspectives during board discussions to ensure a comprehensive understanding of ongoing initiatives and challenges.
- d. To develop draft agendas for board meetings focused on strategy, investment decisions, resource allocation, innovation acceleration, and to overcome obstacles hindering progress.

4. Culture Change

- a. To work with and through internal board members and the senior leadership team of the University of Warwick to ensure that the university's researchers, teachers and students understand the activities and benefits of Warwick Innovation District.
- b. More broadly, to promote the gains it will bring to the University's mission as a leading research and education institution dedicated to producing graduates with the very best skills for the West Midlands, the UK and countries across the world.

Person Specification

The Chair must have the highest personal standards with regard to integrity, honesty and inclusion and commit to the values of the University of Warwick.

These values represent the way we work together to deliver our strategy and ambitions. Further information about our values can be found [here](#).

Essential criteria

- An ability to work strategically and constructively to reach collective decisions in the public interest.
- A good understanding and knowledge of the UK's research and innovation sectors, at the highest levels, and particularly university-based research and innovation activity.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to be an ambassador for the University of Warwick.
- A well-developed network of contacts in Westminster and Whitehall, performers of research and development, and investors in research and development.

Desirable criteria

- Experience as an investor, specifically with knowledge of the market dynamics of the UK's research and development ecosystem.
- Experience in commercial property and specifically the development of office, coworking and laboratory spaces.
- Experience of working with Government on the development and implementation of science policy.
- Experience in the life sciences.

How to apply

Applicants should submit a two-page statement outlining their suitability for the role of Executive Chair of Warwick Innovation District, along with a current CV and identify two individuals, who will write in support of their application.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview with the Selection Committee which is expected to take place on Wednesday 10 July 2024.

Applications should be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Officer, Gemma Wild (G.Wild@warwick.ac.uk) and must be received no later than 11:59pm on Sunday 30 June 2024.

Commitment to Inclusion

Warwick is committed to building an organisation of mutual respect and dignity, promoting a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive working and learning environment. We recognise that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected, and valued. Where possible, we go beyond legislation to provide a place where everyone can thrive, supporting all staff to achieve their full potential. We aspire to remove economic, social, and cultural barriers that may otherwise prevent people from succeeding.

We therefore welcome and encourage applications from all communities regardless of culture, background, age, disability, sex/gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion/belief, or sexual or romantic orientation. To find out more about our social inclusion work at Warwick visit our webpages [here](#).

The University currently holds a [Race Equality Charter Bronze Award](#), [Athena Swan Silver Award](#) and a [Disability Smart Bronze Award](#). The University of Warwick is also one of the six founder institutions of the [EUTOPIA European University Alliance](#).

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

The University of Warwick complies with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against anyone who makes a Disclosure relating to a conviction or other information revealed. More information is available on the University's vacancy pages and applicants may request a copy of the DBS Code of Practice.

Where we're going

[Find out more about the University's strategy and where we want to be by 2030.](#)