University of Nottingham
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Candidate Pack

Chief Digital and Information Officer

Building the digital foundations for how we teach, research, study and work



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Welcome from Chris Hunt

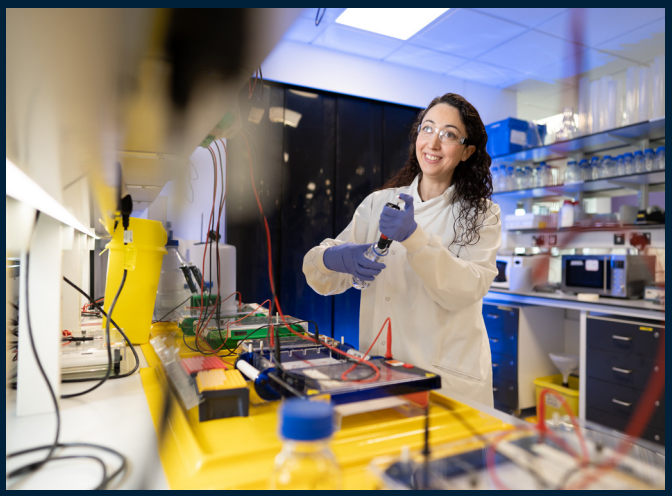
Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Digital and Information Officer at the University of Nottingham.

This is an opportunity to lead digital, data and technology at one of the world's leading universities at a pivotal moment in its development. As we shape the next chapter of the university's future, we are looking for a leader who combines strong operational delivery with strategic vision; someone who brings deep technology expertise, a track record of leading complex services at scale, and a passion for using digital to make a meaningful difference.

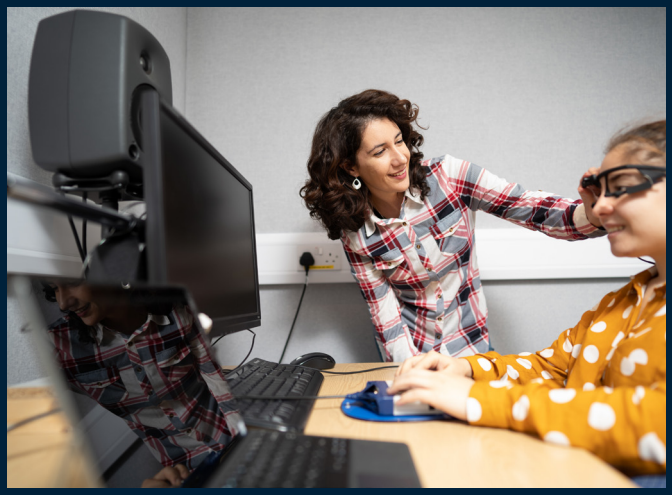
The University of Nottingham has never been afraid to think differently. From the vision of our founder, Sir Jesse Boot, to becoming the first UK university to establish overseas campuses, innovation has been part of our identity for generations. Today, through our Future Nottingham programme, we are creating a more focused, sustainable and high-performing institution, one that enables excellence in teaching, research and student experience for years to come.



Digital sits at the heart of this ambition. We have already laid many of the foundations for success, with an emerging strategic direction, strengthened leadership team and redesigned operating model, and established data and AI strategies. We benefit from strong sponsorship from the University Executive Board and Council, and there is genuine momentum behind our agenda. What we need now is a leader who can convert that momentum into delivery.



You will lead a significant technology estate and a substantial portfolio of change, ensuring our core digital services are resilient, secure and trusted while modernising the platforms, infrastructure and capabilities that will support the university's future. You will bring the technical credibility to challenge, influence and make informed decisions, whilst maintaining a persistent focus on outcomes for students, researchers, academics and professional services colleagues.





Success in this role will come from balancing operational excellence with transformation. You will establish clear priorities, make sound investment decisions and create confidence through delivery. Just as importantly, you will build strong relationships across the university, helping colleagues to see technology not as an end in itself, but as an enabler of world-leading research, exceptional education and a thriving university community.

Whilst experience in higher education is welcome, it is not essential. We are interested in leaders who have run complex technology organisations, delivered large-scale change, built high-performing teams and brought people with them through transformation. Above all, we are seeking someone who combines expertise with authenticity, ambition with pragmatism, and leadership with a genuine commitment to service.

If you are excited by the opportunity to shape the digital future of a globally recognised institution and deliver lasting impact at scale, I would be delighted to hear from you.

With best wishes,

Chris Hunt
Chief Operating Officer
University of Nottingham



About the University of Nottingham

The University of Nottingham was founded on the vision and philanthropic spirit of Sir Jesse Boot. Its achievements include the development of MRI technology, and it was the first UK university to establish international campuses.[1]

Today it is one university with campuses in three countries: the UK, China and Malaysia. It provides research-led education for ~52,000 students, employs over 9,000 staff and makes an annual contribution of more than £1 billion to the UK economy.[2,3]





Research and reputation

- 7th in the UK for research power in REF 2021, according to analysis by Times Higher Education.[4]
- 16th in the UK and joint 97th in the world in the QS World University Rankings 2027.[4]
- A research portfolio, including research and research-related activity, worth £743 million.[2]
- Recognised as the UK's third most targeted university by leading graduate employers.[1]

Our Estate

Campuses in the UK include University Park, Jubilee Campus (the base for this role) and Sutton Bonington, together with medical and health sites linked to the region's hospitals.[6]

Future Nottingham: shaping our next chapter

Like much of UK higher education, the university is responding to significant financial pressures. Future Nottingham is its response: a programme to ensure the university is academically and financially sustainable for current and future generations.[7]

Its aim is to create a university that is more focused in its academic offer, stronger in its areas of distinctive excellence, more consistent in the experience it provides to students and staff, and better placed to deliver sustainable academic excellence. The university describes it as restoring resilience and creating headroom for reinvestment, and as providing the foundations for a new university strategy.[1]

What is changing

- University Council approved the Future Nottingham 2 final business case on 1 October 2026.[8]
- The university will move from a faculty model to three colleges: Health; Humanities and Social Sciences; and Science and Engineering.[8]
- New leadership structures will be in place from January 2027, with the transition to the college structure from August 2027.[8]
- Professional services support, student support and the course portfolio are being reshaped to give a simpler, more consistent experience.[1]



Why this matters for digital

Changes of this scale depend on digital. New academic structures touch enterprise systems, organisational hierarchies, data and the everyday tools people use. The CDIO will work closely with HR, Finance and the wider delivery programme with digital leadership having a strong voice within Future Nottingham governance. For the right person, this is a rare chance to shape how a major research university operates for years to come.

Digital at Nottingham

Historically, Digital & Technology Services (DTS) has provided digital solutions and technology services for students, staff and researchers across the university's global community[9]

More recently, the function has developed a clearer strategy and a redesigned operating model, and is moving to a new departmental identity. A refreshed senior leadership team is currently being formed, with new leadership responsibilities across:

- Technology
- Product
- Business Partnering
- Artificial Intelligence
- Service Delivery and Resilience
- Digital Partnerships

Several of these roles are already in situ and recruitment to newly defined roles is under way, so the incoming CDIO will lead a substantially refreshed team.

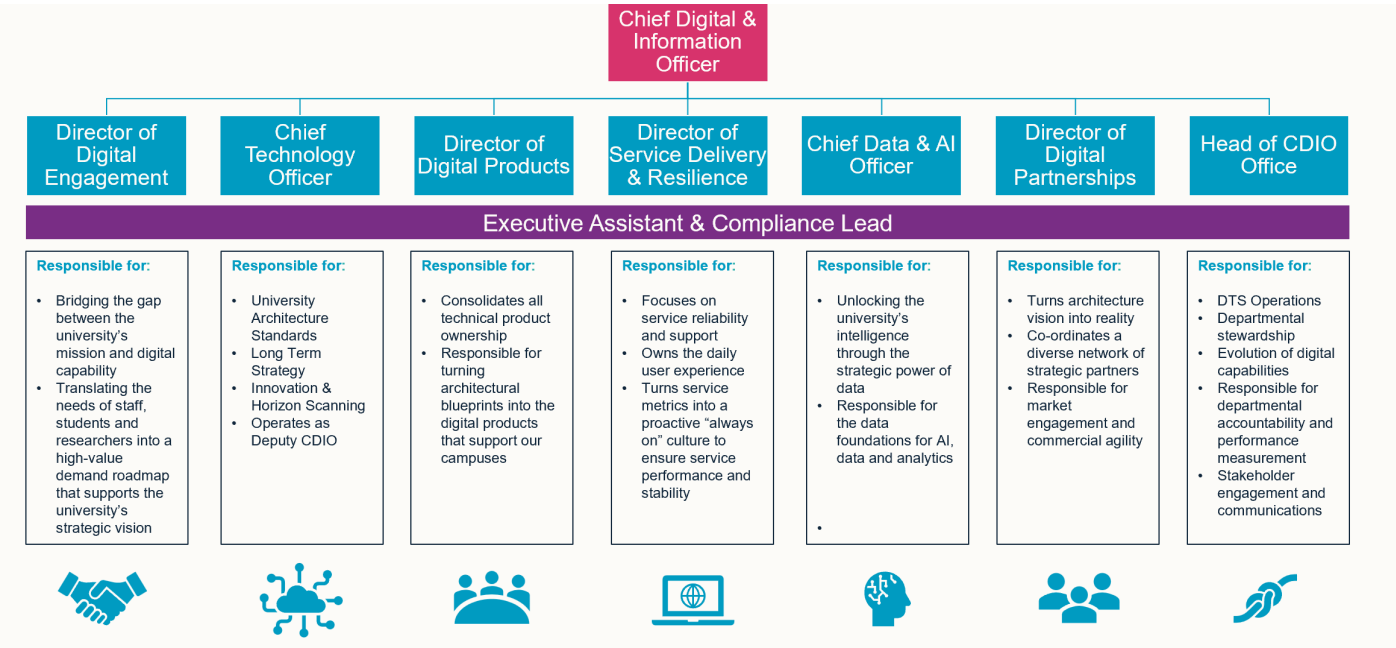
Data and AI strategies have been developed, and a five-year digital and capability roadmap is being finalised, with sign-off expected in Q1 2027.

Governance and sponsorship

Digital has strong support at University Executive Board and Council level. The Digital Services Oversight Committee, a sub-committee of University Operations Committee, provides strategic direction, accountability and authorisation for the university's digital plans.[10]

Senior Leadership Team

The CDIO will lead a senior leadership operational team of seven, supported by an Executive Assistant. Recruitment to several of these roles is under way, so the incoming CDIO will lead a substantially refreshed team.



Vision, Mission, Goals

- **Departmental Vision** - To power the world's most seamless academic experience
- **Departmental Mission** - To strip away digital complexity and empower the pursuit of knowledge
- **Departmental Goals** - To accelerate discovery, inspire learning, connect the global community, protect the mission and champion simplicity
    - **Master the Foundations** – we obsess over essentials
    - **Simplicity is a Feature** – we curate, we don't just add
    - **Design for the Human** – we start with the user and work backwards
    - **Partnership by Default** – we are equal peers in the academic mission
    - **Stewardship of Impact** – we invest where it moves the needle for the university
    - **One Nottingham** – seamlessly global





Core platforms

Area	Platform
Enterprise resource planning (HR, Finance, Procurement)	UniCore (Oracle Fusion)
Student administration and records	Campus Solutions
Research management	Worktribe
Virtual learning environment	Moodle
Data platform	Tableau / Alteryx / Snowflake
Productivity and collaboration	Microsoft 365

The role: an overview

This is a senior leadership appointment at a defining moment for the university.

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, the CDIO is accountable for the delivery, performance and continuous improvement of the university's digital, information and technology services, and for turning an agreed strategy into measurable outcomes.

Delivering excellent, reliable services

The foundations matter most. Students, academics and researchers need Wi-Fi, devices, networks and core systems that simply work. You will set clear service standards, embed consistent service management disciplines and lead the modernisation of the digital estate, including a planned move to SaaS and Public Cloud platforms where appropriate, the renewal of ageing infrastructure and the simplification of the application estate.

Strengthening security and resilience

Cyber security is a top priority. You will make sure risks are clearly owned, visible at senior level and actively managed, and that security operations, governance, business continuity and disaster recovery work together to protect the university's teaching, research and operations.

Leading a substantial portfolio

You will provide executive leadership for a significant programme of change, including:

- **Future Nottingham 2:** the digital elements of Future Nottingham 2, including the systems, ERP and organisational changes that support the move to colleges by August 2027
- **Timetabling:** the replacement of the university's timetabling system
- **Education and student experience:** a growing digital education agenda and the opportunity to improve the digital experience for every student
- **CRM and web:** bringing pace and focus to CRM and the university's web presence



Making the case for investment

Delivering the university's digital ambitions will require investment. You will build compelling, evidence-based business cases, show clearly how each investment supports institutional priorities and agreed KPIs, and make sure benefits are realised and reported.



Data, AI and information services

Through the Chief Data and AI Officer (in appointment), you will lead delivery of the university's data strategy and the ethical adoption of AI, automation and analytics where they add real value. You will also provide senior oversight of information and knowledge services, working with Library Services leadership on access to collections, open access and digital scholarship.



Leading people and culture

You will lead a large and committed team through a period of change: developing skills, raising professional standards, managing performance fairly and creating a culture where people feel safe to contribute, challenge and learn. The aim is a professional, confident function that colleagues across the university trust and value.



Priorities and measures of success

The direction is set. This role is about execution, operational excellence and accountability, delivered in partnership with the university community.

In the first eighteen months, we expect the CDIO to:

- **Listen and build trust:** Spend time with students, academics, researchers and professional services teams to understand their experience of digital services, and use this to shape priorities.
- **Master the foundations:** Deliver visibly reliable core services, from campus Wi-Fi and devices to enterprise systems, with clear service levels and consistent service management.
- **Lead digital change for Future Nottingham:** Get close to Future Nottingham 2 early, working with HR, Finance and academic leaders so that systems and structures change together.
- **Embed the new leadership team:** Bring the refreshed leadership team together around shared goals and strengthen product delivery capability.
- **Strengthen cyber resilience:** Bring clarity to the ownership, reporting and management of cyber and operational risk.
- **Secure investment:** Translate the five-year roadmap into prioritised, affordable plans and business cases that the university can confidently support.
- **Bring people with you on AI:** Help colleagues and students use AI and data with confidence, in ways that are practical, ethical and grounded in user need.



What success will look like

- Students, staff and researchers report a better, more consistent experience of digital services.
- Service performance is measured transparently against agreed KPIs and improves over time.
- Major programmes, including Future Nottingham 2, are delivered to agreed scope, time and budget.
- Investment cases are approved, and their benefits are tracked and realised.
- Cyber and operational risks are clearly owned, reported and reducing.
- Suppliers deliver strong performance and value for money.
- The function is confident, high-performing and inclusive, and is trusted by colleagues across the university.

Job specification

Role detail	Current Position
Role title	Chief Digital and Information Officer
Job family and level	Administration, Professional and Managerial, Level 7
Department	Digital & Technology Services
Reporting to	Chief Operating Officer
Direct reports	Chief Technology Officer, Director of Digital Products, Director of Service Delivery & Resilience, Director of Digital Engagement & Business Partnering, Director of Digital Partnerships, Chief Data & AI Officer, Head of CDIO Office, Executive Administrator & Compliance Lead
Team size	~304 (across UK campuses)
Location	Nottingham Geospatial Building, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham
Link to full job description	www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe137434

Purpose of the role

The CDIO is accountable for the effective delivery, operational performance and continuous improvement of the university's digital, information and technology services. Leading the function, the postholder ensures the agreed digital strategy is translated into measurable outcomes through disciplined execution, reliable service delivery, robust governance and effective management of resources.[11]



Key responsibilities

Area	Share of role	Focus
Strategy and service excellence	30%	Lead execution of the Digital and Information Strategy; modernise and simplify the digital estate; set service standards and KPIs; adopt AI and analytics where they add value; oversee data, BI and information and knowledge services.
People and performance	20%	Lead and develop the leadership team and wider function; build a values-driven, inclusive, learning culture; shape the operating model and workforce plan.
Governance, compliance and risk	20%	Deliver secure, resilient services; oversee service management, cyber security, business continuity and supplier management; drive financial discipline and transparent reporting.
Digital portfolio execution and benefits realisation	20%	Provide executive accountability for the digital investment portfolio; ensure strong programme governance, business readiness and adoption; establish benefits realisation frameworks.
Relationship and representation	10%	Advise the Vice-Chancellor, COO and University Executive Board; partner with academic and professional services leaders; represent the university externally.

The full job description is available here.

Person specification

What you will bring

Your application should address the following six criteria. Please use specific examples, making clear your personal contribution, the scale of the work and the outcomes achieved.

- **Operational technology and service leadership:** A strong track record of running complex, large-scale IT and digital services, with recognised expertise across infrastructure, enterprise applications and IT service management. Experience of raising service standards and delivering reliable services that users notice.
- **Enterprise-wide transformation:** Proven experience of delivering technology-enabled transformation in a large and complex organisation, ideally alongside wider organisational change, understanding the dependencies between systems, structures, people and processes.
- **Security and resilience:** Sound judgement in cyber security, risk and resilience, with experience of making sure risks are clearly owned, visible at senior level and actively managed.
- **Investment, commercial and financial judgement:** Experience of building compelling business cases, prioritising investment, managing significant budgets and strategic suppliers, and demonstrating measurable value and benefits.
- **User focus, data and AI:** A genuine commitment to user-centred services. Experience in data governance, business intelligence and performance measurement, and of helping people adopt new tools, including AI, with confidence.
- **People and stakeholder leadership:** Experience of leading, developing and professionalising teams through change, combining high standards with care. The ability to listen, build trust with senior and academic stakeholders, and influence at executive and governing body level.

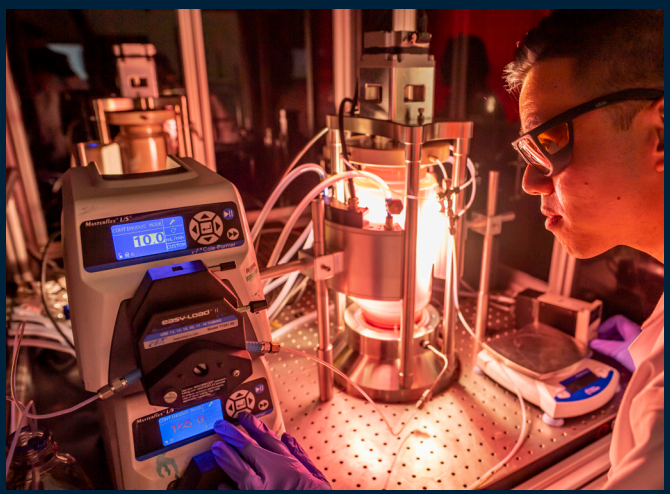


Personal qualities

We are looking for a dynamic, progressive and inspiring leader who is collegiate and people-centred. You will be visible, authentic and resilient; close to users and the frontline experience; technically credible without being technology-led; comfortable offering constructive challenge; and able to bring people with you through change.

Qualifications and experience

- **Essential:** Degree-level qualification or relevant professional qualification, or equivalent knowledge and experience gained through leading functions, services or major programmes.
- **Essential:** Evidence of continued professional development in leadership, operations, strategy or organisational management.





- **Desirable:** Postgraduate qualification in a related discipline; formal leadership training such as an MBA, ILM or CMI; professional certification such as ITIL, TOGAF, PRINCE2, Agile, CISM, CISSP or CDMP.
- **Desirable:** Familiarity with the higher education sector, policy and regulatory environment. We welcome candidates from other sectors who can show how they have adapted to new cultures and won hearts and minds.

Terms of appointment

Location and hybrid working

The role is based at Jubilee Campus, Nottingham. The university is a campus-based community and the CDIO will be expected on site four days a week, with flexibility.

Term	Detail
Job level	Level 7
Salary	£135,456 - £172,992
Pension	Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), with a 14% employer contribution
Contract type	Permanent
Working hours	36.25 hours per week
Annual leave	30 days plus university closure days
Other benefits	Your benefits - The University of Nottingham

Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

The university describes itself as a supportive, inclusive, caring and positive community that warmly welcomes people of different cultures, ethnicities and beliefs, and regards this diversity as vital to its success. Its recognitions include an Athena Swan Gold award, the Race Equality Charter Bronze award, Disability Confident Employer Level 2 and Stonewall Diversity Champion status.[11]



How to apply and timetable

GatenbySanderson is advising the university on this appointment. Applications will be made online through the campaign page.

Item	Detail
Application link	www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe137434
Campaign reference	GSe137434
Closing date	9am, Tuesday 5 January

Your application

- **Your CV:** A current account of your career, responsibilities and achievements.
- **A supporting statement:** No more than two pages, explaining why you are interested in this role and how you meet the six criteria under “What you will bring”.
- **Diversity monitoring:** Please complete the online form. Answers are optional and you may select “prefer not to say”.

Video introductions or video applications are not required for this appointment.



Selection process and timetable

Stage	Detail	Format
Applications close	9am, Tuesday 5 January	Online
Shortlisting	w/c 11 January 2027	Online
GS interviews	From 5 January 2027	Online
Final panel interviews	w/c 25 January 2027	University Park, Nottingham

For a confidential conversation

Please contact Dr Maliha Ahmed, Principal Researcher, or Sarah Luxford, Partner at GatenbySanderson, to arrange an informal, confidential discussion.

Email: cdionottingham@gatenbysanderson.com

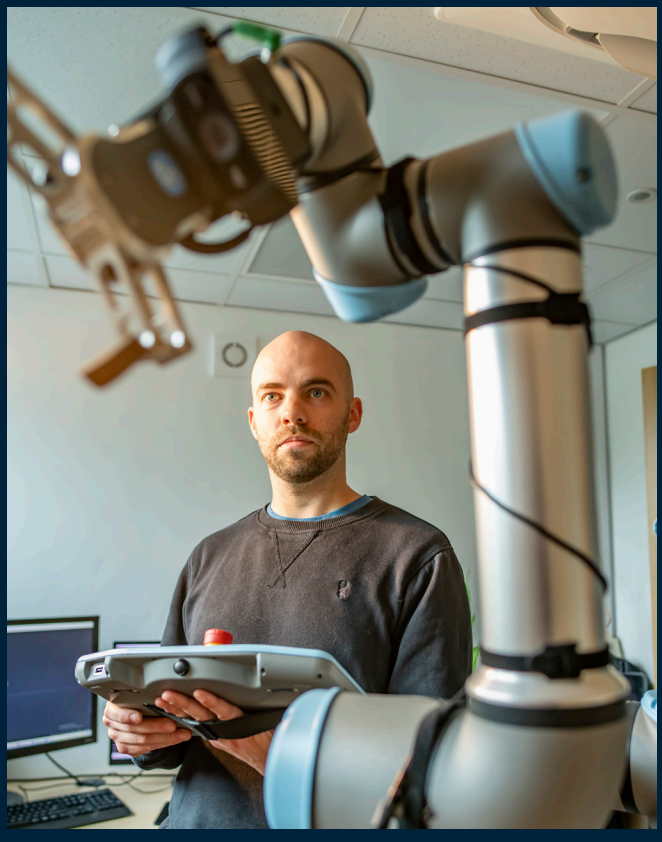
Reasonable adjustments

Please let the campaign team know if you need an adjustment or an alternative format at any stage of the process, so that we can discuss your requirements.



References

1. University of Nottingham, Shaping Nottingham's future (October 2026): **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/shaping-nottinghams-future**
2. Russell Group, University of Nottingham: **https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/our-universities/university-nottingham**
3. University of Nottingham, About: **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/about/**
4. University of Nottingham, Rankings and achievements: **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/about/facts/rankings-and-achievements.aspx**
6. QS Top Universities, University of Nottingham campuses: **https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/university-nottingham**
7. University of Nottingham, Future-proofing the University of Nottingham as a global leader: **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studywithus/future-proofing.aspx**
8. University of Nottingham, Change at the University of Nottingham (October 2026): **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/news/change-at-the-university-of-nottingham**
9. University of Nottingham, Digital Technology Services: About us: **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/dts/about/about-us.aspx**
1. University of Nottingham, Digital Services Oversight Committee: **https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/governance/universitycommittees/digitalservicesoversightcommittee.aspx**
2. University of Nottingham, Chief Digital and Information Officer job profile (supplied by the University)





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