

# Executive Dean School of Computer Science & Digital Technologies



**OPPORTUNITY**

Where change gets real.



**Reference: 1311-25**

**Grade: Band 02**

**Salary: £105,001 to £136,758, per annum, depending on experience**

**Contract Type: Permanent**

**Basis: Full Time (5 year fixed term as Dean of School with honorarium coupled with substantive ongoing Professor appointment)**

# Executive Dean of School of Computer Science & Digital Technologies

## Job description

### Job Purpose:

At Aston University, academic leadership is central to realising the 2030 strategy, university transformation and academic development. Executive Deans lead their School's research and innovation, education, and external engagement, and represent their School on the Vice-Chancellor's Executive team. With responsibility for management of academic staff and financial performance, you will drive mission-critical goals and outcomes across education, research, and enterprise. You will shape the School's academic strategy, contributing to achieving sustainable growth, academic excellence, and impact, positioning the Schools' programs and disciplines at world-class levels.

Reporting to the Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive, you will work closely with senior leaders including the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), PVC for Research & Enterprise, Executive Director of Finance, Chief Operating Officer, Chief People Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, and others.

As an Executive Dean you will help shape Aston's future, champion continuous improvement, and foster a culture where everyone can thrive, living our Aston values of Innovation, Collaboration, Ambition, Inclusion, and Integrity.

### Main duties and responsibilities

#### Management and leadership

- ▶ **Develop and lead the strategy for growth** of the School in line with the Aston 2030 Strategy, driving increases in student numbers, income, and research performance.
- ▶ **Oversee strategic, financial, and people management**, working with Associate Deans, Heads of Department, and research leads to support workload planning and performance.
- ▶ **Manage resources effectively** to meet financial and strategic targets and ensure operational compliance with University policies and processes such as organisational structure, workforce allocation and risk management.
- ▶ **Prepare and manage the annual budget** aligned to University contribution targets and workforce plans.
- ▶ **Lead the annual planning and objective-setting process for the School**, ensuring alignment with University-wide strategic priorities and contributing to institutional performance reporting, including at SQR (Strategic Quarterly Review) review sessions.
- ▶ **Represent the School effectively at VC Executive and Senior Leadership Group (SLG) meetings**, providing timely, constructive, and collegial input that supports University-wide decision-making and strategic alignment.
- ▶ **While accountable for the effective leadership and performance of the School**, the Executive Dean is also expected to demonstrate a whole-of-University perspective, actively contributing to cross-institutional initiatives and advancing shared strategic objectives through collaboration.
- ▶ **Expand income** through student growth, research, partnerships, international teaching, and professional development, including through Transnational Education, Aston Online and Aston Professional.
- ▶ **Provide exceptional leadership** to the School Management Team, fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture, empower them to thrive and take accountability for their performance.
- ▶ **Develop leadership** capability and academic reputation through feedback and mentoring and building strong teams.

- ▶ Ensure all staff have effective performance discussions and appropriate development plans.
- ▶ Collaborate across departments to diversify and grow student and staff populations aligned to workforce plans and achieve economy of scale through collaboration in teaching and research.
- ▶ **Attract and retain leading academics** to enhance the School's global profile.
- ▶ **Chair appointment panels** for appointments within the School and serve on other panels as required. Support the Aston 2030 strategy objectives and measures of success.
- ▶ **Undertake appeals** / grievances and disciplinary processes as required in line with University policies and processes.
- ▶ **Drive the School Great Place to Work initiatives** and achieve School based improvements in line with the local action plan focused on achieving high level of staff engagement and trust.

### **Education for future generations**

- ▶ Champion Aston's ethos of high-quality, inclusive student support, teaching, and employability within a highly diverse environment.
- ▶ Champion nation leading student experience by providing engaged and supportive learning environments, and relevant state-of-the-art professional education with strong employment outcomes.
- ▶ Lead innovation in digital, transnational, and professional education to enhance student outcomes including adoption of new and emerging technologies.
- ▶ Expand the online education portfolio to achieve global reach and attract diverse learners.
- ▶ Inspire and develop a high-performing academic team to drive curriculum innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and external engagement.
- ▶ Promote an inclusive, supportive culture for students of all backgrounds, enabling students to be themselves and thrive.
- ▶ Oversee the School's academic portfolio and contribute to the University's broader academic strategy and growth strategy across the omni-channel.
- ▶ Maintain a strong commercial awareness of UK and international market trends in education and align School strategy accordingly.

### **Business, Public, Third Sector and Professional Engagement**

- ▶ Enhance the School's and University's profile and impact regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- ▶ Foster a dynamic, vibrant innovation ecosystem that supports students, staff, and partners, promoting enterprise, entrepreneurship, and sector-relevant networks.
- ▶ Develop strong partnerships with key stakeholders across industries, sectors, and geographies, contributing to policy, and advancing research and intellectual property.
- ▶ Establish and maintain authority and credibility in your field with external stakeholders.
- ▶ Develop internal and external networks with other educational and professional bodies, and foster collaborative working, with support from the Associate Deans.
- ▶ Strengthen local community ties through public engagement supporting social, economic, and cultural prosperity.
- ▶ Lead School engagement with relevant professional and accrediting bodies and take responsibility for the required outcomes.

## **World leading Research**

- ▶ Lead School-related research disciplines to achieve world-class performance and rankings in line with the REF strategy and Aston 2030 Strategy.
- ▶ Enable the delivery of the research and enterprise strategy for the School in line with the wider objectives and measures of success.
- ▶ Maintain a personal research portfolio and lead by example and with credibility in your respective academic discipline.
- ▶ Create a cross-disciplinary, impactful, collaborative, and sustainable research environment within the School focused on excellence and impact.
- ▶ Ensure early career researchers and mid career researchers in the School are supported to develop to their full potential.
- ▶ Empower senior research leaders to drive research performance through collaboration within the School and across the University, including with University Research Institutes.
- ▶ Ensure recruitment of academic staff that demonstrate excellence and high potential in research as well as education.
- ▶ Drive a culture grounded in collaboration, quality, and high performance.

## **School Specific Deliverables:**

- ▶ Other requirements specific to the School as requested by the Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive.

## **Other related activities and functions**

- ▶ Ensure successful implementation of the Aston 2030 University and relevant enabling strategies and strategic plans at School level as demonstrated by School Senior Management Quarterly Reviews, (SMQRs).
- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the role's demands, including undertaking relevant training and development activities to develop themselves and support the development of others.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and well-being of staff and students.
- ▶ Role model and carry out duties in line with the Aston Values of Innovation, Collaboration, Ambition, Inclusion, and Integrity.
- ▶ Engender trust and promote fairness in all matters.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity and support diversity and inclusion. Responsible for the school Inclusion plan and actions.
- ▶ Support the university's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.
- ▶ Demonstrate a positive and collegial culture within the School and across the University.

## **Additional responsibilities**

- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development activities to develop themselves and support the development of others.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ▶ Carry out duties in a way which promotes fairness in all matters and which engenders trust.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity and support diversity and inclusion as well as working to support the University's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.

## Professorial Role

### Job Purpose:

To lead research, scholarship or teaching activities of the School through professional practice and expertise. In addition, to lead external links with regional, UK and international bodies such as government agencies, schools, colleges, professional bodies, business and industry as appropriate to the subject discipline and School and/or University strategy.

The majority of academic staff will undertake a balance of research and teaching and learning activities. Whilst ability and effectiveness should be demonstrated at an appropriate level in all areas, individuals may be more specifically focused on research, teaching and learning or external engagement. This balance will be discussed and agreed with individuals annually in the PDR meeting in line with operational needs, School and University strategy and with consideration of the individual's career goals and development plans.

Professors will have established and maintained international recognition through original, innovative and distinguished contributions to scholarship and research.

### Main Duties/Responsibilities:

#### Research

- ▶ To pursue and lead an internationally recognised research programme which both informs and is consistent with the School's research priorities.
- ▶ To publish the outcomes of research, with a record of securing publications in internationally rated journals of high standing. Where teaching and learning is the main focus, to publish research disseminated in pedagogic or professional practice publications.
- ▶ To have proven experience of securing significant external funding from prestigious funders including research councils, charities and the European Commission and a record of successfully leading and managing research projects, people and resources.
- ▶ Where appropriate to School/University strategy and subject discipline, to establish partnership links with external organisations to enhance Aston's research and industry profile.
- ▶ To provide strong leadership and team building in the management of research projects.
- ▶ To have a successful record of supervision of postgraduate students at Masters and doctoral levels to completion. To foster an environment which encourages research among students at postgraduate level.
- ▶ To lead research initiatives with colleagues and a wide range of external collaborators including internationally funded research projects as appropriate.
- ▶ To conduct research capable of demonstrating significant impact e.g. research which has the potential to benefit the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life.
- ▶ To build critical mass and promote excellence in the School's research priority areas.

#### Teaching and Learning

- ▶ Depending on role focus, to lead on identifying strategic areas for new teaching provision.
- ▶ To teach students at different levels as appropriate including foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate students, and to carry out the associated examining processes
- ▶ To be responsible for the design and content of specific areas of teaching and learning within the School's teaching programmes.

- ▶ To provide academic support, pastoral care and advice to foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- ▶ To mentor colleagues in effective teaching practice.
- ▶ To cooperate with colleagues across disciplines in the continuous review and development of programmes and the curriculum.
- ▶ To use and promote the use of a range of methods and techniques in teaching, learning and assessment including pursuing digital and modern methods of delivery.
- ▶ To lead on (depending on role focus) supporting and promoting quality assurance measures within the University e.g. by evaluation and development of modules for which the lecturer has responsibility, in terms of content, delivery and assessment as well as reviewing delivered modules, setting and receiving student feedback questionnaires.
- ▶ To innovate in teaching, demonstrating continuous professional development and critical reflective practice.

### **Additional responsibilities**

- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development activities.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ▶ Carry out duties in a way which promotes fairness in all matters and which engenders trust.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity and support diversity and inclusion as well as working to support the University's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.

## Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
<b>Education and qualifications</b>	<p>A PhD in a relevant area, with relevant experience gained at the highest level</p> <p>Membership of the Advance HE/ Higher Education Academy is desirable.</p>	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Proven successful track-record within a specific discipline/specialism that aligns with the School and the needs of our beneficiaries (students, business, and society).</p> <p>An established and extensive record of achievement in the following areas of relevance to the School: learning &amp; teaching, and/or research &amp; innovation, and/or community engagement obtained in academia or industry and business.</p> <p>Experience of successful management at departmental, school/group or organisational level.</p> <p>Substantial experience of raising the profile of your area of expertise through representation on professional bodies (or equivalent).</p> <p>Experience of innovation in education and learning either in academia or professional practice, including digital innovation.</p> <p>High level of personal credibility in a discipline</p> <p>Experience of mentoring and coaching colleagues to nurture professional development and personal growth.</p> <p>Experience in leading a team, group, or organisation through significant periods of external and internal change.</p>	Application form, interview and presentation

	Essential	Method of assessment
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	<p>Excellent leadership qualities and a high level of management skill and judgement.</p> <p>Ability to create positive and productive working environments through inclusive and reflective management and leadership.</p> <p>Excellent communication / presentation skills across a variety of media and a range of audiences and an ability to inspire, develop and manage School performance across all levels.</p> <p>Positive attitude towards student pastoral needs and available support services.</p> <p>Willingness to travel overseas and to contribute to the delivery and development of programmes linked to the School's portfolio.</p>	Application form and interview
<b>Other</b>	<p>A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required.</p> <p>Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.</p>	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Current active engagement with relevant public sector, third sector and/or professional communities.</p> <p>Ability to diversify income streams with proven commercial acumen.</p>	Application form and interview

	Desirable	Method of assessment
	Experience of managing or leading interdisciplinary teams.	
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	Willingness to engage with relevant professional, accrediting, and regulatory bodies.	Interview and presentation

## University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University. In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them.

**Values + Behaviours**

				
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Integrity</b>
We strive for excellence within ourselves and others, providing solutions to new and existing challenges.	We work best when we are collaborative, working together to contribute to the Aston community.	We strive together for improvement and innovation looking ahead to see the bigger picture.	We treat everyone in our community equally and how they would like to be treated.	We are open, honest and fair. We take ownership of the way we work and how we treat each other.

## How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs>.

Applications should be submitted by 23.59pm on the advertised closing date.

All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted.

If you require a manual application form, then please contact the Recruitment Team via [recruitment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@aston.ac.uk).

## Contact information

### Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Prof. Tony Clark

Job Title: Professor Pro-Vice Chancellor And Executive Dean

Email: [tony.clark@aston.ac.uk](mailto:tony.clark@aston.ac.uk)

### Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via [recruitment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@aston.ac.uk) or 0121 204 4500.

## Additional information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits Aston University staff enjoy.

**Salary scales:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

**Benefits:** [Benefits and Rewards | Aston University](#)

**Working in Birmingham:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

**Employment of Ex-Offenders:** Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they applying for is listed an exception under the act.

**Eligibility to work in the UK:** You should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements, including meeting the [English language standards](#). If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful. Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

With the end of free movement for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals from 1 January 2021, the UK's new immigration system applies to all non-UK/Irish nationals who require a visa.

Where an individual is subject to UK immigration control, they will require a visa to work in the UK.

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

The main routes available for those who need a visa to work in the UK are **Skilled Worker**, **Global Talent** and the **Graduate Route**.

You can find further information about each of these visa routes on our candidate immigration page.

If you will conduct research in your role, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application. Please see below for further details.

### **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):**

If you will conduct research in your role and you apply for a Skilled Worker or Temporary

Worker GAE visa, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application.

This process can take at least 6 weeks to process, and Aston will consider this when confirming your expected start date. Processing times will increase between April and September and can longer to complete.

There is no fast-track option available. ATAS certificates will be processed in order of receipt.

You can find more information about ATAS on our candidate immigration page.

## **Before you start and Right to Work**

### 90-day entry vignette

If you have applied for your visa outside of the UK, you will receive a vignette in your passport which is usually valid for 90 days. Please make sure to travel to the UK within the 'valid from' and 'valid to' dates on this visa. If you entered the UK before or after these dates, you would not 'activate' the visa and you would need to leave and re-enter the country.

You will also receive a decision letter confirming details about your immigration permission and where to collect your Biometric Residence Permit.

### Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents in and around Birmingham that can help you find suitable accommodation. The Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme provides a list of professional agencies and landlords who have applied with them for accreditation. Whilst accreditation is not a guarantee of quality, it provides some reassurance about the standard of the service they provide.

You can also use property search websites such as Rightmove or Zoopla.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level.

The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form. Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its

Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment.  
Individuals will not be identified by name.

**Data Protection**

Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (“GDPR”). The University’s Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies>

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