

# 1 BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

## 1.1 Introduction

Wits ICT is committed to supporting the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg’s (“the University”) vision by creating an environment which allows both staff and students to thrive. Strategic ICT advisory services are a critical enabler of this vision. The University’s digital transformation agenda, as outlined in the Wits 2033 Strategy, requires expert support to strengthen ICT governance, enhance cybersecurity posture, drive digital innovation, and ensure the strategic alignment of technology initiatives with core academic and operational priorities.

The current ICT operating model highlights the need for a long-term strategic partnership that brings sector-specific advisory capabilities and implementation insight tailored to higher education. This Scope of Work (SOW) outlines the requirements for a 5-year engagement with an IT research and advisory partner who will provide strategic guidance, maturity assessments, benchmarking, research capability and implementation planning in key ICT capability areas.

This initiative will ensure that Wits ICT continues to deliver secure, innovative, and value-driven services aligned to institutional goals. It complements existing IT service management improvements and positions the University to lead in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

# 2 DEFINITIONS AND APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

## Term / Acronym

## Definition

DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
DOAD	Delegation of Authority Document
SLA	Service Level Agreement
Wits ICT	Information and Communication Technology department of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
COBIT	Control Objectives for Information and Related Technologies

NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
TOGAF	The Open Group Architecture Framework
ISO/IEC 27001	International standard for information security management systems (ISMS)
ITIL	Information Technology Infrastructure Library
EDUCAUSE	A nonprofit association widely recognized as the leading organization for IT in higher education
PRINCE2	Structured project management methodology
PMBOK	Project Management Body of Knowledge
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation

### 3 THE UNIVERSITY'S OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 Primary Objective

To engage a qualified IT research and advisory partner to provide strategic guidance and expertise for the next five years (2026 – 2030), ensuring alignment between the University's digital direction and its institutional strategy.

#### 3.2 Objectives

- **To stay up to date with technology trends:** So that the university can make smart decisions about new tools, systems, and innovations and not fall behind.
- **To get expert advice before making large and complex IT decisions:** So, leadership and IT teams can have sufficient information relating to IT investment decisions.
- **To benchmark with other universities:** So that the University has an overview of what is going well, what can be improved on and what other universities are doing that works.
- **To plan better for future technology needs:** By understanding what's coming next in the technology / digital world, to prepare for the future instead of reacting too late.
- **To reduce risks in IT projects and investments:** To avoid making inaccurately informed investment decisions.

- **To enable continuous learning and improvement:** To drive continuous learning and improvement through easy access to a wide variety of technology resources.

## 4 SCOPE OF WORK

### 4.1 Description

This Scope of Work (SOW) outlines the engagement of a qualified and experienced IT research and advisory partner to support the University's digital transformation agenda which includes cloud adoption, mobility to enable student and administrative services to be accessible remotely, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, network connectivity, digitization of processes. The engagement aims to strengthen the University's strategic and operational ICT capabilities through access to global best practices, sector-specific research, expert advisory services, and benchmarking tools.

The scope includes the provision of, however not limited to:

- **Access to IT Knowledge and Advisory Platform:** On-demand access to a comprehensive, continuously updated knowledge and advisory platform, covering topics such as IT strategy, governance, cybersecurity, innovation, operations, and emerging technologies. This includes resources accessible to both professional and academic staff, as well as students where applicable.
- **Advisory and Analytical Services:** Expert consultations, advisory content, and analytical tools to support the development and refinement of the University's ICT strategy, transformation roadmaps, and implementation frameworks, strategic decision-making on technology investments, IT governance, service delivery, digital transformation, and institutional alignment.
- **Cybersecurity Support:** Cybersecurity posture assessments, risk mitigation strategies, and ongoing expert consultations and advisory input to strengthen the University's resilience and data protection capabilities.
- **Digital Innovation and Transformation:** Expert consultations, advisory content, and analytical tools to support for planning and implementing digital initiatives aimed at improving student experience, operational efficiency, and institutional effectiveness.
- **Capability and Maturity Assessments:** Evaluation of current ICT capabilities across key domains, identifying strengths and areas for development.

- **Benchmarking and Metrics:** Provision of comparative data, evaluative tools, and best-practice benchmarks to support continuous improvement and performance measurement.
- **Custom Research Projects:** Tailored research assignments aligned to specific university challenges or transformation priorities.
- **Strategic Planning and Execution Support:** Collaboration on prioritizing IT initiatives and aligning them with institutional goals, supported by strategic planning frameworks and case studies.
- **Procurement and Vendor Support:** Independent guidance on technology vendor evaluations, contract negotiations, and procurement strategies.
- **Executive Programs and Education:** Access to workshops, leadership development programs, and executive education tailored to IT leadership, change management, and digital strategy execution.
- **Peer Engagement and Networking:** Facilitation of knowledge-sharing through curated events, roundtables, and access to a network of peer institutions.
- **Ongoing Advisory Engagement:** Sustained advisory relationship to provide continuity, guide implementation, and respond to evolving institutional needs.

## 4.2 Considerations

- 4.2.1 **Extent of Work:** Comprehensive strategic advisory support across key ICT domains, including governance, cybersecurity, digital innovation, service delivery, and ICT capability development, aligned with the University's long-term digital transformation goals.
- 4.2.2 **Methodology:** Utilisation of internationally recognised ICT management frameworks and methodologies (e.g., COBIT, NIST, TOGAF, ISO 27001), combined with higher education best practices and evidence-based strategic planning models.
- 4.2.3 **Location of Work:** Advisory services will be delivered through remote consultations, as appropriate to the workstream and phase of engagement.

## 5 TASK IDENTIFICATION

### 5.1 Tasks

- Provide access to research reports, best practices, toolkits, and benchmark data relevant to higher education IT strategy, operations, and transformation.

- Deliver insights on emerging technologies (e.g., AI, cloud, cybersecurity) and higher education trends (e.g., digital transformation, hybrid learning, student experience platforms).
- Support development of institutional IT strategic plans aligned with academic and administrative objectives.
- Assist in the creation and review of technology roadmaps for modernization, cloud adoption, cybersecurity, and digital initiatives.
- Conduct or provide the tools for capability gap assessments and recommend prioritization strategies.
- Provide guidance on IT service management practices using industry frameworks (e.g., ITIL).
- Assess the university's cybersecurity posture using established frameworks (e.g., NIST, ISO/IEC 27001) and benchmark performance against peer institutions.
- Support evaluation and selection of technology vendors, including comparative analysis, fit-for-purpose assessments, and procurement support.
- Offer one-on-one advisory sessions for university leadership to review strategies, resolve issues, and prepare executive-level communications.
- Provide practical tools and templates (e.g., KPIs, business case models, risk assessments) to support informed decision-making.
- Advise academic and administrative stakeholders on topics including instructional technology, student success analytics, and enterprise system modernization.

## 5.2 Technical Requirements

### 5.2.1 IT Knowledge and Advisory Platform

Suppliers must provide access to a centralised comprehensive IT Knowledge and Advisory Platform that supports a wide range of users including technical experts, academic researchers, students, and IT management and executives. The platform must meet the following criteria:

- Content and Resources:
  - Offer a broad, regularly updated repository of IT-related materials, including but not limited to:
    - Industry and technical best practices (e.g., ITIL, Agile, DevOps)

- Academic and industry research papers
- Technical whitepapers, case studies, implementation guides, toolkits and frameworks, and training resources
- Include tools for content discovery such as advanced search and filtering capabilities.
- User Engagement and Accessibility:
  - Provide collaboration features such as discussion forums, comments, and user profiles.
  - Ensure intuitive, user-friendly navigation for diverse user groups.
- Security and Compliance:
  - Comply with relevant international standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 27001, GDPR).
- Service Availability and Support:
  - Guarantee a minimum of 99.9% platform uptime.
  - Provide 24/7 technical support.
  - Respond to advisory or consultation and requests in alignment with engagement schedules and within agreed SLA timeframes (e.g., 5 business days for non-critical outputs, 2 days for urgent inputs).

## 5.2.2 Technical Advisory and Consulting Services

Suppliers must provide access to on-demand technical advisory and consulting services to support a range of IT disciplines and business needs. The service offering must include,

- **Service Delivery Methods:**
  - Virtual consultations
  - Tailored written reports, recommendations, or assessments
  - Access to subject matter experts
- **Responsiveness:**
  - Ability to engage on both ad hoc and scheduled basis
  - Clear service-level expectations, including acknowledgment of requests within agreed timeframes (e.g., within 3 business days)

These services should be flexible, scalable, and aligned with the evolving needs of technical teams and the University's priorities.

### 5.2.3 IT Executive Support

Suppliers must provide strategic advisory services specifically tailored for Senior IT Leadership. The services must include:

- **Executive Engagement:**
  - Delivery of high-value executive briefings on current and emerging trends
  - Access to leadership forums, roundtables, and conferences for peer engagement and knowledge sharing
  - One-on-one or group advisory sessions supporting digital and the University's transformation initiatives
- **Focus Areas (Non-Exhaustive):**
  - Emerging technologies and innovation strategy
  - Enterprise architecture and governance
  - Regulatory compliance and data privacy
  - Workforce development, talent strategy, and capability building
  - IT financial management, vendor strategy, and risk management
  - Sustainability, ESG alignment, and digital ethics

The supplier is expected to evolve and tailor executive-level support in response to changing business environments, sector challenges, and executive priorities.

### 5.2.4. The advisory partner must demonstrate expertise in

- Higher education ICT governance and transformation frameworks.
- Cybersecurity strategy development (aligned with NIST/ISO 27001).
- Digital innovation and enterprise architecture (e.g. TOGAF).
- Benchmarking and capability maturity models (e.g. COBIT, ITIL, EDUCAUSE).
- Knowledge of ITIL and service management integration.
- Experience working with academic institutions.

## 5.3 Task Summary

### 5.3.1 Responsibilities

- **Service Provider Responsibilities:** Deliver a quality IT knowledge and advisory platform and qualified strategic advisors who can lead assessments and advise on strategy related artefacts (i.e. plans, roadmaps, reporting, etc.).

- **Wits ICT Responsibilities:** Provide access to institutional information and stakeholders, manage contract oversight, coordinate internal approvals and appoint a project sponsor and contact lead.

### 5.3.2 Methodology

The service provider will use a combination of:

- COBIT, ITIL v4, and EDUCAUSE Core Data Service frameworks.
- TOGAF for enterprise architecture alignment.
- NIST/ISO 27001 for cybersecurity advisory.
- Evidence-based ICT capability maturity assessments.
- Project management aligned to PRINCE2, PMBOK, or equivalent standards.

## 6 STANDARDS

The service provider must adhere to relevant international and sector standards, including:

- Relevant data protection regulations (e.g., POPIA, GDPR).

## 7 TRAINING & KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

7.1 **Training Responsibility:** Service provider.

7.2 **Training Requirements:**

7.2.1 **Trainees:** ICT leadership, strategy teams, and relevant operational staff.

7.2.2 **Timing:** After platform rollout and at least quarterly refresher sessions.

7.2.3 **Methodology:** Thorough training of the platform and necessary tools following workshop format.

7.2.4 **Number of Trainees:** To be specified by Wits ICT based on engagement scope.

7.3 **Training Types:** Platform / software training.

7.4 **Framework Versions:** Training must reflect the latest version of relevant ICT governance and management standards.

7.5 **Knowledge Transfer:** Ongoing, starting at project initiation and continuing throughout in the form of refresher sessions.

7.5.1 **Trainees:** Wits ICT leadership and strategic planning staff.

7.5.2 **Timing:** Continuous.

7.5.3 **Measurement:** Evaluated through feedback.

7.6 **Training Components and Outputs**



The provider must supply:

- Training materials (guides, templates, presentation decks).
- Knowledge capture documentation and recordings, where applicable.

## **8 CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

### **8.1 Change Process**

- 8.1.1 Document change request.
- 8.1.2 Assess impact (technical, strategic, and operational).
- 8.1.3 Review and approve with Wits ICT.
- 8.1.4 Implement through a structured plan.
- 8.1.5 Communicate changes to affected units.
- 8.1.6 Conduct a post-implementation review.

## **9 CONTRACTUAL MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 **Operational Management:** Managed via joint governance with designated contract managers from both parties.
- 9.2 **Meetings and Reporting**
  - 9.2.1 **Meetings:** Regular progress and strategy alignment meetings.
  - 9.2.2 **Reporting:** Includes milestone tracking, strategy implementation progress, maturity assessments, and ad hoc reports aligned with executive priorities.
- 9.3 **Annual Review:** Formal review of advisory impact, service quality, and alignment to milestones. In the event that service quality or milestone alignment is found to be unsatisfactory during the annual review, the service provider shall be subject to a corrective action plan. Should the service provider fail to demonstrate satisfactory improvement within a mutually agreed remediation period, Wits University reserves the right to apply penalties, which will be contractually defined.
- 9.4 **Monitoring Standards:** Includes stakeholder feedback, engagement outcomes, deliverable quality, and adherence to agreed frameworks and SLAs.

## **10 TIMEFRAMES AND DELIVERABLES**

### **10.1 Timeframes**

- Contract Award: **28 November 2025**
- Engagement Start: **01 January 2026**
- Duration: **Five-year contract with periodic reviews.**

### **10.2 Deliverables**

- Signed agreement
- Training materials
- Access to research and advisory platform

**10.3 Project Plan:** To be jointly developed post-award, including workstreams, timelines, and resourcing.

## **11 ACCEPTANCE, ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA & ACCEPTANCE TESTING**

### **11.1 Acceptance**

All deliverables are subject to formal acceptance by Wits ICT, measured against agreed deliverable specifications.

**11.2 Documentation Access:** The provider must share all advisory tools, templates, and training materials as part of knowledge transfer.

## **12 SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE**

Ongoing research and advisory platform support and maintenance.

## **13 SERVICE LEVELS**

### **13.1 Response Times and Responsibilities**

Service provider must respond to Wits ICT queries and requests in alignment with engagement schedules and within agreed SLA timeframes (e.g., 5 business days for non-critical outputs, 2 days for urgent inputs). Failure to meet these response times will be considered non-performance and may result in consequences including but not limited to issuance of a formal warning, requirement to implement a corrective action plan, fee deductions proportional to the impact of the delay, or termination of the agreement in accordance with the escalation and remediation procedures outlined as defined in the contractual agreement.

### 13.2 Support Type

- Platform/software support
- Strategic consultation
- Remote and on-site workshops
- Advisory briefings and reporting
- Stakeholder facilitation

### 13.3 Escalation Process

For this engagement, the escalation path is as follows:

#### 1. **Senior Manager: ICT Planning and Governance**

The first point of escalation for operational or technical concerns.

#### 2. **General Manager: oCIO and Customer Services**

If the issue remains unresolved, it is escalated to the General Manager responsible for overseeing the office of the CIO and customer service functions.

#### 3. **Chief Information Officer (CIO)**

As the highest escalation point, the CIO provides executive oversight and decision-making authority to resolve critical or persistent issues impacting service delivery or strategic objectives.

### 13.4 Performance

Measured through milestone delivery, advisory quality, user feedback, and adherence to agreed timelines.

### 13.5 **Penalties:** May be contractually defined for failure to meet key milestones without valid justification, similar to SLA breach terms.