

IT Strategy and Advisory Services

Empowering Your Organisation with Expert Leadership and Guidance



Our Services at a Glance

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, organisations face increasing pressure to align technology with strategic goals, drive innovation and safeguard their operations. Our IT Strategy & Advisory Services are designed to empower your business with expert leadership, tailored guidance and practical solutions that transform your IT function into a true enabler of success. Whether you need strategic direction, operational improvement, robust security or compliance assurance, our portfolio of services delivers the expertise and flexibility required to meet your unique needs – helping you unlock value, reduce risk and achieve lasting results.



Virtual IT Director Services

What is it?

A flexible, on-demand leadership solution that provides your organisation with access to a highly experienced IT Director. This service is ideal for organisations that need strategic IT direction, transformation or improvement, but do not require a full-time hire.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Strategic Leadership:** Immediate access to senior IT expertise to guide your organisation's technology direction.
- ✓ **IT Strategy Development:** Creation and delivery of a tailored IT strategy aligned to your business goals.
- ✓ **Transformation:** Shift from reactive IT support to a proactive, forward-looking approach.
- ✓ **Cost Efficiency:** Benefit from executive-level leadership at a fraction of the cost of a permanent hire.
- ✓ **Accountability:** Direct reporting to senior management or Board level, ensuring transparency and alignment.
- ✓ **Innovation:** Introduction of new ideas, technologies and processes to drive organisational improvement.
- ✓ **Vendor Management:** Oversight and negotiation of third-party contracts for best value.



IT Manager as a Service (ITMaaS)

What is it?

A scalable service providing your organisation with an experienced IT Manager who oversees day-to-day IT operations, drives improvement projects and ensures best practice and governance.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Operational Oversight:** Central point of contact for all IT matters, ensuring reliability and security.
- ✓ **Infrastructure Assessment:** Review of current systems, security and partners to identify risks and opportunities.
- ✓ **Cost Control:** Budget review and identification of cost-saving measures.
- ✓ **Vendor Management:** Management and accountability for third-party suppliers.
- ✓ **Best Practice:** Implementation of industry standards and governance.
- ✓ **Scalable Support:** Flexible engagement, from one-off projects to ongoing management.
- ✓ **Risk Reduction:** Quick identification and resolution of IT risks.
- ✓ **Stakeholder Engagement:** Consultation across the organisation to align IT with business needs.



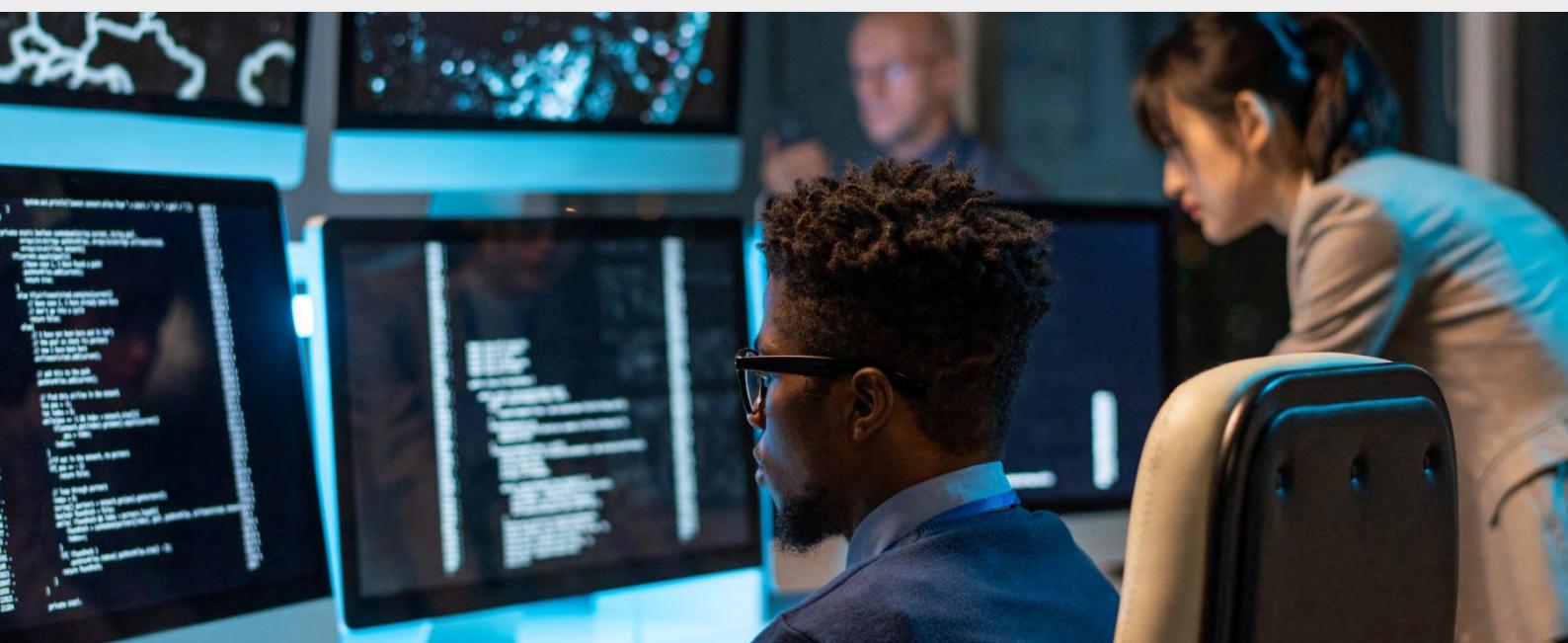
Service Delivery Manager as a Service (SDMaaS)

What is it?

A fractional or full-time service providing a dedicated IT Service Delivery Manager to drive continual improvement in your IT support function, enhance user experience and introduce automation.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Continual Service Improvement:** Ongoing review and enhancement of IT support quality and user satisfaction.
- ✓ **Project Management:** Delivery of improvement projects and process redesign.
- ✓ **Automation & Self-Service:** Implementation of digital workflows to streamline support and increase efficiency.
- ✓ **Cost Control:** Optimisation of support processes to reduce overheads.
- ✓ **Governance:** Alignment with ITIL best practice and robust vendor management.
- ✓ **Centralised Accountability:** A named expert responsible for your CSI roadmap and support experience.
- ✓ **Flexible Engagement:** Service tailored to your needs, from part-time to full-time support.



Strategic IT Assessment & Review

What is it?

A comprehensive, independent review of your organisation's IT operating model, systems, processes and expenditure. The service delivers a prioritised improvement plan and roadmap to align IT with your strategic goals.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Tailored IT Improvement Plan:** Practical, prioritised recommendations to optimise your IT function.
- ✓ **Business Alignment:** Ensures all IT investment supports organisational objectives.
- ✓ **Cost Savings:** Identification of areas to reduce spend and improve efficiency.
- ✓ **Benchmarking:** Comparison against industry standards and best practice.
- ✓ **Risk Management:** Assessment of cyber security, information governance and compliance.
- ✓ **User Experience:** Recommendations to improve staff engagement with technology.
- ✓ **Leadership & Governance:** Guidance on IT management structure and processes.



Virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) as a Service

What is it?

A specialist service providing immediate access to experienced information security leaders who take ownership of your organisation's security strategy, risk management and improvement projects.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Security Leadership:** Expert guidance and accountability for your security posture.
- ✓ **Fast Access to Security Guidance:** Expert advice on responding to threats and strengthening security measures.
- ✓ **Best Practice Alignment:** Implementation of recognised frameworks (NCSC CAF, Cyber Essentials Plus, ISO27001).
- ✓ **Risk Management:** Maintenance of risk registers and oversight of key risk areas.
- ✓ **Technical Audits:** Infrastructure assessments and vulnerability management reporting, with management and procurement assistance for penetration testing, including scoping and remediation.
- ✓ **Security Awareness:** In-person user training to supplement existing platform-based learning, with ongoing advice to strengthen organisational resilience.
- ✓ **Vendor Management:** Oversight and coordination of security vendors and projects.



Data Protection Officer (DPO) as a Service

What is it?

An outsourced solution providing expert support to ensure your organisation complies with UK GDPR and other associated legislation. The service includes board-level reporting, policy reviews, incident management and ongoing advice.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Compliance Assurance:** Independent, objective oversight of data protection requirements.
- ✓ **Expert Guidance:** Access to specialist advice and support for complex data protection issues.
- ✓ **Policy & Process Review:** Regular assessment and improvement of data protection policies and procedures.
- ✓ **Incident Management:** Rapid response and support for personal data breaches.
- ✓ **Flexible Service Levels:** Reactive and proactive options to suit your organisation's needs.
- ✓ **Board-Level Reporting:** Clear, actionable insights for senior management.



Why choose Academia & Smartdesc

Selecting the right partner for IT strategy, security and governance is critical to achieving resilience and long-term success. Academia & Smartdesc combine strategic insight, technical expertise and a proven track record to deliver measurable outcomes for your organisation.

Key benefits:

- ✓ **Proven Expertise:** Decades of experience delivering IT leadership, cyber security and governance solutions across diverse sectors.
- ✓ **Certified & Accredited:** ISO 27001 certified, Cyber Essentials Certification Body, Microsoft Solutions Partner and Apple Business & Education Partner status – giving you confidence in compliance and best practice.
- ✓ **Integrated Approach:** A unique blend of IT strategy, security and information governance services under one roof—ensuring cohesive, end-to-end solutions.
- ✓ **Flexible Engagement:** Fractional, on-demand services tailored to your needs—whether strategic leadership, operational improvement or 24/7 managed security.
- ✓ **Outcome-Focused:** Clear roadmaps, measurable improvements and transparent reporting to demonstrate value and reduce risk.
- ✓ **Trusted Partner:** Long-standing relationships built on integrity, collaboration and delivering results that matter.

How to Engage

Speak with our experts to explore your needs. Call us on 01992 703900, email us at info@academia.co.uk or find us at www.academia.co.uk.



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