

CANDIDATE PACK

Director of Student and
Academic Services

Student and Academic Services

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER 



OUR UNIVERSITY

Under the inspirational leadership of Professor Peter Bonfield OBE, the University of Westminster is a place where discoveries are made, barriers are broken, diversity is celebrated and where everyone is welcome. Serving more than 21,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, apprentice and executive students, our mission is to transform the lives of young people from all backgrounds. We seek to make the world a more inclusive, sustainable, better and healthier place through our educational, research and knowledge exchange endeavours.

Since our founding in 1838 we have stood out as innovators, committed to tackling social inequalities. In 2021, our University ranked 2nd in England out of more than 100 higher education institutions for social mobility. The ranking - produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Sutton Trust - compares the number of students from low-income backgrounds at universities, and the extent to which their studies helped them to move up the income ladder. Westminster has the second highest performance among universities in England.

As we focus forward to 2029, we will continue to do so in a way that is true to our progressive, compassionate and responsible values. Our education offer will be more personalised and authentic, giving students from all backgrounds an opportunity of transformative learning, helping them succeed in their studies and professional lives. Our curriculum will be employability-linked, leading to stronger outcomes and helping prepare our graduates for the world of work and for life. Our research and knowledge exchange will enable us to maximise our positive impact on societies in the UK and around the world in an environment where everyone is inspired to succeed. Our priorities of wellbeing, inclusion and sustainable development will help us as we navigate through the challenges and opportunities towards 2029.



OUR PRIORITIES

The University's 2022-2029 strategy, *Being Westminster*, sets us apart and builds on our unique history and achievements. In our University, we value social justice, moral conscience, inclusivity and equality, acting positively together to make change for good.

The University of Westminster has three priorities.

WELLBEING

Working and studying together at Westminster as a community of students and colleagues is a big part of our lives – doing so in an environment that places our wellbeing front and centre helps us to be safe and feel safe. We care for the safety, health and wellbeing of those around us as well as ourselves.

INCLUSION

All Westminster, colleagues and students are in a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and is a place where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated. As a responsible institution, we strive to ensure and to champion equality. As a progressive institution, we take pride in our diversity. As a compassionate institution, we commit to an inclusive culture that allows students and colleagues to reach their full potential.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We take inspiration from the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in how we drive our actions and activities and governance across our University. As a community, we bring together our collective energies to play our part in addressing the climate crisis and inequalities to enable a more sustainable and socially just world. We are one of the top 20 universities in the world in SDG 5 for providing equal access and supporting the academic progression of women. We are one of the top 25 universities in the world in SDG 10 tackling economic, health based and international inequalities. We are in the top 50 universities in SDG 12 for promoting resource and energy efficiency, having a sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services for all.



OUR OBJECTIVES 2022-2029

Against a backdrop of a changing and challenging higher education environment, the University has recently completed a major review of its objectives and strategy, and has published its commitments for the period 2022-29.

EDUCATION

We will offer personalised and authentic education, underpinned by an inclusive curriculum, to enable all our students, from all backgrounds, to engage in transformative learning and to succeed in their studies and professional lives. We will address global, political, and social challenges through a relevant demand-led and forward-looking portfolio. We will do this by offering authentic teaching, learning and assessment modes which immerse students in the wider-world through live projects, work-based learning and global opportunities. We will invest in our people to enable all teaching colleagues to plan and deliver exceptional learning experiences and professional colleagues to offer exceptional support. Students will be empowered by working in partnership with colleagues and fellow students to shape the Westminster experience. We will develop an integrated physical and digital environment that supports excellent practical, active and collaborative learning for all our students.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Research and knowledge exchange are fundamental to our commitment to making a positive difference to the world and transforming lives. We are committed to research in four priority areas: Diversity and Inclusion; Health Innovation and Wellbeing; Sustainable Cities and the Urban Environment; Arts, Communication and Culture. Our excellence in research and knowledge exchange will infuse our education endeavour, inspiring and equipping our students as agents of change locally as well as globally. We will continue to grow our community of PhD researchers, ensuring that the Westminster postgraduate research experience remains sector leading and the foundation for great careers. In knowledge exchange we will focus on engagement with government, business and with the public and local community. We will achieve more when we identify shared interests and build partnerships with our communities and collaborate for the public good with a clear civic purpose.

EMPLOYABILITY

We will ensure that all our students benefit from employability-led learning and purposeful engagement with employers, business and industry, to give students from every background the best possible preparation for the world of work and enable the best possible employability outcomes. We will do this through the further extension and embedding of programmes such as work-based and placement learning; the Westminster Employability Award; Westminster Working Cultures; mentoring; and student enterprise. Employability-related learning will be a core and critical part of the courses and curriculum we offer, right across the University. It will be front and centre of life at the University for students and colleagues.



A key priority will be the development of a dedicated Centre for Employability and Enterprise at 29 Marylebone Road, intended to transform our student experience and our engagement with business, industry and employers. The Centre will provide a game-changing experience through which undergraduate and postgraduate students from across Westminster will come together and practise enterprise; develop an entrepreneurial mindset and skills; access training, work, projects, business advice and mentoring; and connect directly with employers. The future-focused environment of the Centre will scale up our employability provision, helping our students to be 'fit for the future' in the most challenging of post-pandemic labour markets and economic environments. It will strengthen links between our UK-based and international employer partners and our motivated, bright, work-ready students, affording employers access to a diverse mix of people right for the needs of the contemporary workforce.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

We will raise the international reputation and reach of the University, ensuring that 30% of our undergraduate community and 70% of our taught postgraduates come to us from overseas. Overseas partnerships will remain central to our global engagements. We will prioritise the outward mobility of our students to partner institutions, contributing to students' development of employability skills and competences. We will extend and deepen our Trans-National Education relationships. These partnerships, particularly that with Westminster International University in Tashkent, will move beyond franchised or validated arrangements to embrace employability, alumni-related research, CPD and knowledge exchange connections.



OUR STRUCTURE

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

Our structure is built to deliver an enhanced learning environment, stronger and broader industrial, international and professional connections and pioneering and impactful research. The University comprises three Colleges:

Westminster Business School

- School of Organisations, Economy and Society
- School of Finance and Accounting
- School of Applied Management
- School of Management and Marketing

Design, Creative and Digital Industries

- School of Architecture and Cities
- Westminster School of Arts
- School of Computer Science and Engineering
- Westminster School of Media and Communications

Liberal Arts and Sciences

- School of Social Sciences
- Westminster Law School
- School of Humanities
- School of Life Sciences

The University Executive Board comprises:

- Vice Chancellor and President
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Employability and Global Engagement)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education and Students)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange)
- Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary
- Three Heads of College

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Our Professional Services teams support the effective and professional delivery of our teaching, research and knowledge exchange and the management of student residences and sports facilities.

- Academic Registry
- Business Engagement
- Estates
- Finance and Commercial Activities
- Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications
- Information Systems and Support
- People, Culture and Wellbeing
- Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Student and Academic Services



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Director of Student and Academic Services

Reports to: University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

Department: Student and Academic Services

Grade: L4

ROLE PURPOSE

To provide strategic vision, direction and leadership for the development and delivery of a coherent suite of services that directly enable excellence in education and research and are aligned with the University's strategic priorities. Be responsible for the successful delivery of relevant University KPIs and targets annually and that Student and Academic Services (SAS) and activities enable success in national metrics/frameworks e.g. NSS, TEF, REF, APP.

The role holder is pivotal in enriching the student experience, fostering academic excellence, and ensuring the seamless management of student support services. This includes leading on the innovative development of physical spaces within SAS to promote student success and cultivate a strong sense of belonging.

The role holder works closely with the University Executive Board and other senior colleagues, as well in partnership with the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU), to create a culture which delivers a consistently excellent user experience for all members of the University community and external partners.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Provide strategic leadership for the development and delivery of comprehensive University-wide student support and academic services, and the related policy framework, to underpin the University's Strategy, ensuring an integrated approach to service delivery to enhance students' access, success and progression throughout their relationship with the University. The role will be responsible for ensuring an effective delivery of student and academic facing services, responding to external factors and legislative changes to ensure a fit for purpose and future proof offering for students.
2. Identify, develop and lead specific initiatives and projects that encourage and enable colleagues across the University to engage effectively in improving the student experience and enabling a sense of belonging, evidencing the impact of all such activities to enable internal and external reporting on these, for example in relation to University KPI's, TEF, APP.
3. Promote and lead partnership working between Professional Services and academic teams, as well as with UWSU in order to champion a culture of proactive development and



continuous improvement of services. To prioritise and focus on those student groups who are at greater risk of lack of equality of opportunity, driving forward the University's commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that every student has the support and resources they need to succeed.

4. Lead the planning, resourcing and monitoring of an integrated student experience through provision of learning resources, skills development, student support and the innovative development of physical spaces; identify gaps in requirements and anticipate and respond to future planning needs, focusing all processes around student-centred approaches, ensuring services are designed against appropriate external benchmarks and standards, and are informed by the student voice.
5. As a leader at the University, enable active collaboration to advance the University's commitment to research with impact and the relationship with learning and teaching, and to creating a unified community where research and knowledge exchange are for everyone and form a critical part of the student experience including the Students as Researchers project.
6. Provide strategic oversight for risk management processes within SAS; including overseeing the development and implementation of risk management frameworks and providing leadership to ensure compliance with relevant external regulations and standards.
7. Provide strategic direction and leadership for SAS, including ensuring a shared sense of vision and belonging across a large complex department and demonstrating good practice line management, ensuring that all relevant people management policies are effectively implemented. Engage in personal development and be a role model to all members of the department, committed to, and accountable for, developing the skills and capabilities of all colleagues in SAS.
8. As a member of the Professional Services Management Team, act as a senior leader to drive change, deliver a high-quality value for money service and model our values, working collaboratively internally and across the sector to ensure that the University can deliver on its mission and strategic priorities.
9. Contribute to the profile and reputation of the University through representation and participation in relevant external networks, conferences and other professional activities; undertake horizon scanning across the services within the portfolio, providing relevant information and expert guidance to Chief Operating Officer, the University Executive Board and other related Committees and Groups.
10. Undertake such other duties within their competence as may be requested by the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer from time to time.

CONTEXT

This senior management post is responsible for Student and Academic Services (SAS). The post holder will lead the services within their remit to create a coherent experience for all users and which maximises the synergies between all teams in the Directorate and draws on the different professional disciplines.



The post holder will ensure that services are fully aligned across SAS teams, with other Professional Services activities and that they complement the academic offer to enable the University to deliver its strategic priorities and meet its statutory obligations.

Student and Academic Services (SAS)

SAS provides professional, efficient, effective and consistent support and services for the whole University community and external partners. It leads on professional support for a wide range of governance, research, learning, skills development and wellbeing interventions that enhance the experience of students, colleagues, alumni and external partners throughout their relationship with the University.

SAS activities are key to the success of the University's strategic objectives and enable the University to deliver on its mission:

To help students and colleagues from different backgrounds fulfil their potential and contribute to a more sustainable, equitable and healthier society.

To achieve this, SAS is organised into four clusters:

- Business Operations
- Library and Archives Service
- Student Centre
- Student Support and Residential Life

Business Operations

The team supports the Director and Senior Team in the delivery of SAS-wide activities, projects and physical spaces by overseeing the operational management of these services. The team plays a key role in the strategic planning and development of the Directorate ensuring alignment with the SAS operational plan, the University's strategic objectives and the University values. The team also provides expert guidance and recommendations to enable the effective management and planning of strategic financial budgets and support senior leaders in SAS with resource management and planning. The team are also responsible for the University's Student Ambassadors programme which engenders a sense of belonging for current students through a strong training programme and activities which enable support for Open Days, events and other initiatives.

Library and Archives Service

The team provides services across three libraries, two archival locations and has a strong online presence. It is made up of four teams: Content and Digital Services purchases and sources print and electronic resources and manages access and authentication to all library e-resources. They also maintain the catalogue and operate an inter-library loan service; the Library Operations team develops and maintains safe, effective and inclusive library spaces across three sites, manages the print collection and leads the social media communications and marketing/promotional campaigns for the service; Library Research and Education Services offers expertise in open research, publishing, bibliometrics, copyright, information and academic skills. They provide skills training for students at all levels, researchers, and teaching colleagues. They focus on maximizing the use of library resources to aid writing, learning, and teaching. They also lead institutional strategies for open research, open access, and research data management. The team manages the University of Westminster Press and Westminster Research; University Records and Archives provides a professional archives and records management service to the



University. They deliver talks and teaching sessions to colleagues, students, and external stakeholders. The team is responsible for the University Archive and the Westminster Menswear Archive.

Student Centre

The team provides a 'one-stop shop' service to manage all initial enquiries from current students, prospective students or alumni. Wherever possible these are resolved at first contact (typically 60%). When needed the team refers queries to one of the 39 service partners who provide specialist services across the University. The Student Centre operates an EMS (based on Salesforce) for enquiries sent digitally, a live-chat service that runs 7 days a week and an in-person service across our three campuses located in the respective libraries. The Student Centre makes a significant contribution to student success. The team manages over 200,000 unique engagements every year and through its broad knowledge, multiple service points and outreach to other Professional Services teams, is key to the student experience.

Student Support and Residential Life

The team is dedicated to creating a cohesive and supportive wellbeing experience for students. By integrating various professional disciplines and maximising synergies between teams, this cluster ensures a holistic approach to student wellbeing. Aligned with SAS teams and other Professional Services, the team works collaboratively to enhance the overall student experience. It provides strategic oversight of wellbeing initiatives, student support services, and residential life programs, ensuring they are inclusive, student-centred, and responsive to evolving needs. Through strong partnerships with academic and Professional Service colleagues, as well as external stakeholders, SSRL fosters a vibrant and supportive University environment. Its focus on data-driven decision-making, continuous improvement, and proactive student engagement ensures that services are effective, innovative, and aligned with institutional goals.

Uniting these services in a single Directorate enables a powerful synergy between support for learning, teaching and research & knowledge exchange, and co-locates these with the professionals who lead on student wellbeing. In turn, this informs the whole-University approach to the wellbeing of all colleagues.

SAS teams contribute to increasing success in the NSS/PTES/PRES, TEF, REF, KEF and Graduate Outcomes and therefore positively impact league tables. Services delivered by SAS student-facing teams are critical to achieving the priorities of the University's Access and Participation Plan.

SAS is a large and diverse Directorate comprising circa 180 colleagues who, between them, work in every University building and have a strong online presence to support and collaborate with students and colleagues who prefer/need to work virtually. SAS teams are very flexible, and roles evolve with changing needs. There is a strong commitment to developing the skills and capabilities of colleagues through a proactive programme of staff development. The post holder will be expected to engage in personal development and to be a role model to all members of the team.



The post holder will be expected to embed and role model the University's values: *Progressive, Compassionate, Responsible* and our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion commitments in all that they do.

The post is based in the West End but the post holder may be expected to work at any of the University sites as required. The University has adopted Smart Working principles to support and further our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aims of being an inclusive, collaborative, and flexible employer.

The University requires all post holders to have an understanding of individual health and safety responsibilities and an awareness of the risks in the work environment, together with their potential impact on both individual work and that of others.

The Student Hub Programme

The Student Hub Programme, led by the Director of Student and Academic Services on behalf of the University, is a multi-year endeavour to transform the student experience. The programme consists of three strands.

The Student Centre

SAS is responsible for the Student Centre, launched in September 2022 as the University's 'one-stop shop' for all student queries. Each of our three libraries is home to a Student Centre service point. Colleagues staffing these and the very popular live chat service are co-located with library teams across the sites. The monitoring and management of physical library space is shared between the Library and Archives Service and the Student Centre.

The Digital Student Hub

The first phase of this strand has delivered an enquiry management system, Compass (via the Salesforce platform), which enables the work of the Student Centre teams, the triaging of queries to specialist teams across Professional Services and the functionality to enable students to track their enquiries. Compass went live in February 2024 and work is ongoing to increase the services that are in scope in order to deliver on the 'one-stop shop' model to reduce student 'bounce' and to build on the use of management data from the system to plan services.

The Student Hub Building

The University has submitted a planning application to build a Student Hub at its site in New Cavendish Street, with an outcome expected in the first quarter of 2025. The Student Hub will co-locate a range of different study environments with access to student-facing services that are provided by all Professional Services teams. UWSU will share the building, which will be a home for clubs and societies and other activities that contribute to students' sense of belonging. The library for the Fitzrovia Campus will be relocated to the Student Hub and will be designed to provide state of the art facilities.

The post holder will play a significant role in the successful planning, design, and delivery of the whole building, should the planning application and funding be approved.

DIMENSIONS

- Line management responsibility for 4 direct reports and indirect responsibility for the leadership of circa 180 colleagues working in various locations.
- Staffing budget of approximately £7.6M



- Non-pay budget of approximately £8.6M (reviewed annually)
- Income of £9.1M
- Responsibility for the deployment of project budget(s) and/or associated financial records
- Deputising for the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer
- Member of all relevant University Committees including: Academic Council, EDI Committee, Research and Education Steering Group, Student Voice Forum, Teaching Committee
- Chair/member of working groups related to remit
- The University operates seven days a week and some student services are open in the evenings and at weekends. This might on occasion require the working of unsocial hours.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Vice Chancellor
- DVC Education
- DVC Global Engagement and Employability
- DVC Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Heads of Colleges and Schools
- Associate Heads of Colleges (Education and Students; External Relations; RKE)
- Head of the Graduate School
- Professional Services Directors and their senior teams
- Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange Office
- Head of Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation
- College or School specific appointments with a cross-College or School role linked to learning, teaching, RKE and/or the student experience
- Officers and colleagues of UWSU and other representative student groups
- Partner Colleges - UK and overseas
- Peer role holders from other universities
- Relevant external bodies, e.g. Advance HE, AHEP, Joint Information Systems Committee



PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- A relevant first degree or equivalent practical experience that demonstrates relevant levels of knowledge and skills in one of the core professional practice areas
- A professional qualification and/or successful completion of a professional development programme in one of the core professional practice areas or with equivalent significant experience at a senior level working
- A management qualification or equivalent practical experience that demonstrates relevant levels of knowledge and skills.

Desirable

- Postgraduate degree in a relevant subject
- Membership of a relevant professional body

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Significant knowledge of UK University structures, UK Government policies, external agency and legislative requirements and the operating environment, and proven experience in successfully applying these in practice
- In-depth understanding of support requirements for students and academic colleagues and proven experience of ensuring a high level and responsive service to support student and academic needs
- Knowledge and applied experience of the legislative and regulatory requirements in at least one of the core professional service areas
- Significant experience of successfully leading and implementing strategies and policy development
- Significant experience of devising and operationalising high level strategies and plans and of developing customer-focused operations and service standards
- Demonstrable evidence of designing a needs-based portfolio of professional support activities in one of the core professional practice areas
- Significant experience of leading and integrating a multi-disciplinary service in a large and complex institution
- Evidence of working with external accreditation processes
- Experience of, as well as a commitment to, the use of IT to improve service and efficiency
- Demonstrable evidence of leading successful change programmes in a large organisation
- Demonstrable evidence of budget planning and management
- Demonstrable evidence of working effectively in a senior team to deliver a common agenda
- Demonstrable evidence of managing political agendas in a complex organisational environment at senior level to influence decision making and bring about cultural change
- Significant experience of leading, managing, motivating and developing professional colleagues and teams with varying



responsibilities to achieve organisational aims within a given framework of resource

Desirable

- Experience of working in the Higher Education sector, preferably in a senior role in service provision with responsibility for a student facing department

APTITUDES, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Essential

- Takes responsibility for understanding the University vision and for working towards these
- Thinks strategically and can initiate organise and implement strategic plans
- Acts as a role model for positive change by embracing it and leading people through it and creating a climate where change can be effectively implemented
- Maintains a long-term perspective when tackling short term issues and problems and ensures that resources are directed towards strategic priorities
- Coaches and supports teams and individuals so that they maximise their potential
- Guides the team to a clearly defined vision of the future and creates momentum and excitement about what needs to be done
- Shares and exemplifies the University's values
- Commitment to continuous personal and professional development for themselves and their team
- Personal credibility and confidence to work with colleagues and managers at all levels
- Open and transparent ways of working
- Comfortable with ambiguity and rapidly changing agendas
- Persuasive and empathetic
- Fully committed to creating a stimulating learning and working environment which is supportive and fair, based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable
- Willingness to work long hours on occasion
Exceptionally, the post may entail occasional overnight stays, weekend working, and international travel, as required.



HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this vacancy, please visit our [vacancies page](#) where you will be able to download our application form template. You will then be requested to complete a quick registration before being able to upload completed application form and any supporting documentation.

Applications should include:

- A concise statement in support (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification and motivation for applying.
- You may also include an up to date curriculum vitae;
- names and contact details of two referees (although referees will only be approached at offer stage).

The deadline for receipt of applications is midnight on 18 May 2025.

Interviews will take place w/c 2 June 2025.

An appointment will be made subject to proof of eligibility to work in the UK and satisfactory references being obtained.

At the University of Westminster, diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity are at the core of how we engage with students, colleagues, applicants, visitors and all our stakeholders.

We are fully committed to enabling a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

The University has adopted Smart Working principles to support and further our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aims of being an inclusive, collaborative and flexible employer. Further details of Smart Working can be discussed at interview stage.



OUR BENEFITS

The University offers a range of wellbeing and work-life balance benefits to recognise and reward the essential contribution our colleagues make to success and growth. Our benefits are inclusive for colleagues of all backgrounds including LGBTQ+ colleagues, disabled colleagues, pregnant colleagues, parents and carers, as well as colleagues of all genders, age, ethnicities, nationalities, religion and beliefs, and marriage and civil partnership status.

- 35 days annual leave per year, plus bank/national holidays and University of Westminster closure days (pro-rata for part-time staff).
- A generous occupational pension scheme.
- Annual incremental progression and/or cost of living reviews.
- Generous maternity, paternity and adoption leave.
- Flexible working and smart working.
- Learning and development opportunities.
- Free membership rates for a wide range of sporting facilities, including gyms at Regent Street and Harrow campuses, as well as the Chiswick Sports Ground.
- Employee assistance programme.
- The opportunity to participate in other attractive employee benefit schemes such as Cycle to Work, Eye Care Vouchers, Season Ticket Loans, and Give As You Earn.





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