

CANDIDATE PACK

Executive Assistant to the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO)

Vice Chancellor's Office

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: Executive Assistant (EA) to the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO)
Reports to: Vice-Chancellor's Executive Manager
Department: Vice-Chancellor's Office
Grade: NG4

ROLE PURPOSE

This post provides high level administrative support to the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO), with specific responsibility for diary co-ordination, managing internal relationships with external stakeholders and internal colleagues; travel arrangements and programmes and associated administration. The post holder will also assist the VC's Executive Manager as required with the general running of the office and supporting the senior team in the Vice-Chancellor's (VC's) Office.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Provide confidential administrative support to the USCOO and, as required, to the senior team in Finance and in the VC's office.
2. Manage internal relationships with external stakeholders and internal colleagues.
3. Manage incoming communications from internal and external parties, including emails, calls and meeting requests, ensuring that all calls and access to the USCOO are managed discreetly and in an effective and controlled way and to ensure that all incoming and outgoing correspondence is dealt with efficiently and accurately.
4. Proactive diary management to ensure the USCOO's meeting agendas and papers are provided and reviewed in advance, alerting the USCOO of actions in a timely manner.
5. Ensuring the USCOO direct reports provide meeting papers in a timely manner and have responded to all agenda items.
6. Providing administrative support such as data management, letter writing, presentations, and email communications to colleagues. Ensure adequate filing and bring forward systems to allow quick retrieval of information.
7. Plan, organise and manage meetings, visits and events, ensuring these are planned effectively, and that room bookings, catering, travel and hospitality are organised as necessary.



8. Undertake research and ad hoc projects as and when needed by the USCOO.
9. Carry out accurate and timely submission of USCOO expense claims; raise purchase orders and process invoices via the Agresso system and monitor budgets as required.
10. Ensure diplomacy and absolute discretion and confidentiality at all times. Act with tact and discretion to support confidentiality when dealing with personal matters, in particular.
11. Assist the VC's Executive Manager as required in ensuring that the VC's office operates efficiently and deputise for other members of the VC's Office support team as required during periods of absence.
12. Undertake any other duties as appropriate within their competence as required from time to time.

CONTEXT

The post holder will be expected to liaise and communicate with colleagues at all levels. The requirements of the job will require the post holder to be collegial, confident and politically aware and sensitive. The post holder will be part of the team working within the VC's office to ensure that the office operates in an effective and efficient manner. Diplomacy and the need for absolute discretion and confidentiality are paramount requisites.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- Educated to A level or equivalent, including Maths and English at grade C or above
- Keyboard skills to a minimum of RSA level 2 or equivalent.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Proven experience in an administrative role within a team in a busy office, preferably in a large and complex organisation
- Proven experience of electronic diary management and managing a demanding and complex workload
- Significant experience of working with senior management
- Experience of taking responsibility for specific projects/areas of work
- High level of competency in a range of desktop IT packages. Those currently in regular use are Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint and MS Project
- Excellent written and spoken English
- Experience of using the Internet for research.

Desirable

- Experience of recording proceedings at meetings
- Knowledge of other languages and cultures.



APTITUDES, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Essential

- Strong oral and written communication skills, including note-taking, and a high standard of numeracy
- A high degree of accuracy and attention to detail
- Ability to establish good working relationships
- The post holder should have the ability to solve a range of problems by proactively responding to varying circumstances whilst working within standard procedures
- Ability to use tact and discretion when working with sensitive and personal issues
- A flexible attitude to changing workloads
- Strong commitment to providing excellent customer care to a range of stakeholders.
- A calm, assured and well-organised approach to work, with a flexible and positive attitude
- A high level of discretion in dealing with confidential information
- Ability to work well under pressure and on own initiative
- Good communication, diplomacy and inter-personal skills
- Ability to prioritise conflicting demands on time
- Good team-working skills with the ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively with colleagues.

It may be necessary to work outside normal working hours at certain times of the year.



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 16 August 2024.

Interviews will take place during w/c 27 August 2024.

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.





[westminster.ac.uk](https://www.westminster.ac.uk)

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