

**Chief Operating Officer
Job Description**

Salary:

Responsible to: Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for: Head of Marketing & Communications, Finance Manager, HR Specialist, Facilities Manager

This job description is a guide to the work you will initially be required to undertake. It may be changed from time to time to meet changing circumstances. It does not form part of your Contract of Employment.

1. Purpose of Post:

You will be a values-driven, collaborative leader who builds high-performing, inclusive teams and robust systems.

Leading the Organisational Business planning and Budget cycle and ensuring the delivery of robust operational systems and processes that ensure financial sustainability, effective safeguarding and people management, and safe, compliant facilities and operations.

Leading the Finance, Marketing and Insight, HR and operations, you will embed KPI/OKR performance management; lead on risk, safeguarding and business continuity; and ensure compliant, efficient delivery across the organisation.

Working with the CEO, Commercial Director and key stakeholders you will assist in designing, implementing and evaluating scalable operating models that maximise net income with the student experience at the heart of decisions.

You will oversee teams that lead procurement and supplier management, facilities projects, and external assurance relationships, (auditors/insurers/University), benchmarking against sector best practice to continuously improve student experience and organisational resilience.

You will ensure compliance with charity law, employment legislation, and financial regulations, while driving operational excellence and supporting the CEO and Board of Trustees in delivering the charity's mission.

You will oversee the communication of Impact and move our satisfaction and engagement levels higher, tracking and benchmarking these against industry standards.

This newly created role is critical to maintaining organisational resilience and enabling strategic growth.

2. Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Oversee Finance, HR, Facilities and Marketing and Communications functions.
- Implement and oversee annual cycle of business

- Implement planning cycles for activity, budgeting and reporting.
- Embed KPI/OKR frameworks across all of the organisation's functions.
- Lead positive change management.
- Provide operational insight and advice to support decision-making and long-term sustainability.
- Lead on organisational risk management including risk register tracking and mitigations.
- Lead on business continuity planning, including crisis response.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with external partners, auditors, insurers, and regulators.
- Maintain external assurance relationships and sector networks (NUS/SUs) for benchmarking and best practice.

People Leadership & Development

- Line-manage and support the Head of Marketing & Communications, Finance Manager, HR Specialist and Facilities Manager, providing coaching, guidance, and performance oversight.
- Promote professional development, wellbeing, and a positive working culture across all areas.

Finance

- Working with the CEO, lead on strategic financial management, and contracts register
- Oversee procurement of Auditors, insurances, and suppliers.
- Oversee budgeting, forecasting, and reporting through the implementation of financial dashboards to the CEO, Trustees and Stakeholders.
- Ensure compliance with the Charities Act 2011, Companies Act 2006, and Charity Commission guidance.
- Maintain adherence to SORP accounting standards and VAT/tax regulations including production of an Impact report.
- Set up Gift Aid with HMRC.
- Work with CEO and Commercial Director to manage cash flow and reserves policy to ensure financial resilience.

Human Resources and EDI

- Oversee organisational Lead for Safeguarding, health & safety, and wellbeing.
- Foster a positive organisational culture aligned with charity values.
- Work with the HR team to ensure compliance and best practice in recruitment, onboarding, performance management, and workforce planning.
- Champion organisational culture, equality, diversity and inclusion, and staff wellbeing.
- Oversee Policy log and procedures in line with legal requirements and best practice.

Facilities & Estates

- Oversee facilities management, health & safety compliance, and sustainability initiatives.

- Oversee capital projects and estate strategy, ensuring safe, inclusive, and sustainable spaces.
- Oversee contracts, suppliers, and procurement processes for cost efficiency and compliance.
- Lead on implementation and monitoring compliance for data protection (GDPR) and information security across all operations.
- Lead sustainability initiatives and ESG reporting.

Governance & Compliance

- Support the CEO and Trustees in fulfilling governance responsibilities, including company secretariat duties.
- Ensure compliance with Charity Commission, Companies House, Education Act 1994, and relevant regulatory bodies.

Marketing, Comm, Digital, & Data

- Oversee the organisations digital and data analytics strategy, including core systems (Finance, HR, CRM) and cybersecurity.
- Working closely with the Head of Marketing, ensure external communications, PR and Media encourages wider participation, aligning with our core values and positively promotes the SU
- Oversee the implementation of an internal comms strategy which supports cohesive working across the organisation
- Ensure that our approach to Research and Student Voice supports the core mission of the organisation and meets best practice and legislative requirements
- Production of an Annual Impact report
- Production of Annual Audit in line with SORP

Procurement & Contract Management

- Lead procurement policy and contract lifecycle management, embedding ESG and Modern Slavery compliance.
- Oversee Auditor procurement and Annual Audit.
- Negotiate and manage supplier SLAs and ensure value-for-money outcomes.

Democracy & Student Voice

- Ensure elected Officers are supported to ensure they can fulfil their democratic priorities.
- Maintain adherence to SU Code of Practice and Education Act requirements.

Knowledge & Compliance Requirements

- Charity law and trustee duties.
- Employment law and HR best practice.
- Financial regulations, VAT, and tax rules for charities.
- Health & safety legislation and facilities management standards.
- GDPR and data protection requirements.
- Environmental sustainability and ESG principles.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PERSON SPECIFICATION

Requirements		(E) (D)
1	Qualifications/Training	
1.1	Good general level of education, usually to degree level, or relevant equivalent experience	E
1.2	Professional qualification in Strategy, HR, Finance, Facilities, or Digital/Data Management	E
2	Experience	
2.1	Proven senior leadership experience in a charity, membership or regulated environment	E
2.2	Strong financial acumen and ability to manage complex budgets and financial analysis.	E
2.3	In-depth knowledge of HR, employment law and compliance frameworks	D
2.4	Excellent stakeholder engagement and communication skills with strong influencing skills	E
2.5	Track record in digital transformation and data governance	D
2.6	Experience in business continuity and safeguarding leadership	D
2.7	Programme management leadership from brief to delivery	D
2.8	Experience of working with Boards or Trustees	D
3	Knowledge	
3.1	Charity law, trustee duties, and governance frameworks	E
3.2	Health & safety, GDPR, and ESG principles	E
3.3	Financial regulations, VAT/tax rules, and SORP standards	E
3.4	Education Act 1994 and SU democratic compliance	D
3.5	Knowledge of charity governance and risk management	D
4	Skills & Attributes	
4.1	Strategic thinker with ability to embed performance frameworks and deliver results	E
4.2	Exceptional communicator with the ability to convey complex technical matters in a way that are universally accessible	E
4.3	Resilient and adaptable	E
4.4	Highly organised, detail-orientated, and a completer-finisher	E
4.5	Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion	E

Criteria: E = essential, D = desirable