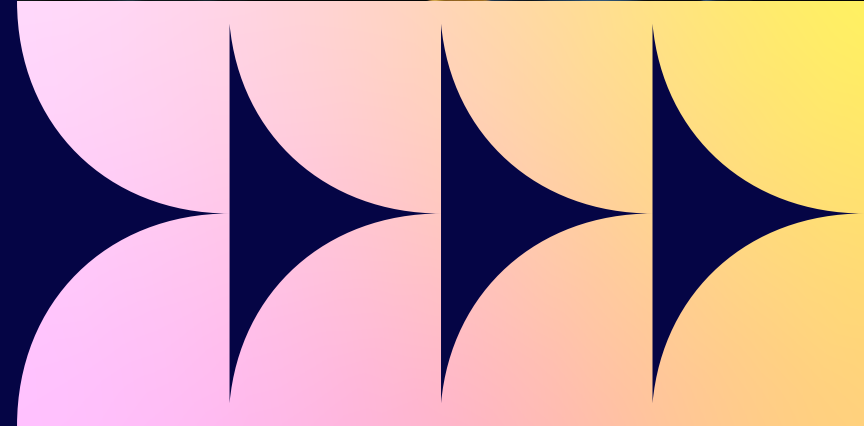


Candidate brief for the position of **Vice-Chancellor**

August 2024





Foreword from **Malcolm Sweeting**

Dear Candidate

Thank you for considering the role of Vice-Chancellor of The Open University.

At a pivotal moment in The Open University's history, we are seeking a new Vice-Chancellor to succeed Professor Tim Blackman when he steps down from office in May 2025.

In our 55th year, we undertake this task at a point of unprecedented global change and positive disruption initiated by digital and technological developments with the power to transform all our futures.

Our vision is providing lifechanging learning that enriches society – through embracing innovation in thought and application, we aim to be the exemplar provider of distance-learning anywhere in the world.

We are one University serving four nations. We are distinct. Our brand is unparalleled. Together we live and breathe our values of inclusivity, innovation and responsiveness. We have the talent and capability within our organisation to rethink the delivery of learning and research that both progresses our mission and meets the evolving context of our complex, modern society.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for our next Vice-Chancellor to help us co-create an inspiring vision for the future, as a world class institution, driving forward our mission to be open to all through an exciting and diverse portfolio, at the leading edge of learning and educational technologies which engages students and delivers success. Putting students at the heart of everything we do, we are focused on bringing education to all, whoever they are, wherever they are; enabling everyone to reach their true potential, for the betterment of society.

We seek an outstanding leader with an understanding of the impact of new technologies in shaping our world and their impact in the delivery of learning, teaching, skills, and research. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a creative, modern, values-based leader, who will lead with empathy to inspire colleagues to realise our ambitions and deliver our strategy. We have the opportunity to shape the future of education – if this is a challenge that excites you, we would like to hear from you.

Malcolm Sweeting
Pro-Chancellor of The Open University

The Open University

The Open University was founded in 1969 with the mission to: “promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high quality education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential – open to people, places, method and ideas”. We are the only institution worldwide with such a single vision and purpose. We are distinctive and unique. Our mission is still as relevant today as it was then, perhaps even more so.

Defined by our social purpose, we have one of the most recognised and respected brands of any organisation in either the public or private sector. Our bespoke distance-learning delivery and inspired teaching, together with our ability to reach and support students wherever they may be, whatever their circumstances, are what make us unique amongst higher education providers.

We seek a new Vice-Chancellor at a pivotal point of change for society and for our organisation. We have a unique opportunity to reshape how we deliver our mission and change lives. Nothing could be more important, relevant, impactful or stimulating.

Whilst we remain true to our mission, we operate in extraordinary times: destructive geo-political forces in a post-pandemic world, a cost-of-living crisis, the challenges of financial sustainability; changing working patterns, increased unpredictability, and uncertainty in every aspect of people’s working lives, often with the unwelcome influence of increasing inequity. We also face the challenge of environmental sustainability, changing student demographics, and perhaps most challenging but potentially the most exciting of all, the impact of technological development and Artificial Intelligence (AI) on society.



Find out more about the OU

Visit

<https://perrettlaver.com/campaigns/appointment-of-vice-chancellor/>

Continued on next page





These elements create an exceptionally complex set of circumstances through which any successful organisation must navigate their future. The scale of the challenges is not underestimated, but nor is the exceptional and exciting opportunity ahead of us.

The Open University is truly unique amongst higher education providers: ours is a large, dispersed, and complex organisation with approximately 200,000 students, almost 10,000 staff and over two million alumni, operating across the whole of the UK and the Republic of Ireland, responsible to the devolved administrations in Belfast, Cardiff, and Edinburgh as well as to the UK government in London. As the best-known distance education provider, we must retain our reputation for being at the forefront of innovation in education delivery. To do this we must understand how the future impact of technology will alter the way society functions, how we live and work and define the role that education can play in preparing current and future generations for their own success.

The Open University is the largest academic institution in the UK by student numbers. Our size and scale, and the focus of our mission mean that we have the power and the talent to collaborate with external partners to influence policy and help shape the future of education.

All who work at The Open University are immensely proud of our distinctiveness. Motivated by and committed to our mission and purpose, we form a powerful and distinctive collective force for good.

Our next Vice-Chancellor will have the privilege of guiding and leading our extraordinary and talented community to ensure we are responsive to the demands of society. They will help us reach the widest possible audience through innovative delivery of distance learning, positioning us to influence and work with others to effect change and working with The Open University community to enhance our mission whilst ensuring our continued financial sustainability.

Our next leader will protect and nurture our mission and embrace our values of being inclusive, innovative and responsive. Respecting and recognising our heritage, they will have the empathy and judgement to help us navigate the future by encouraging and supporting innovation and creativity from within, enabling us to identify and seize the opportunities ahead with confidence.

We have already made a difference to lives for more than fifty years – together, we will ensure we are making a difference for the next fifty years.

50+ years of life-changing learning

We believe that where you start shouldn't limit where you go. That's why most OU courses don't come with formal entry requirements.



In 2023, the OU was awarded overall **Gold** in the Teaching Excellence Framework

2.3 million+ learners have chosen the OU since 1969 and counting...

200,000

current students

37,000

students declare a disability

70%

of students work full or part time

Open, ambitious and inclusive

We proudly play a unique role in society, making higher education open to all and promoting social justice and social mobility.

- We teach students from 160 UK prisons and 30 secure environments
- We partner with 950 employers to teach 2,800+ apprentices
- 28% of OU UK undergraduates live in the 25% most deprived areas
- We train the next generation of nurses and police officers
- 73% of FTSE 100 companies sponsoring staff with the OU

The Open University in numbers



Our legacy

- ▶ We have taught over 2.3 million learners since 1969



Revenue

- ▶ £561.9m total income
- ▶ £397.2m from tuition fees and education contracts
- ▶ £123.4m from funding body grants
- ▶ £15.9m from research grants and contracts



Greater reach

- ▶ 82% of our research submitted to REF2021 was world-leading or internationally excellent
- ▶ 111m visitors to our OpenLearn platform since 2006
- ▶ 1,500+ Armed Forces members and their dependents study with us



Our students

- ▶ 37,000+ of our students declare disabilities
- ▶ More than a third of our students have fewer than two A Levels
- ▶ Median age of our new UG-level students is 29
- ▶ 70% of our directly-registered students are already in work
- ▶ More than 40,000 students on validated programmes UK and internationally



Societal impact

- ▶ Partner with 950 employers to teach 2,800+ apprentices
- ▶ Teach in over 160 UK prisons and 30 secure environments
- ▶ Partner with 23 police forces
- ▶ Over 40 UK partners whose qualifications we validate



Our community

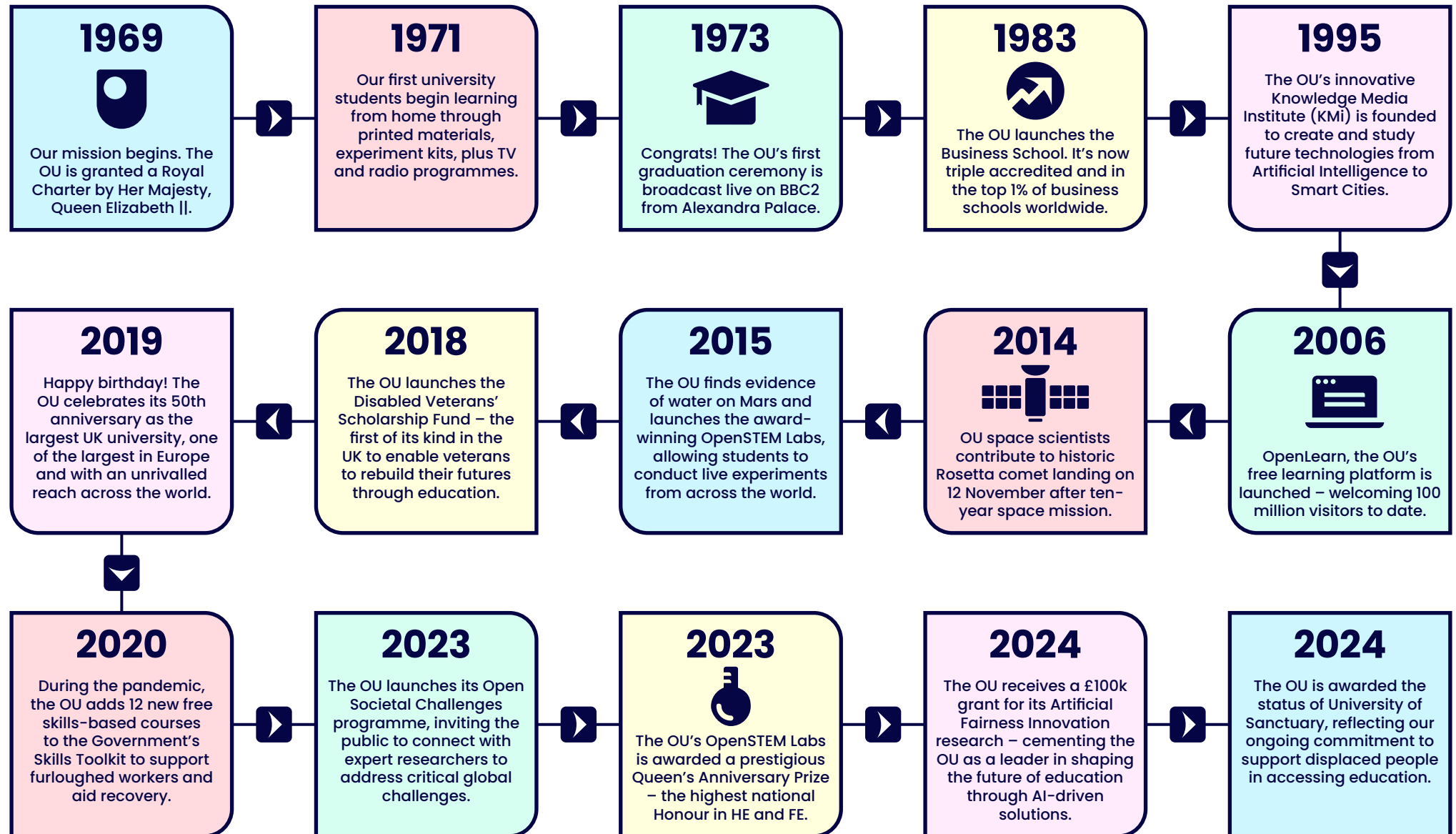
- ▶ We are a Four Nations university
- ▶ 200,000 students
- ▶ Around 10,000 staff



Our scale

- ▶ 450+ undergraduate and almost 140 postgraduate modules offered
- ▶ We receive 350,000+ calls and 250,000+ emails a year
- ▶ 37,000 students use our Virtual Learning Environment on an average day
- ▶ Our students handed in nearly 1.3m pieces of assessed work, and over 160,000 end-of-module assignments
- ▶ Over 2 million alumni

A history of firsts



Our OU family

Every day, OU students prove that the impossible is possible. They are dream-chasers and jugglers, balancing studies with busy jobs, families and social lives. We're proud to support students of all ages and backgrounds, from career changers to school leavers, carers and everyone in-between.

Here are just some of the OU students and graduates who endlessly inspire us to do what we do...



I am so proud to be an OU graduate. If I hadn't studied with the OU, I'd never have set up this purpose-driven business which has become my career. The OU changed me. My determination to

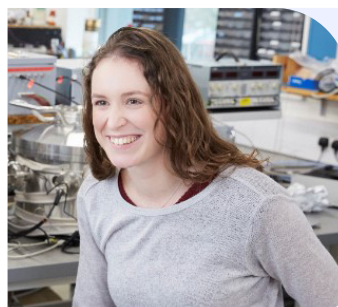
do well came from my OU studies as I learnt that you have to put the work in to get the results. I now make a difference to the world every day and I am so excited to think I might encourage others to do the same.

Ruby, OU graduate & founder of WUKA,
the UK's first reusable period pants



The OU opened up a new direction for me. It's been life-saving and life-changing. I dread to think what might have happened and what might have become of me had I not been given my chance. Looking to the future, I would really like to use my qualification to see how I can help veterans facing similar circumstances to my own.

Steven, OU graduate & Disabled Veterans' Scholarship recipient



I chose the OU for my PhD programme as it matched my interests in both science and engineering in my chosen field of Space Resources. The OU also appealed to me because their projects involved active hands-on experience and not just theory-based

work. I enjoyed the collaborative, interdisciplinary approach – working alongside geologists, physicists, chemists, engineers and more. But what really stood out for me was the inclusive environment at the OU, which accommodated diverse backgrounds and non-traditional standard routes. Achieving my PhD through the OU has had a real positive effect on my career, and I am proud of my association with the University.

Dr Hannah Sargeant, PhD graduate in Planetary Science



Explore more student stories at:
<https://ounews.co/category/student-stories/>

One university, four nations

We're a uniquely four-nation university, delivering world-class, flexible education and transforming lives across the four nations of the UK, Ireland and worldwide. We're proud to have an unrivalled scale and influence on shaping today's society.

OU in England



We're the largest provider of undergraduate part-time education in England, with over 99,000 students from every part of the country. Across England and the nations, we work with employers across the public and private sectors to address important skills gaps and have the unique scale and expertise to make a major contribution to widening participation and access to education. Our cost-effective model of flexible and lifelong learning enables the UK Government to meet economic and social challenges, equipping students with essential skills for the future.

Fact file:

- 47% of part-time UK undergraduates are taught by the OU.
- We offer 200+ qualifications, from short courses to degrees and postgraduate qualifications.
- We're highly rated for student satisfaction – beating the sector average across teaching and academic support.

OU in Scotland



We provide innovative and flexible education for more part-time undergraduates in Scotland than anyone else. We're funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and are accountable to them through the Outcomes Framework. We have formal partnerships with 16 regional colleges and collaborate with local authorities, the NHS, social care, the third sector and employers across Scotland.

Fact file:

- We're one of the largest universities in Scotland, with over 19,500 students from the Shetland Isles to Galloway.
- We ranked first in Scotland for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2024.
- 22% of our undergraduates in Scotland live in remote or rural areas.
- Our Young Applicants in Schools Scheme operates in all 32 local authority areas to help final year pupils access a broader curriculum and transition to university level study.

One university, four nations

OU in Wales



We welcome more part-time undergraduates than any other provider in Wales, with over 16,000 students and 300 tutors. We continue to build on successive years of student growth following the introduction of part-time maintenance grants by the Welsh Government in 2018.

Fact file:

- We have seen a 115% increase in student numbers since 2017/18.
- There are OU students in every Senedd constituency.
- We partner with businesses, charities, public bodies and other education providers across Wales to help widen access to education in line with funding council and Welsh Government aims.
- Over 150 companies in Wales sponsor employees to study with us. Since 2020, we've trained the next generation of teachers on our innovative, bilingual PGCE course.
- 48% of our students come from Wales' most disadvantaged areas.

OU in Ireland

We're the only university in Northern Ireland (NI) dedicated to distance learning. With over 7,000 current students, 59% of all part-time students in NI choose to study with us. We work with the Department for the Economy to help address low employment rates, low productivity, low wages, and regional imbalances through accessible higher education. We also work with all six Health Trusts in NI and provide a pre-registration nursing programme and NI-specific Social Work Degree.

In Ireland, we've established strong partnerships with employers and continue to influence support for Lifelong Learning. We are well placed to grow our student numbers and to contribute to the OU's international work with Dublin as a base within the European Union.

Fact file:

- We have students in each of the 32 counties across the island of Ireland.
- Our validation partnership with all six regional colleges in NI currently supports the delivery of 51 courses ranging from higher level certificates to foundation and honours degrees.
- In 2024 we marked our 20th consecutive year as the top institution for overall student satisfaction in Northern Ireland through the National Student Survey.
- We provide higher education to over 170 students in prison, working with every prison across the island of Ireland.

Bringing learning to millions

Since we first beamed those late-night BBC lectures into people's homes in the 70s, the OU has continued to use the latest technology and expertise to bring learning to the masses.

Our unique partnership with the BBC has inspired and educated millions of learners for 50+ years. Our expert academics power some of the most beloved BBC productions on screens today, from Blue Planet 2 to Secrets of the Museum. On top of hundreds of hours of programming, we co-create content across radio, social media and digital channels.

Sharing knowledge freely

The OU has always had a radical and pioneering approach to access. In 2006, we launched OpenLearn – offering free courses and educational resources. Anyone in the world can now dip their toe into bite-sized learning for free, 24/7, discovering topics from languages to sport aimed at all levels, from new learners to existing students and educators.

Since then we've partnered with industry and the UK Department for Education to develop courses and have had over 111 millions visits to the site.



Inspiring anyone, anywhere to learn

- ▶ OU-BBC TV and radio was viewed and watched 285 million times in 2022/23
- ▶ We co-produce 35 prime-time TV and radio series every year
- ▶ OpenLearn offers 1,000+ free courses, videos, resources and more
- ▶ OpenLearn has reached 111 million visitors (& counting)



Learn more about our partnership with the BBC

Visit

<https://connect.open.ac.uk/>

World-leading research

The Open University is renowned for world-class research and innovation, which not only underpins our curriculum, but drives tangible change for communities around the globe.

We take a challenge-led approach to our research, utilising our expertise and partnerships to tackle the biggest questions facing our society today, so we can future-proof tomorrow.

Our Open Societal Challenges are focused on three core themes:

Sustainability



We believe combatting the climate crisis also means protecting people's rights and improving living conditions now and for future generations worldwide.

Tackling inequalities



Our passions drive our research, from tackling religious intolerance and online violence against women and girls to the inequalities LGBTQ+ people face, racial and ethnic educational disadvantages and unequal access and opportunities for disabled people.

Living well



Our research addresses complex challenges from preventing and curing diseases like prostate cancer and diabetes, to empowering people to live well into later life and saving children from a dangerous life on the streets.

Revealing the secrets of the Universe

The OU is world renowned for planetary exploration and lunar science and astronomy, proudly partnering with NASA, the UK Space Agency and international organisations on missions to the Moon, Mars and beyond.



Learn more about our world-class research

Visit

<https://research.open.ac.uk/>

Our strategy: **Learn & Live**

Since the start, the OU was always more than just a university. We are a movement, a testament to the power of education to transform lives and communities. Our mission of openness has remained constant, the guiding star that has united us all for 55 years, whilst our strategy continues to evolve to help us stay ahead. We will continue to grow, to embrace new technology, and grasp new opportunities that will steer us into the future as a world-class university.

Here are the five goals that will guide us:

1. **Greater reach:** offering unrivalled choice, quality and flexibility to more people from all parts of society.
2. **Success for our students:** we'll support them to achieve their goals, whoever and wherever they are, with outcomes that are equitable and open up new opportunities in life and work.
3. **Societal impact:** our world-class research, enterprise and skills development will shape the future and address the world's most pressing challenges.
4. **Equity:** we're embedding equity, greater diversity at all levels, and inclusion in every aspect of how we work and what we achieve.
5. **Environmental and social sustainability:** we're committed to doing better for our people and the planet, with sustainability running through our education, research, enterprise, curriculum and public engagement work.

A note on finances: The OU is currently in the third of a four-year return to surplus plan which targets savings of £95.7m. Both individual unit and institutional savings targets have largely been delivered to date and confidence in the delivery of future savings targets is high with units having already put in place many actions to reduce costs. Joining in summer 2025 will mean we should have achieved the majority of our cost reduction targets and be able to look forward investing further in developing our services and continuing to invest in the student learning experience.

Our enduring mission:

“to be open to people, places, methods and ideas”

Living our Values

We can only achieve our goals by being Inclusive, Innovative, Responsive in all that we do. By supporting each other, being future-facing and continuously improving how we manage change.

We are a vast OU family united by this shared mission and every one of our 10,000 employees have a unique part to play.



Find out more about our Learn and Live Strategy

Visit

<https://about.open.ac.uk/strategy>

Organisation and governance

The University's governing body is the Council, which focuses on the University's overall strategy, finances, property, staff and students. It is supported by a number of subcommittees, such as Finance and Audit Committees. The Council is chaired by the Pro-Chancellor.

The Council has the ultimate authority within the OU, but it has to respect the views of the Senate in academic matters. The Senate is the academic authority of the University, responsible for academic strategy, policy, priorities and performance.

The Vice-Chancellor is accountable to the Council for maintaining and promoting the efficiency and good order of the University.



Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho
University Chancellor



Malcolm Sweeting
Pro-Chancellor

Vice-Chancellor's Executive

The Vice-Chancellor chairs the Vice-Chancellor's Executive in their capacity as Chief Executive of The Open University.

Meet the Vice-Chancellor's Executive team:

Tim Blackman,
Vice-Chancellor
(until May 2025)

Dave Hall,
University Secretary

Vikki Matthews,
Chief People Officer

Emma Stace,
Chief Digital Information Officer

Paul Traynor,
Chief Financial Officer

Professor Josie Fraser,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Professor Ian Pickup,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students)

Vacant,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Equity, Diversity & Inclusion)

Professor Kevin Shakesheff,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Research & Innovation)

Professor Nick Braithwaite,
Executive Dean of the Faculty
of Science, Technology,
Engineering and Mathematics

Dr Klaus-Dieter Rossade,
Interim Executive Dean of the
Faculty of Wellbeing, Education
and Language Studies

Professor Adrienne Scullion,
Executive Dean of the Faculty
of Arts and Social Sciences

Professor Mark Durkin,
Executive Dean of the Faculty
of Business and Law

Ben Lewis,
Director of The Open University
in Wales

John D'Arcy,
Director of The Open University
in Ireland

Susan Stewart,
Director of The Open University
in Scotland

The Open University Students Association

The Open University Students Association has been the voice of OU students since 1972, representing their collective needs and ensuring their opinions are heard at the highest levels of the University and beyond. Their mission is to make a positive difference for all OU students.



The Students Association is comprised of three main bodies: the Board of Trustees, the Student Leadership Team (SLT), and a dedicated staff team. This structure is further supported by a network of student volunteers, including representatives from all four Nations.

Students can access various forms of support through the Students Association, including the Student Advice Service, and several student-run support groups. The Students Association also supports over 60 student clubs and societies that are run by, and for, OU students. These clubs and societies bring communities of students together around their shared interests and life-circumstances, from societies in areas such as Law and Psychological, to Fit Club and Grandparents Club.

The Student Voice is pivotal at the University, and where possible, the Students Association works in partnership with The Open University to address student issues and continuously enhance the student experience.

A shared commitment to fostering authentic student engagement in University decision-making is embedded in our co-created Student Charter, which underscores the importance of strong partnerships between staff and students.



About the role

We are looking for an **inspirational leader** who will ensure The Open University remains as relevant and as visionary as it was when it was first established in 1969.

The OU has changed the lives of more than two million students since then and our colleagues are understandably proud of what they have achieved together. The new Vice-Chancellor's relentless **focus on academic quality** will help us continue to play a key role in securing the UK's resilience and future prosperity.

Imbued with an **entrepreneurial spirit** and a desire to help millions more people secure better lives for themselves, they will lead the development of a new strategic plan that will take us into the next decade and beyond.

Our new leader's **compassionate leadership** will, in partnership with and delivering through, the senior leadership team, drive the transformative change that is necessary if we are to embrace future opportunities for the higher education sector. Their **compelling vision** will help retain The Open University's position of being at the forefront of educational technology, while broadening our global reach and societal impact.

Passionate in their commitment to "promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential", they will **demonstrate how The Open University will forever be "open to people, places, methods and ideas"**. Their devotion to that mission will be constant, matched by a thoughtful and considered understanding of how technology can best be applied by our colleagues, our students and our partners to deliver the higher education models our society needs in the future.

In our first 55 years we dominated the UK market in undergraduate distance learning degree provision. We secured brand recognition internationally through our combination of award winning supported open learning, continuous innovation in pedagogies, access to free OU resources across a range of platforms, and through validating provision at more than 40 partner institutions worldwide.

The widespread surge in online provision during the pandemic and the subsequent evolution of hybrid teaching models have only strengthened our desire to improve our own high standards. Global forces have exacerbated pressures on the higher education sector's finances, and we are reducing costs to return to surplus in line with plans that this academic year will reach peak savings delivery.

Nonetheless, we continue to **invest in a richly diverse curriculum** that includes the short courses and renowned apprenticeships that are integral to our longer-term growth generation plans. Our degree courses must continue to match those of other UK universities in quality but be available for less cost and with greater flexibility of study for anyone who wants to learn. Impressive TEF and REF outcomes offer welcome recognition and acknowledgment of our academic and teaching credentials, strengthening our already highly regarded brand.

We perform strongly in research, with 76% of our research and 82% of our impact rated 4* ('world leading') or 3* ('internationally excellent') in the last UK Research Excellence Framework assessment in 2021, and **use our research to transform lives across the four nations of the UK and globally**. We strive to find new ways to share this knowledge, connecting and collaborating with others to ignite far-reaching positive change.





Our Open Societal Challenges Programme aims to tackle some of the most important challenges of our time through impact-driven research. The Programme's focus on the themes of Tackling Inequalities, Living Well, and Sustainability aligns with our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

The Open University's expertise in learning design and digital capability has a pivotal role to play in increasing student access and success, empowering students to achieve their goals regardless of their background. We must now understand how to create truly personalised learning experiences that respond to individual student needs and learning preferences. We also recognise the need to raise awareness and consideration levels among younger age groups.

We want to **explore new teaching options** too, including the potential development of a local face-to-face proposition that would enhance our civic contribution to our own local community in Milton Keynes. Parallel consideration of the longer-term future of our home at Walton Hall must also be regarded within the broader context of our net zero commitment, which recognises Climate Change Act requirements and our desire to take a leading role in tackling the world's climate emergency.

The Open University's size and reputation are advantages as we face the future, but scale also brings complexity. Our next Vice-Chancellor will **take the lead in enhancing our agility and our ability** to maximise opportunities in the face of social, demographic and economic change and increased competition.

Building on our relationships with policy makers in each of the four nations, they will demonstrate an astute understanding of the impact of funding and policy changes as governments seek to raise levels of skill, productivity and growth amid a deepening climate crisis and a shifting global balance of power.

Our new leader must also **nurture a safe, open and inclusive environment for all our colleagues and our students**. The Open University continues to address sensitive key issues that attract widespread levels of interest and attention, including the sex and gender debate. We need a Vice-Chancellor who **champions academic freedom and freedom of speech**, while balancing them with a responsibility to offer consistent levels of respect and support to everyone who works and studies with us.

Our new Vice-Chancellor will **foster research and innovation in an AI-enabled future**, support our students and colleagues in an era in which rapid technical change impacts our wellbeing, and grasp the opportunity to compete more effectively on a global scale. In doing so, they will help us fulfil the core mission of our founders by opening a world of possibility for everyone.

This is a unique opportunity to help us shape the future. We are **looking for a leader who challenges and inspires us** and who embraces our values.

We are more than a University. We are a social movement.

Job description

A visionary, dynamic and compassionate leader committed to driving The Open University to new heights of global excellence and innovation in its service to students.

The Role

- **Visionary Leadership:** You will co-create a compelling, long-term vision which will propel the University to be a world leader in open and flexible higher education.
- **Championing Excellence and Innovation:** Your wide experience of leading strategic change in a large, complex, values-driven organisation, combined with your understanding of the rapidly evolving digital and technological landscape, will enable the University to renew and develop its educational model and continue to deliver transformative outcomes for students worldwide, empowering them to achieve their aspirations regardless of their background.
- **Research Impact:** You will inspire colleagues in their commitment to international excellence in research and in their development of research which addresses societal challenges.
- **Empowering Culture:** By immersing yourself in the social mission of the University you will be a compassionate leader who fosters an inclusive and empowering culture, in which all colleagues are motivated and supported to excel, and academic discourse thrives.
- **Passionate Advocacy:** Your passion for the University's unique role will enable you to serve as a dynamic and credible advocate, representing its interests regionally, nationally, and internationally, engaging effectively with colleagues, external stakeholders, regulators, and influencers. Your efforts will continue to build the University's reputation across the four nations of the UK and beyond, and further the unrivalled partnership with the BBC.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Your entrepreneurial instincts and financial acumen will enable the diversification of the University's income streams through expanding our educational portfolio and developing new strategic collaborations and partnerships.
- **Strategic Governance:** Your personal integrity will ensure the highest standards of governance, supported through productive relationships with the University Council and Senate.

Job description

The Person

Experience:

- **Leadership Excellence:** Demonstrable experience of leading and developing a strong and united senior team at an executive level in a large and complex organisation, preferably within higher education or a comparable environment.
- **Innovative Visionary:** Proven ability to convey a compelling vision and create value for students by integrating human and technological resources and embedding digital-led innovations.
- **Change Management:** A track record of directing and managing transformational change and service-led improvements, preferably in an educational setting.
- **Financial Acumen:** Demonstrable experience in driving financial sustainability and governance while balancing opportunity-focused and innovative approaches.
- **Risk Management:** Ability to engage in calculated risk-taking, balancing multiple and competing priorities.
- **Environmental Commitment:** Strong commitment to environmental sustainability and achieving net-zero in business operations and educational mission.

Skills & Attributes:

- **Bold and Decisive:** Bold, decisive and innovative, with the ability to thrive in ambiguous and uncertain environments.
- **Inclusive Leadership:** Authentic, compassionate and visible leadership style that reflects commitment to diversity of thought and curiosity, and an openness to challenges.
- **Mission-Driven:** Deep personal commitment to the mission, values, and ambitions of The Open University.
- **Relationship Builder:** Excellent ambassadorial and relationship-building skills, with a proven ability to develop strong partnerships domestically and internationally.
- **Ethical Integrity:** High ethical standards and personal integrity.
- **Intellectual Stature:** Demonstrable credibility as the potential leader of an academic institution.
- **Resilient and Tenacious:** Resilience and tenacity, coupled with the ability to manage emotions under pressure and adapt to setbacks and change.
- **Operational Command:** Capability to oversee a broad range of operations across diverse themes.
- **Academic Passion:** Active interest in a broad range of academic disciplines, with a strong passion for lifelong, part-time and technology-enhanced distance learning.

How to apply

Key dates

Applications are invited by close of business on midnight (GMT) on **Sunday 22nd September 2024**.

An initial longlisting meeting will take place in early October, before Perrett Laver conduct initial consultations with prospective candidates.

A final shortlisting meeting will take place in early November.

The interview assessment process will take place in early/mid December.

The anticipated start date for this post is **1st May 2025**.

How to apply

For further information and instruction on how to apply, please visit Perrett Laver's website: <https://perrettlaver.com/campaigns/appointment-of-vice-chancellor/>

To submit your application online, please visit: <https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies>

Reference: 7348

To apply please submit:

- A CV that has been drafted to outline the strategic leadership experience tailored for the OU
- A three-page supporting statement that outlines:
 1. Your motivation to apply for the Vice-Chancellor role at this time.
 2. Evidence of how you have provided strategic leadership for a large portfolio within an institution to drive excellence in teaching, learning, student experience and research & innovation in line with the institutional ambitions.
 3. What you perceive the opportunities to be for The Open University and how you will optimise these to drive highest standards of excellence in all areas including teaching, learning, student experience, research and innovation?

Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and / or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

If you need further clarifications, or an informal, confidential conversation about the role, please contact our advisors at Perrett Laver.

Arshya Dayal (Research Associate) on arshya.dayal@perrettlaver.com or +44 (0)20 3928 7392.

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact: simon.epsley@perrettlaver.com

Also, if you have any comments and/or suggestions about improving access to our application processes please don't hesitate to contact us: simon.epsley@perrettlaver.com

Search process

Approaching candidates

Perrett Laver will have an initial discussion with you over the phone to determine your interest and suitability for this role and discuss a little about your background and aspirations.

Long listing

Following the closing date, Perrett Laver will review the field of candidates and discuss all applications with the Selection Panel. The Panel will select a long list of candidates for interview with Perrett Laver.

Interviewing candidates

Perrett Laver will meet long listed candidates for an in-depth, competency-based interview covering areas such as career history, vision for the Vice-Chancellor role, leadership experience and approach to people and financial management.

Short listing

Perrett Laver will present our interview findings to the Selection Panel, which will select a short list of candidates for final interview with the OU.

Meetings at The Open University

Candidates will be offered meetings with members of the senior leadership team. This will give you the opportunity to really understand the role, the University's culture and their expectations of you. You will more than likely be offered the opportunity to have multiple meetings with key stakeholders to get a feel for the organisation.

Due diligence

You will have conducted due diligence on The Open University and you would expect us to do the same for the candidates who anticipate they would really bring that 'something special' to the University.

Offer and acceptance

The OU puts together the offer which we convey to you. We will fully support you through your resignation period and beyond.

Ongoing communications

We like to maintain contact with all candidates from a search. If you have been successful in this activity, we will meet with you after your first month to ensure that your expectations have been met.

If you have not, we will ensure that you gain full feedback and we will maintain a relationship with you for the future.

Inclusion & Diversity

We aim to ensure that each stage of the search process is inclusive and equitable, and Perrett Laver will work to support the OU in their commitment to their EDI principles.

Confidentiality

We guarantee that any approach we make to you and any discussions we have will be in the strictest confidence. Any discussions will be conducted under the terms of a formal nondisclosure agreement.



The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales, and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.