

University Secretary Role Description

The University Secretary is the lead professional support services steward of effective governance at the University, providing specialist and expert advice to both the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair of Council, to which this role jointly and directly reports. The University Secretary is the institutional leader with principal accountability for:

Core Governance

- the institutional owner and custodian leading on providing constitutional advice on, the development and interpretation of, the Charter and Statutes of the University, with accountability directly from Council for advancing, proposing, consulting on and formulating amendments to, the governing instruments, to secure Council and Privy Council approval to such changes.
- as key steward of the University Ordinances and Regulations of the University ensuring their alignment to the governing instruments and secondary policy framework.
- providing specialist knowledge and advice on the framework of University Regulations, and to those responsible for implementing and operating specific Ordinances and Regulations.
- leading on proportionate and effective governance for the four highest governance bodies of the University, as Secretary to the Council, Senate, Court and the University Executive Board (UEB), whilst ensuring that each body acts within its powers and authority and for the effective conduct of their business. In particular, this means to:
 - lead on advising Council on its powers and procedures and provide information to assist in its adherence to the highest standards of corporate governance
 - lead senior officer (below the Vice-Chancellor and President) for the Chair of Council, in ensuring that the governing body receives the information and advice it requires, decisions are implemented and it complies with good governance in all its activities
 - work closely with the Vice-Chancellor and President (to whom this role jointly reports) to ensure that Council is fully involved in the development and monitoring of the University Strategy, and other key strategic and policy developments.
- delivering specialist secretariat support for other key University committees, including those requiring specialist sensitivity, diplomacy and confidentiality, including the Remuneration Committee
- promoting and being the University lead for effective corporate and academic governance at the highest levels of the University, and advising colleagues at all levels of the University, ensuring that the University has governance structures and committees that enable committees to perform their duties the highest standard and in accordance with the University's governing instruments.

- being responsible for the provision of specialist and expert advice on the assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of all governance arrangements within the University, including the effectiveness and coherence of the committee framework.
- working with colleagues in other Directorates to ensure that the governance of the University's subsidiary companies and Group structure is working effectively, advising on compliance with company legislation and effective company secretaryship.

Policy and Regulation

- acting as a key focal point, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and President as 'Accountable Officer' to the Office for Students (OfS), for the internal and external co-ordination of OfS requirements, consultations, other calls for information, and wider engagement and communication with the OfS.
- oversight of OfS-related matters to ensure that colleagues are meeting compliance with specific registration conditions linked to their portfolios.
- to be notified of, and involved in, planned statutory inspections or auditing activity by regulatory and enforcement bodies, and playing a role in responses and management actions arising from these activities.
- leading on the development or review of corporate policy supporting good governance, transparency and accountability and corporate ethics in the University, to ensure that the University's reputation is safeguarded, and to advise other colleagues on best practice in the development and delivery of corporate policy in their domains (e.g., HR, Finance and Procurement and Planning and Risk colleagues).
- acting as the University's Prevent Duty lead in conjunction with the OfS and other statutory and regulatory agencies, working with a range of Professional Support departments responsible for implementation and monitoring of the duty, and ensure the University upholds the requirements of it.
- developing, delivering or commissioning governance-related policy in all its forms, to support effective committee governance and champion effective governance practice across the University, maintaining robustness and rigour, whilst supporting agility and flexibility in facilitating discussion and deliberation.

Other

- Acting as Returning Officer to oversee the fair and good conduct of Council and Senate elections, and to provide advice on sound electoral practice in other arena of the University, and Students' Union.
- Holding custody of the University Seal and report to Council on its affixment, and furnish authenticated documents to various internal and external organisations and record keeping.

- Leading on the development and review of the University Scheme of Delegation.
- Acting as signatory on behalf of the University to a number of contracts and agreements *ex officio* to the role of Secretary.
- Approving, and ensuring the monitoring of, the expenses of Council members (with the exception of the Vice-Chancellor and President) and the Chancellor.

External

- Representing the University regionally, nationally and internationally, on matters of university governance and related policy with bodies including the Committee of University Chairs (CUC), Advance HE, the OfS, the Russell Group, and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA).

December 2020