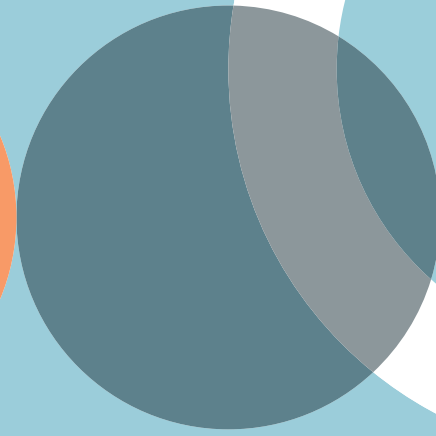


dixon walter

Summer

NEWSLETTER

July 2024



Handing over the Baton

Welcome once again to our whirlwind round up of all things Talent Acquisition in Higher Education, and in the spirit of Paris 2024, we've gone with an Olympic Theme...

The Tories are out, and Labour is in and unless you've been hiding under a rock, it's all anyone is talking about, and whilst we all may have our opinions on the outcome of the election, there is no denying that Labour have their work cut out.

The folks over at Wonkhe have been looking at Labour's in-tray for Higher Education: [view here](#).

The new government has shown some early promise, with positive rhetoric emphasising the crucial role of universities in driving growth for the UK and enhancing our global standing. That being said, it is just that: early days and let's face it, HE is one of a number of competing priorities in what is a highly challenging fiscal landscape at present. Higher Education did not receive a specific mention in the recent Kings Speech (check out the background briefing [here](#)) although the knock-on effects of the various governmental arms will of course be felt in the sector as pointed out by David Kernohan at Wonkhe;

"Parts of the *Employment Rights Bill* will have a bearing on working conditions in the sector. The "new deal for working people" will ban "exploitative zero hours contracts" – though there are few of these among academics (though there are still too many!), the big impact of this (and the enhanced rights, including flexible working) will be on ancillary staff. The Bill removes the minimum service levels during industrial action, among wider updates to trade union legislation. All of this will be enforced by a new body, the Fair Work Agency. Likewise, the draft *Equality (Race and Disability) Bill* will make the right to equal pay easier for disabled and ethnic minority workers to assert and will introduce mandatory pay equality reporting for employers with more than 250 employees." ([Original source](#))

As of May 2024, 55 UK universities had announced staff redundancies due to financial challenges. These challenges include declining international student numbers, a predicted drop in enrolments due to visa system changes, and real-term value decline. The apparent shift in conversation to economic patriotism does raise questions around international collaboration between top academics and the impact that will have on research and development funding and opportunities. UCU have been publicly calling for Labour to step in to support sectoral financial challenges else face a cash catastrophe across the sector. It is too early for us to draw any real conclusions on how the next few months or years may look under this new government but as they begin to make their plans for change, we will be watching and focussing on supporting those institutions and leaders that continue to make a real difference in what is becoming a much tougher landscape.

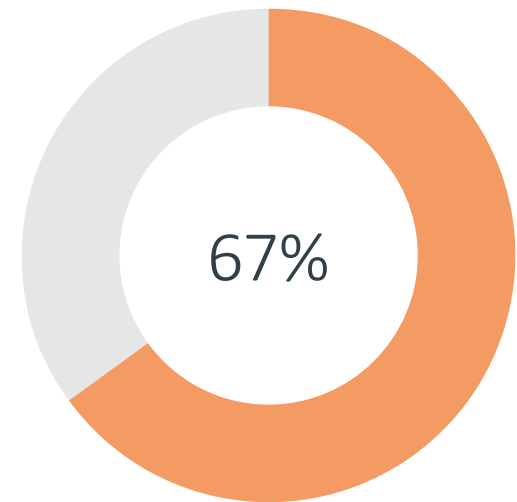
Carrying the Flame

If you have read our previous Newsletters, you will know that we like to keep up to date with how the sector is responding to the call to action for more diverse and inclusive practices.

We know that universities are constantly under pressure to measure EDI, to ensure fairness and to actively diversify their recruitment channels and processes. We are fully aware of the responsibility we hold as senior recruiters to the sectors we serve and acknowledge that EDI must be at the heart of our approach. We want Dixon Walter to be part of the positive change within the sector, taking an active role and providing expert guidance for our clients.

Research has shown that diverse businesses are *35% more likely to financially outperform their industry's national average*. For potential job hunters, *67% now consider a diverse workforce is an important factor when considering job offers*.

“Lack of Diversity in Professional Services leadership continues to be a problem; as part of a project on the lack of ethnic diversity in university leadership, Monika Nangia asked professional services colleagues to share their stories. [Here's what they said.](#)”



For potential job hunters, 67% now consider a diverse workforce is an important factor when considering job offers

Recent Appointment

Following a successful search by Dixon Walter, Glasgow Caledonian University appoint Director of Future Students, Marketing and Communications (FSM&C). [Read More.](#)

Why inclusive leadership matters in higher education

Baljit Birring, Advance HE Senior Consultant for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has introduced a new guide, 'Understanding Inclusive leadership in practice', along with a series of vlogs from leaders in higher education. This guide is part of the 'Creating a Culture for Strategic EDI Change' member project.

"The Current Landscape of UK Higher Education

The UK higher education sector is renowned globally for its high standards and rich traditions. However, it is not without its challenges. Issues such as racial disparities, gender inequality, and underrepresentation of racialised minority groups persist. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), only 1% of UK university professors are Black, and women hold fewer than 30% of senior academic positions. These statistics highlight the need for a concerted effort towards more inclusive practices to create more a diverse and inclusive workforce. This is a time when there is greater diversity in our student population, a global and mobile workforce."

[Read the full article here >](#)

For now, here are the conclusions drawn;

"Leadership and inclusive leadership are intrinsically related. Inclusive leadership embellishes traditional leadership practices. By integrating principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, inclusive leaders not only guide and inspire but also create environments where everyone can thrive. In today's diverse and interconnected world, the ability to lead inclusively has become essential. Embracing inclusive leadership can transform organisations, foster innovation, and build a more equitable society for all.

Inclusive leadership is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for higher education. It is fundamental to creating equitable, innovative, and responsive institutions that can meet the challenges of the 21st century. By embracing inclusive leadership, universities can unlock the full potential of their diverse communities, enhance learning and research, and contribute to the creation of a fairer and equitable society. As higher education continues to evolve, the commitment to inclusivity at the forefront of institutional priorities leads to stronger and more robust higher education providers and the creation of a future where everyone can thrive and succeed".

Shout out to Oxford University who have recently announced they are increasing paternity leave from 2 to 12 weeks. Vice-Chancellor Professor Irene Tracey has personally spearheaded the change. It's a big and welcome step change for the sector that will hopefully see others follow. Let's hear it for the Daddy's out there!!



Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together

Leading Change when the environment is so tough.

Advance HE and Wonkhe have published a new report Leading strategic change in higher education in challenging times, based on work they have jointly undertaken to explore leadership dynamics at times of strategic change and challenge.

“In higher education in the UK we have seen a flurry of really positive change agendas around digital transformation, portfolio and curriculum enhancement, inclusion, civic engagement and much more, as higher education institutions continue to increase their impact. But these change agendas are being delivered against a backdrop of rising costs, income constraints, and new regulatory accountabilities – legislation on freedom of speech in England is one example but different jurisdictions will have others. Students are seeing their costs rise too, affecting their engagement with learning.....”

“In such times, effective strategic leadership demands a finely-tuned balance between setting out a vision for the future that can inspire, while also making pragmatic and often difficult and contentious decisions in the present. Leaders are under enormous pressure to get it right, for the sake of students, institutional staff, and the communities and external stakeholders that value and depend on them”

[Read the full article here >](#)



Modern Games

The Role of AI in Higher Education Recruitment and Talent Management.

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to advance, governments are recognising the need for regulations to guide its use, as highlighted in the Government's AI Regulation White Paper.

AI is becoming increasingly prevalent across various sectors, and higher education recruitment is no exception. It is transforming how institutions attract and hire talent, aiming to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the hiring process. However, using AI in recruitment comes with risks and challenges, including concerns about bias, transparency, and the implications for human roles in hiring.

Some higher education institutions are leveraging AI to handle administrative recruitment tasks and improve overall candidate experience. A positive candidate experience is crucial for attracting and retaining top talent but managing it can be time-consuming for staff. By automating these tasks, AI may free up staff to focus on elements that require a human touch. For instance, Glassdoor found a 40% decrease in new hire turnover within the first year for those with a positive experience.

Higher education is evolving rapidly, with rising costs and demanding job responsibilities. The pandemic has increased workloads for many staff members, making it harder to manage. A recent survey showed that most staff felt this burden, raising concerns about attracting and retaining talented professionals.

AI offers several potential benefits but must be carefully assessed to ensure it genuinely alleviates staff stress and supports them effectively while understanding the risks, it is also crucial to be aware of the considerations, limitations, and risks involved surrounding privacy, data security, monitoring and maintenance and bias concerns to name a few.

AI is impacting higher education recruitment by automating processes, assessing skills, and matching candidates to jobs. It offers benefits like efficiency and objectivity but also poses challenges, such as potential job displacement and the need for ongoing adaptation by education professionals. A balanced approach that eases workloads, ensures positive experiences, and respects candidates and their data is essential.

Merging Industry Expertise with a Robust Talent Network

At Dixon Walter, our consultants possess extensive knowledge of higher education recruitment. With dedicated teams constantly monitoring industry hiring trends, we are well-equipped to assist with a wide range of talent acquisition needs. Whether you're looking to diversify your search for academic professionals or need support throughout the entire recruitment process, we can help. [Contact us](#) today to discover how our specialist team can support your higher education institution.

Olympicism

blending sport with
culture and education

What can HR in HE learn from talent management in professional sports?

HR in Higher Education (HE) can draw several valuable lessons from talent management practices in professional sports. Recent research conducted by Emma Ogden from SUMS Consulting sheds light on critical aspects such as workforce planning, talent attraction, adapting to change and performance development. You can read the full article [here](#). Here's a summary of the key takeaways.

Professional sports teams excel in workforce planning by using data to assess player strengths and weaknesses and developing succession plans. HE institutions can adopt similar data-driven strategies for strategic workforce planning and establishing talent pipelines for future leadership roles.

To attract talent, sports teams build strong brands and offer attractive incentives. HE can strengthen its institutional branding, and provide competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, and supportive work environments to attract top talent.

In terms of performance development, sports teams invest in continuous, individualised training and use detailed performance metrics. HE can enhance staff performance by offering tailored professional development programs and regular feedback and performance reviews.

Supporting new working parents is another area where HE can learn from sports teams, which often provide flexible schedules and parental support programs. HE institutions should ensure adequate parental leave, flexible working arrangements, and on-site childcare facilities to support new parents.

Lastly, both sports teams and HE face the challenge of adapting to changes, such as new technologies. Sports teams help employees manage stress and provide training for new processes. HE can implement change management programs and offer training on emerging technologies like AI to ensure staff are comfortable and proficient.

By integrating these strategies, HR in HE can create a supportive and dynamic work environment that fosters growth, innovation, and excellence.

Recent Appointment

Professor Carlo Panara appointed Head of Leicester Law School following successful search campaign led by Dixon Walter. [Read More](#).

Race to the Podium

Both the QS World Rankings and the National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes were published in July.

QS World Rankings The [2025 edition of the QS World University Rankings](#) is once again topped by [Massachusetts Institute of Technology \(MIT\)](#) with [Imperial College London](#) climbing to second place, above two other UK universities: the [University of Oxford](#) and the University of Cambridge.

[Check out the full list here >](#)

National Student Survey results are broadly positive showing upward trends in overall student satisfaction - [Times Higher](#) and [Wonkhe](#) both provide coverage, with an interesting article by David Kernohan which explores the [links between student satisfaction and staff characteristics](#).

[Explore the public data >](#)

“2025 edition of the QS World University Rankings is once again topped by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with Imperial College London climbing to second place.”



Active Recovery

Here's a few articles you may have missed that we think are worth a read over a well-deserved cuppa...

Simon Meacher, Head of the Executive and Governance Office at Newcastle University, shares his experience of effective governance and one of the most rewarding parts of his role - being an institutional champion for one Success on the Board participant.

[Read More](#)

[UK universities valued more than institutions like parliament and BBC, finds survey.](#) King's College London poll finds people rank universities behind only the NHS, armed forces and royal family.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Nick Jennings says universities have to showcase the breadth and depth of their impact on individuals, regions and countries if they're to be valued as they should.

Full link [here](#)

Closing

Ceremony

Job Shadowing HE is a monthly podcast hosted by Susannah Marsden. Each episode takes a deep dive into the roles of people who work in Higher Education.

Featuring guests from across the sector, each episode reveals what's involved in a specific role, the career path that led to it and tips on how to get in and get on in these jobs. Most recently Susannah was joined by Professor Susannah Quinsee & Ian Anderson: 'Remembering Our Why' – where they reflect upon many of the themes that have arisen across the mini-series and consider how institutions are managing change.

They draw together thoughts on how this might be done while also providing some sense of stability, consider the critical importance of building human connections, discuss the value of recognising success and milestones and provide some inspiration on why we should keep going and be proud of UK Higher Education.

[Listen to the podcast >](#)

Recent Appointment

The University of Manchester has appointed **Eleanor Morrissey** as its new Executive Director for People and Organisational Development following national campaign led by Dixon Walter. [Read More.](#)

Recent Appointment

Dixon Walter proud to have supported Durham University in welcoming new Executive Dean for Faculty of Social Sciences and Health. [Read More.](#)



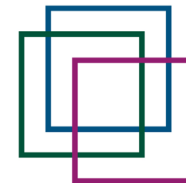
Spotlight Job

SUMS group – Chief Executive

We are seeking an exceptional, innovation-led leader for the next step in the SUMS journey. The new Chief Executive will deliver the ambitious new strategy 2030, and will play a leading role in cementing SUMS as the HE sector's Management Consultancy of choice and in realising their ambitions for SUPC.

Closing Date – 4th September 2024

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[Find out more and apply here >](#)

[Got a question? Email Dixon Walter >](#)

