

DIRECTOR OF ESTATES AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Applicant Brief



University of
CUMBRIA





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WE ARE THE UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA



“We are the University of Cumbria, for and from Cumbria and our localities, rooted in and serving our communities and reflecting the unique environment of the Lake District. We are a university for our region with people, place and partnership at our heart. We are also a young university that is growing and evolving.”

Providing diverse routes into higher education, into and through employment, and across and into the region is an important part of our offer for future generations from Cumbria and beyond. We specialise in portfolio and programmes aligned to a range of learner needs and types – on and off campus – delivered with and through a range of strategic employer, educational and stakeholder partnerships. With an emphasis on work-based and flexible learning options, we expect to deliver an excellent learning experience, environment, and outcomes for all our students, underpinned by our applied research and professional practice.

As well as the creation of new university campuses we are very excited to have formed a strategic partnership with Imperial College London to open a new medical school to develop and deliver the Pears Cumbria Medical School from our Carlisle campus. We will apply our experience in training nurses, midwives, and other professionals allied to medicine, alongside Imperial College London’s expertise in medical education to produce doctors who are ready to contribute to vital services across the region.

We are investing and being invested in. With £63 million capital funding from the Borderlands Growth Deal Initiative, Carlisle Town Deal, and Barrow Town Deal we are transforming our university presence, visibility, and impact in Carlisle and Barrow. Increasing participation, access, and routes into higher education, addressing skills and productivity needs across Cumbria and the Borderlands region, and making a demonstrable impact to place, vibrancy and to local economies and communities.

With more than 15,000 students, we have plans in place for growth to 20,000 by 2030. One key driver for recent and projected student number increases is our expanding higher-level apprenticeship activity, training which provides fresh opportunities for the university to engage with and support businesses in providing training in Cumbria, North Lancashire and, where appropriate, nationally in focused, niche areas of activity. We expect 2,500 such students to be registered annually by 2025. We work closely with further education colleges in Cumbria and beyond and have a small number of international partners in Europe and Asia.

The university aims to be a catalyst for individual and regional prosperity and pride, raising the aspirations and attainment of young people within the region and providing routes into and through higher education to address current and future skills needs. The university is committed to collaborative working and partnerships, with academic portfolio and related activities increasingly shaped by, and through, partnership with regional and national employers. We work closely with Enterprising Cumbria, strategically focused on delivering higher-level skills needs (new, upskilling and reskilling) in our region. As the only university in Cumbria, and as the lead provider for higher-level skills within the county, the university works in partnership with education providers and employers to raise aspirations and to address gaps in educational achievement and provision, across Cumbria and into North Lancashire.



Our apprenticeship portfolio continues to grow and is contributing to the national effort to train and have more qualified frontline professionals including police officers, nurses, and paramedics remains a key focus.

With a growing profile and reputation in the region and beyond, we are one of the largest providers of teacher education in the UK, a major provider of healthcare education and are working with employers developing and delivering higher-level apprenticeships.

“The university has been open to the challenges faced in bringing a new apprenticeship scheme on stream, displaying great creativity and adaptability, which has aided the positive working partnership we currently enjoy. The university has continually demonstrated their commitment to go the extra mile.” Richard Stanford, CEO, Forestry Commission

We also deliver a Paramedic Science (Apprenticeship) Degree. And by the end of this academic year, the university will be delivering to around 600 new recruits across seven of England’s ambulance trusts – including over 260 in London.

We are proud to have been recognised as a silver-rated university by the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 (TEF) for the quality of our teaching and student outcomes. We are

amongst the best in the UK for graduate employment and one of the top two universities in the Northwest, with 92% of our students getting a job or going on to further study within 15 months of graduating (HESA 2023). We’re ranked in the top 41% of universities worldwide overall for our social and economic impact. We are also ranked as the top university in the North of England for producing alumni company founders and came 6th overall in a 2023 study by Novuna Business Cash Flow.

We received a “Good” ITE Ofsted rating in which it states we ensure that addressing disadvantage is a ‘golden thread’ running through our provision. Trainees benefit from well-structured curriculums, based on pertinent research, that are expertly delivered

We work collaboratively with our partners, locally nationally and globally to bring value by developing key future skills.

“It is a pleasure to work in partnership with University of Cumbria. They are a shining light in Cumberland, providing a high-quality teaching and learning environment for students, whilst taking its please leadership role incredibly seriously and successfully.” Andrew Seekings, Chief Executive Officer, Cumberland Council

For more details on our extensive partnership working visit: news.cumbria.ac.uk/testimonials

WHAT DRIVES US

Our vision and strategic intent

We are the University of Cumbria, a place where people are at the heart of all we do, where enriching the lives of our students, staff and the communities we serve means we make a difference that matters.

Now is a very exciting time to be joining us. We are well placed to make a significant contribution to the success of our students and region, with our newly approved strategy setting out our ambitions for the years ahead. We will be making the most of our three most valuable assets; people, place, and partnerships, to further our role as a catalyst for economic well-being for our region, nationally and internationally. The institutions that came together in 2007 to create the University of Cumbria had a proud history of empowering students with the tools, attributes, and opportunities to maximise their potential to be more than they thought they could be. This continues to be at the heart of all that we do.

Our professional and practice-based focus is one of our great strengths. We are passionate about sharing knowledge and have confidence in what we do: our students learn from some of the best in their field. We care and are committed to engaging and inspiring future generations. We embrace inspiring teaching, lifelong learning, and creative innovation, enabled and enriched by research of international standing. All this takes place across five campuses with approximately 15,000 students, 1,045 colleagues and a turnover of around £75m. The diversity of our locations, landscape, and heritage provides inspiration, challenges, and potential in equal measure.

Following the approval of our new university strategy: Towards 2030, we are developing the supporting strategies and plans to deliver for the years ahead: we look forward to the future with confidence.

The new strategy can be viewed here: cumbria.ac.uk/t2030

Our Strategic Focus Towards 2030

We fulfill our local and global roles and ambition to positively impact our students, increase higher education participation in our county, to address higher-level skills and sector needs, to co-create and apply new knowledge, and to positively embrace our civic responsibilities through our students and graduates; our academic and applied research focus; people, practice and place.

Informed by our cross-cutting themes covering digital; sustainability & carbon reduction; health & wellbeing; and partnerships.

The University's Vision

Transforming lives and livelihoods through learning, applied research, and practice – for now and for our future generations.

The University's Mission

Inspiring and equipping our graduates, communities, economy and environment to thrive.



PEOPLE PROFILE

The university currently has around 15,000 students, either based at one of our campuses, in workplace settings or at one of our partner colleges in the UK and overseas.

The university employs over 1000 employees and has, when compared with the sector, a high proportion of part-time employees.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, more than 3,800 students were studying full-time at one of our campus locations and a further 4300 were engaged in part-time study, which was largely workplace-based, in areas such as healthcare, education, and project management. Our apprenticeship delivery has continued to significantly expand, with significant contracts in place with a range of employers, with over 2,300 students enrolled on this type of provision in 2023/24. Over 5,400 students studied for a university award at one of our partner institutions.

The university has diversified its academic portfolio and activities significantly over the last five years, moving from the traditional higher education model of delivery to campus-based students to one where there is a significant variety of modes, locations and types of provision. Around half our students are now based away from one of our campuses, with delivery via distance learning arrangements and at employers and partner colleges. Across our 15,000 headcount in 2023-24, 3,800 students were studying fulltime at one of our campus locations and a further 4,300 were engaged in part-time study, which was largely workplace-based, in areas such as healthcare, education, and project management. Our apprenticeship delivery has continued to significantly expand, with significant contracts in place with a range of employers, with over 2,300 students enrolled on this type of provision in 2023/24. Over 5,400 students studied for a university award at one of our partner institutions. The full-time undergraduate student body is predominantly female (66%); 60% are 21 years or older on admission. 14% of these students identify themselves with Black, Asian, or minority ethnic backgrounds; 12% had a declared disability on entry, and 17% are from low participating neighbourhoods.



OUR LOCATIONS

We have campuses in the historical, cultural, and vibrant cities of Carlisle and Lancaster. Our Ambleside campus sits in the heart of the Lake District National Park which, was recently awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status. We also have a site in London close to Canary Wharf. In addition, the university has teaching sites at Barrow-in-Furness and Workington.

All our north-west campuses are easily accessible by rail, car or air – within easy reach of major cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Edinburgh.

Our London campus is within walking distance of nearby overground stations.

We are committed to maintaining our geographical footprint of our campuses so that the university continues to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of the different regional economies.

Place is, and will be, increasingly important to support us in the delivery of our plans and ambitions with our partners.



FINANCE AND ESTATE

Key components of our ongoing strategy are to rationalise and improve the quality of the estate, and to ensure that our infrastructure supports our future strategy, including learning from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The university was formally established in 2007 with an ageing estate. It has taken the university some years to find its niche in the competitive higher education market.

“Following the appointment of Professor Julie Mennell as Vice Chancellor in 2016, the university focused on reversing a decline in income through an academic portfolio review; identifying areas of growth; and aligning the cost base to more appropriate income projections.

This has involved the active understanding and addressing of regional and sector higher-level skills needs and led to the diversification of income streams through commercial contracts and a focus on upskilling and reskilling in the workplace, complementing the more traditional academic delivery based on our campuses.

This approach has seen the university's income grow by just under 25% between 2018 and 2023, with revenues rising to £74m last year. Excluding accounting adjustments such as pension provision movements, the university has delivered surpluses across this period, with the 2022/23 return at 6% of income. Along with student number growth, this reflects our careful use of resources, particularly in recent times of higher inflation. We are continuing to build from this strong base with further growth and positive cash generation planned for in 2024/25 and beyond. As we continue to deliver our financial strategy this year and beyond, we have a central focus on growth, responding effectively to opportunities and risk, effective cost management and creating capacity to invest significantly in our infrastructure.

Key components of our estate strategy are to improve the quality of the estate and to ensure that our infrastructure supports the delivery of our overarching strategy. Our financial progress has allowed the university to commit to inputting finance into major estate developments in Carlisle and Barrow.

In Carlisle, the university will be creating a new campus in the historic Courts buildings in the centre of the city, supported by funding from the Borderlands Growth Deal Initiative. Town Deal funding is supporting the development of a Learning Quarter in Barrow, working with the local authority, Furness College and British Aerospace.

THE ROLE

Job Purpose:

Reporting to and working closely with the Chief Transformation Officer, the Director of Estates and Commercial Services is responsible for planning, creating and operating the university's estate which currently includes four campuses in the Northwest of England and one in London. A new campus will open in Barrow in September 2025 and work is also underway on our new Citadels campus in Carlisle. The Director is required to provide vision, strategic leadership, and management for estates and commercial services across the university, developing and implementing a sustainable Estates Strategy and annual plans that integrate effectively with our Digital Strategy, underpinning and advancing the university's strategic objectives.

This role provides direct line management to Estates & Property Management, Campus & Commercial Services and Health & Safety across our campuses. The role will drive the establishment of a Sustainability function within Estates, supporting activity and reporting across the university as we deliver against Net Zero and Sustainable Development Goals, is anticipated.

As a member of the university leadership team, you will make a key contribution to the wider strategic direction of the university and collaborate with the Vice-Chancellor's Executive. You will work with members of the university board, Finance & Resources Committee and Audit & Risk Committee to ensure effective decision-making, assurance and risk management. The services must work closely with Institutes, Professional Services and colleagues across the university including strong linkages with the Students' Union.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develop the vision for future estates options at the University of Cumbria providing vibrant and effective locations for our staff, students and partners to work and study.
- Lead the annual operational planning cycle for the service, working with stakeholders across the university to ensure the Estates and Commercial Services plans support our immediate and long-term objectives.
- Lead and advise Vice Chancellor Executive (VCE) and the Board in relation to long and medium-term estate related financial forecasting related to Estates and Commercial Services and provide lead input into addressing issues this forecasting may surface.
- Provide strategic direction across all aspects of Estates and Commercial Services, including property, capital development, building facilities, repairs and maintenance, security, grounds maintenance, domestic services, catering, car parking, hospitality, conferencing, health & safety, utilities and sustainability.
- Champion the development and implementation of an integrated approach to environmental sustainability including a Carbon Management Plan and enhanced Environmental Management Systems to help reduce the university's carbon footprint.
- Champion and enable the development of commercial services, shared use of our estate and contribution to the mission and financial sustainability of the university.
- Plan and manage the directorate budget, allocating the resource in line with the strategic priorities set out in the estates operational plan.

Leadership and Management:

- Role model the university's values and leadership behaviours and be an integral part of delivering the university's equality, diversity and inclusivity priorities.
- Inspire, develop and provide clear effective leadership to a team of professional, administrative and manual staff across a diverse range of services and establish an effective team structure to facilitate delivery of the Estates Strategy, empowering managers and teams, and supporting a high-performance culture.
- Lead and deliver transformational change within the department, reshaping and revitalising the structure and operating model, engaging and involving the department in a manner that creates a cohesive team.
- Effectively manage an operational capital and revenue budget of circa £8.5m per annum and a staff group of circa 70 staff as well as our partner relationships for catering and security.
- Embed the highest standards of Estates and Commercial Services practice, discipline, integrity and governance, ensuring that all reporting, management and systems are fit for purpose and fully compliant with all legislative and audit requirements.
- Lead on health and safety and ensure statutory compliance is always maintained, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and policies and procedures are clearly understood to keep students, staff and visitors safe on our campuses.



Estates Development, Management and Projects:

- Build creative solutions for estates development and commercial services.
- Lead the implementation of the university's capital development programme.
- Lead the management and development of the university's rolling planned and preventative maintenance programme to ensure maintenance issues are rapidly resolved.
- Formulate estates-related systems and procedures, provide leadership for the management of the estate and provide a sustainable physical environment that is safe, compliant, vibrant, and fit for purpose (including environmental, operational and health and safety-related policies).
- Lead and enhance the delivery of an effective, customer focused facilities support service including help desk support for all campus users, and rapid response support for teaching spaces and other elements of the on-campus learning environment.
- Effectively manage all the university property; whether owned, leased or access agreements (including development, rates, disposals, management of surplus property assets and acquisitions).
- Drive efficiency across the university's estate through the design (with stakeholders) and implementation of effective space management policies supporting new models of working, interdisciplinary interaction and community building and by the application of an innovative and commercial mind set to our estate and services.
- Ensure the development of Risk Management and Business Continuity plans for Estates to minimise the possibility of disruption to university business activities.



Commercial Services:

- Lead the development and management of a portfolio of commercial services on behalf of the university.
- In addition to the operation of our residential and catering services for staff and students, this activity is expected to include the use of our property portfolio for conferencing, event and other commercial activities compatible with our primary purpose and, in partnership with our Research & Knowledge Exchange team, and the use of specialist resources such as our medical imaging equipment.

Communication:

- Contribute to the development and fulfilment of the university's vision, mission, values and strategic objectives, including appropriate engagement with partners and stakeholders.
- Contribute to and participate in the university's corporate decision-making and policy-making processes through membership of university committees, working parties and cross-university projects as may be required.
- Work with, develop and maintain a strong working relationship with the Director of Student Services regarding student accommodation, operations and supporting a commercial approach within our Accommodation strategy.
- Engage with our student community and their feedback and respond to their considerations around our estate with a view to enhancing the student experience.

Other Requirements:

As a strategic advisor to the Vice Chancellor and her Executive you will be required to support all matters relating to strategy, leadership and management of the university and consideration of policy issues and new initiatives.

You will be an active member of the Vice Chancellor Directorate and may be required to attend meetings of the university's Governing Board and attend the Vice Chancellors Executive Group.

You will always operate within established university regulations and procedures and will need to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of a large, complex, multi campus university.

On occasions and in line with operational needs you will be required to travel to other campuses and sites, nationally or internationally.

As a senior post holder, you will be expected to work flexibly in discharging duties. The normal working week is defined in the contract of employment but because of the nature of the post, you will be required to work flexibly and for such hours as are necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the post.

It is the university's intention that this job description is seen as a guide to the major areas and duties for which the post holder is accountable. However, the business will change, and your obligations will vary and develop. This job description should be seen as a guide and not as a permanent, definitive and exhaustive statement

THE PERSON

Qualifications & Training

A relevant first degree and postgraduate qualification or equivalent professional experience and evidence of CPD

Full membership of a relevant professional body (RICS, CIOB, CIBSE, APM etc.)

Knowledge and Experience

Strong track record of achievement in strategic estates management, with a breadth of experience across the portfolio of responsibility and expertise in capital project development and delivery, facilities management and commercial services.

Demonstrable experience of effective leadership in a complex, multi-location environment.

Successful track record of managing diverse teams with the ability to lead, motivate and develop the Estates and Commercial Services staff, to realise their full potential and to promote effective working within and between teams in the service.

Excellent interpersonal, influencing, oral and written communication skills with a diverse range of colleagues, customers and stakeholders at all levels, including senior management and the university board. A natural relationship builder, able to establish a high level of credibility within the university and external partners.

Ability to think and operate strategically and use highly developed analytical skills to develop new approaches and ways of thinking.

Able to deploy initiative and to think creatively to solve problems, make decisions and provide substantial contributions to the creation and implementation of strategic and operational plans, understanding, conceptualising and interpreting the requirements of our community.

High level planning and organisational skills including effective project management skills, providing effective leadership of the delivery of major strategic projects on time and within the resource envelope.

Demonstrable understanding of how the core business areas of the university relate to each other, and how wider Higher Education and academic challenges impact on the forward agenda.

Strong understanding of financial management and successful management and control budgets, resources, and funding.

Our Values

At the University of Cumbria, our values shape the way we work, our culture and environment.

We are PERSONAL

Individuals are at the heart of what we do, and our culture of belonging recognises and supports every person. As an institution, we have mutual respect for those we work with and for and we care about understanding each other's challenges and helping one another to thrive.

We are PROGRESSIVE

As a university we have a determination to deliver our mission, which keeps us open to opportunities in front of us. We encourage thoughtful and inspirational ideas, and we tackle problems proactively, with optimism, creativity and courage.

We are ENGAGED

As stewards of knowledge and place, it is our privilege to champion the region and advocate for the value of education. The University of Cumbria is welcoming to different perspectives, expertise and experiences and we are committed to building and nurturing strong links with our communities.



Equality Diversity and Inclusion Statement

All post holders at the University of Cumbria are required to uphold and work to the Universities Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity statement and associated policies:

The University of Cumbria is committed to providing an inclusive environment, where staff, students and visitors are encouraged to be their true self, in order to enhance the individual and collective experience. As a university community, we share the social responsibility of enabling this inclusive environment by valuing, respecting and celebrating differences, to ensure that we generate a sense of understanding and belonging.

The university recognises that our differences are our strength, seeking and valuing different perspectives and ideas, in an environment that is without prejudice and bias. We are committed to embracing our responsibility as a facilitator of change and continue to develop our equality agenda in line with and, where appropriate, beyond the Equality Act 2010. We do not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Health & Safety Statement

All employees at the University of Cumbria are required to ensure that all duties and responsibilities are discharged in accordance with the Universities health and Safety at work policy. They should take reasonable care for their own Health and Safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do. Staff should correctly use work items provided by the university, including personal protective equipment in accordance with training or instructions.



HOW TO APPLY

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Emma Wilkins at Dixon Walter Search and Selection at:

**emma@dixonwalter.co.uk
07741 875289**

To apply please submit:

- An up-to-date CV with details of your current or last remuneration.
- A covering letter of no more than 2,000 words that addresses the requirements in the person specification on page 12.
- Details of three referees (one of whom should be your current employer), including name, nature of your relationship, position and contact details. References will not be taken up without prior consent.
- A completed equal opportunities and diversity form (also available to download from the campaign site).

These documents should be emailed to:

emma@dixonwalter.co.uk

Key dates for your diary

- The closing date for applications is Tuesday 25th February
- Final stage assessment and selection will be held on Wednesday 26th March