The Open University (OU) is the largest university in the UK by student population, and has a significant global reach through a network of alumni in over 150 countries, international partnerships and research. The OU is the only university to receive funding from, and operate in, all four nations of the UK.

The OU was established in 1969 with a unique aim. Our mission was to provide a new-style of university education that was truly open to people, places, methods and ideas, to improve lives and enrich communities in the UK and across the world. As we enter our fiftieth year, and with more than two million people who have studied with us, the commitment to our mission is as strong as ever. That's why we continue to evolve and adapt our teaching methods and technology to support student success in a rapidly changing world.

A UNIQUE INSTITUTION
The OU is unique. A world leader in open access, supported open learning and open educational resources, our distance learning approach sets us apart from other universities. Our commitment to open entry requirements means the OU has an unrivalled reach and influence on today’s society. Our flexible approach supports people of all ages and backgrounds to study and achieve their potential. Through academic research, teaching innovation and partnerships, the OU constantly breaks new ground in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning.

OPEN, AMBITIOUS, INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE
We believe anyone, anywhere, can study with The Open University. Around 174,000 students are currently studying with us, and these include:
- Around 24,000 disabled students.
- 1,500 students in prison or other secure environments.
- Students sponsored by FTSE 100 companies and major public services like the police and the NHS.
- In excess of 1,000 students on apprenticeship courses.

Some other highlights include:
- An overall satisfaction rate of 90% in the latest National Student Survey.
- A unique partnership with the BBC since 1971 and co-production of approximately 35 prime-time TV and radio series every year. During 2017/18, OU-BBC TV and radio programmes were listened to or viewed 351 million times, including the flagship Blue Planet II series.
- Free-to-use courses and modules on our OpenLearn in-house platform received 7.8m views in 2017/18.
- Being one of the top three space science centres in the UK.
- Providing free educational resources to teachers and healthcare workers in sub-Saharan Africa and India, reaching over 2 million people.
- A Business School that is part of the top 1% of global business schools who are triple accredited by the world's leading management education associations.
VALUES
Our c. 9,000 staff stay true to a clearly defined set of core values. First, we are inclusive, playing a unique role in society by making higher education open to all and promoting social justice through the development of knowledge and skills. Second, we are innovative, leading the learning revolution, placing innovation at the heart of our teaching and research, continuously seeking new and better ways to inspire and enable learning, and creating world class research and teaching. Third, we are responsive to the needs of individuals, employers and communities, and dedicated to supporting our students’ learning success.

LOCATION
The University has its headquarters on a purpose-built campus of approximately 110 acres in the south-east of Milton Keynes. It also has national headquarters in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and Dublin, and bases in Manchester and Nottingham.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
The University is a chartered institution and received its Royal Charter on 23 April 1969. It is an exempt charity registered in England and Wales and regulated on behalf of the Charity Commission by the Office for Students. It is also registered as a charity in Scotland.

The University’s governing body is the Council, which focuses on the University’s overall strategy, finances, property and staff, and is supported by a number of sub-committees. 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. The University’s Chancellor is Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho and its Pro-Chancellor (who also chairs the Council) is Malcolm Sweeting.

More information on the OU’s leadership and structure can be found here.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Further information about The Open University may be found on its website. The website provides access to recent Annual Reports, Financial Statements, and information about Faculty organisation, research and courses.

OpenLearn can be found here and FutureLearn – a private company wholly owned by The Open University, and a provider of a world-leading platform for online courses and degrees – can be found here.
MISSION AND STRATEGY

The Open University’s mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. Our key strategic priority is student success.

MISSION

We promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential. Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership, we seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning.

Most of our undergraduate courses have no formal entry requirements. We believe that the qualifications our students have when they leave are the only ones that matter. We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all, and close monitoring makes sure that we live up to our ideals.

Our Annual Reports provide a record of our work, events, projects and financial highlights year by year. More information on the OU’s Mission and Academic Strategy can be found here.

STRATEGY

Through our scale, reach and our ability to support students to succeed we achieve a positive impact on society and the economy. This includes:

- Understanding our students’ study goals and ensuring they get onto the right study path at the right level.
- Supporting our students successfully to progress through and complete their chosen module(s) or qualification.
- Delivering a high quality and flexible student experience with high levels of student satisfaction.
- Supporting students to achieve positive career and personal development outcomes.

The focus on student success is underpinned by a set of related objectives, which together will achieve our overall vision:

- Delivering excellent teaching and research to enhance our distinctiveness, reputation and, above all, student success.
- Enhancing our future growth and sustainability by diversifying our reach and sources of income and managing and challenging our cost base, to ensure our financial sustainability, headroom for re-investment back into the University, and value for our students.
- Investing in technology that enables success – both student facing technology and our own internal systems.
- Fostering a dynamic and inclusive culture by investing in staff to recognise and maximise their contribution to our success.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on the OU’s Strategic Objectives can be found here.
FINANCES AND KEY STATISTICS

In 2018 the OU had 174,898 students (64,914 FTE). Total income was £424m, of which £271m came from tuition fees and education contracts, £101m from funding body grants, and £14m from research grants and contracts. The remainder came from other sources. The University has a strong balance sheet with substantial reserves. A programme of agreed cost-saving measures will provide current account surpluses from 2019/20. The reserves have enabled investment in strategic change to build for our future.

Full Annual Reports and Financial Statements can be found [here](#). The Open University has spent almost 50 years inspiring learning and creating higher educational opportunities with no barriers to entry. We continue to demonstrate excellence in research and teaching and achieve enormous reach through use of open access educational resources and our partnership with the BBC. Key highlights of the year included:

**GROWING OUR ATTRACTIVENESS TO STUDENTS**
We increased the number of students studying with us to a level last seen in 2013/14 and improved our student satisfaction score in the 2018 National Students Survey.

**GAINING EXTERNAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE EXCELLENCE OF OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING**
We secured continuance of triple accreditation for our MBA, keeping us in the top 1% globally, and we have excelled in all our professional programme reaccreditations and quality assurance assessments.

**EXTENDING OUR REACH**
We remain the largest university in the UK and one of the largest in Europe in terms of student numbers. We grew online courses provided through the University’s subsidiary company, FutureLearn Limited, to 20.6 million registrations from 8.4 million learners across the world, and we have established and are growing Higher Level Apprenticeships.

**ENHANCING OUR MULTIPLE MEDIA CHANNELS**
Use of our multiple media channels continues to grow. Total downloads from The Open University iTunes U service reached 72 million, video views of Open University content on YouTube reached 50 million, and there were 7.8 million unique visits to the University’s open educational resource website, OpenLearn. We achieved significant recognition for programmes including Blue Planet II, The Prosecutors, and The NHS at 70.

**EXTENDING OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT**
We continue to work in partnership with international development agencies to deliver life-changing educational programmes across three continents.

**BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE**
We commenced an ambitious and far reaching programme of strategic change to enhance our students’ experience and interaction with the University, and to upgrade and improve our student facing support systems and processes.
This year we celebrated with more than 8,000 graduates at 29 ceremonies in 14 locations. Those 8,000 were joined by over 26,000 guests - supportive family and friends who cheered, clapped, whistled and whooped during each event. And we conferred 34 honorary degrees.

OU students are represented by the OU Students Association. Run by students, for students, it ensures that the student voice is heard. The OU Students Association works with the University to ensure that students are involved as partners in shaping their studies. Although OU students learn at a distance, we work to ensure they all have the opportunity to be involved in giving their views on the curriculum or institutional change and development.

STUDENT PROFILES
There is no typical OU student. People of all ages and backgrounds study with us, for all sorts of reasons - to update their skills, get a qualification, boost their career, change direction, prove themselves, or keep mentally active.
- 76% of directly registered OU students work full- or part-time during their studies
- 23% of OU UK undergraduates live in the 25% most deprived areas
- 34% of new OU undergraduates are under 25

We are the largest provider of higher education for people with disabilities:
- 24,709 students with disabilities studied with us in 2017/18

Our open admissions policy helps thousands of people who failed to achieve their potential earlier in life:
- 34% of students had one A level or a lower qualification at entry

STUDENT STORIES
The OU’s students have some remarkable personal stories. For example:

Fatema fled from her home country of Bangladesh to Cyprus at 16 without finishing school. Investing all of her time in daily survival, she never had the opportunity to resume her schooling. Upon hearing about The Open University and its open to all policy, she enrolled on a Social Work course.

John grew up in Cardiff and was unable to read or write. He reached his mid-30s having never read a book, and it was later discovered he has severe dyslexia, ADHD, and Meares-Irlen syndrome. Despite these challenges, John graduated with an OU Science Degree at the age of 46.

Read more student stories here.
The People Services unit comprises all the functions and activity required to provide high quality HR expertise and support across the University. The People Services team, of around 175 colleagues, is responsible for delivering HR expertise, and support for staff and managers through a centralised Resourcing Hub, People Hub, People Services Business Partners and Areas of Expertise.

The ambition of the People Services team is:
“To inspire our people to reach their potential so that our students can reach theirs.”

**ORGANISATION**
The Group People Director is supported by a Deputy Group People Director, to whom the operational and delivery teams in People Services report directly. The Areas of Expertise leads, together with the Deputy Group People Director, report to the Group People Services Director.

**PEOPLE HUB**
The People Hub are responsible for dealing with all queries on people process and policy. The team are focused on supporting line managers with their staffing queries, including disciplinaries, grievances, performance and absence issues. The team consists of generalist advisers and specialist teams including Immigration, and employee relations specialists.

**PEOPLE SERVICES BUSINESS PARTNERS**
The central team of Business Partners are responsible for providing strategic and operational HR support for Faculties and Units. Working closely with key stakeholders, Business Partners support and enable the Units to deliver their objectives through people interventions and solutions. They have responsibility for supporting and leading people change, organisation design and engagement.

**RESOURCING HUB**
The Resourcing Hub supports all recruitment activity, attraction, selection, candidate management, shortlisting and agency selection and management. The team have specialist expertise to support the differing requirements of specialist recruitment from Academics to IT and Data experts.
AREAS OF EXPERTISE

PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION
The People Engagement and Inclusion Area of Expertise develops and implements organisational industrial relations and engagement strategies that enable the University to become an employer of choice and a great place to work.

REWARD AND INSIGHT
The Reward and Insight Area of Expertise develops and manages the People Services’ Reward, Benefits and Performance strategies to ensure that the University has best practice frameworks to deliver the institutional strategy. The Area of Expertise comprises of the Reward team where the focus is on developing the University’s Reward and Benefits strategy and approach, and the HR MI and Systems team which provides support on the HR systems and the provision of HR insight and analytics across HR and the University. The University is engaged in a major project to replace its core business systems and this will be a key area of focus for the team in the next few years.

TALENT AND DEVELOPMENT
The Talent and Development Area of Expertise looks after OU-wide learning initiatives to support the development and growth of University staff. This includes, support with the identification of learning needs and appropriate solutions, providing quality learning opportunities and strategic talent identification and development (early to executive level).

PEOPLE SERVICES TRANSFORMATION
The People Services function has been transforming. We have established our new centralised resourcing and information and guidance hubs, bringing together devolved and disparate services to form expert teams. These services went live on 28th January 2019.

In our next phase of transformation, and as part of an OU wide systems review, all HR systems are being upgraded. The plan is to implement new systems and ensure benefits are found through efficiencies by 21/22.

The People Services Transformation team consists of subject matter experts, project managers and expert consultancy advisers working to support our people, both inside People Services and more broadly through the University through the implementation and impact of these changes.

SIZE AND SCOPE
In total the People Services team is approximately 175 people. Nearly 100 team members come together in our Hubs, working tirelessly to provide front line help and support for all colleagues.
In 2019 the OU marks its 50th Anniversary. This will be the celebration of the remarkable contribution the University has already made to millions of learners and to society more generally. At a time of unprecedented change, the University is seeking to appoint a Group People Director to help deliver the next stage sustainable and long-term change.

As Group People Director you will provide a clear vision and direction that will promote continuous improvement, innovation and agility in service delivery, and ensure that the University’s people strategies support the achievement of the University’s mission and align with the University’s values.

You will report to the University Secretary, providing advice, guidance and input to the senior leadership group in your area of expertise. This key position in the University provides a great opportunity to contribute to cross-institutional strategic direction, working very closely with members of VCE and the Vice Chancellor to shape and influence the formation of policy, and ensuring that all our activities align with, and actively support, the achievement of the University’s central objective of student success, and that our people are enabled to succeed in support of our students.

**KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES**
- Leadership of the OU people function, providing the motivation and direction required to deliver against the University’s strategy.
- Act as a partner for the senior leadership team, actively promoting a collegiate culture; driving greater collaboration and innovation across the organisation.
- Drive a clear and creative plan for engagement with colleagues at all levels; work closely with Marketing and Internal Communications to build the internal brand ensuring it reflects the best of The Open University’s external brand.
- Promote greater innovation through creative organisation design, attracting and promoting diverse talent, and building an adaptive and resilient organisation.
- Improve organisational effectiveness, enabling the organisation to become more agile, through improved use of technology and the changing of structures where necessary.
- Sustain good working relationships with critical stakeholders, such as unions.
- Provide guidance and an external market lens on reward; lead the effective modernisation of terms and conditions.
- Lead talent acquisition; ensuring that The OU is well placed to attract the best talent. Help shape the organisation’s social media strategy, employer branding and optimise external relationships appropriately.
- Lead talent development; equipping and enabling managers to utilise personal development plans and ensuring performance management tools are in place to drive accountability, productivity and pace.
THE PERSON

The Group People Director will have a proven track record of operating as part of a business leadership team, in an organisation of complexity and scale. While experience in the higher education arena is not essential, it will be advantageous, and senior experience of leading the people function in a regulated, customer-centric organisation is particularly desirable. The successful individual will have the intellect and maturity to understand the wider strategic and political implications impacting The Open University and they must be passionate about their role, motivated by The Open University’s social justice mission, and driven to deliver results.

Experience of working in an organisation which has deep heritage and long serving colleagues would be valuable, combined with a track record of successfully introducing and implementing necessary change. Stakeholder management will be a critical element of this role and the Group People Director must have the interpersonal skills to build effective relationships across the organisation; this will require intellect, energy, impact and resilience.

EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrable experience of driving cultural and behavioural change in complex organisations with robust internal and external stakeholders e.g. unions.
- Keen insight into organisations with strong, mission-based colleague groups, many of whom are long-serving.
- Track record of enabling innovation in an organisation through structural and/or behavioural change.
- Record of driving improvements in costs, efficiency and productivity.
- Some exposure to Higher Education or a similarly regulated sector would be advantageous.

PERSONAL

- Intellect, maturity, political sensitivity, robustness and influencing skills to operate at this level.
- Robust project management skills and a structured, thorough and organised approach.
- Commercial acumen with a keen sense of how to lead HR in an organisation which is driven by market forces.
- Passion and enthusiasm for education.
- A style which is proactive, enabling, resilient, energetic, with the presence, warmth and gravitas to operate at the top of the organisation.
HOW TO APPLY

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive curriculum vitae along with a covering letter, setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the required criteria. Please include in a separate document the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at www.odgers.com/70570
If you are unable to apply online please email your application to 70570@odgers.com.
All applications will receive an automated response.
If you prefer to send your application by post, it should be addressed to:
Natalie Pettifer, Odgers Berndtson, 20 Cannon Street, London EC4M 6XD.
All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist The Open University in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

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.

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.

RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE
Closing date: 15 March 2019
Longlist meeting: 25 March 2019
Odgers Berndtson Interviews: 18 – 29 March 2019
Shortlist meeting: 15 April 2019
Final Panel Interviews: 30 April 2019
Please diarise these dates accordingly.

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 Natalie.Pettifer@odgersberndtson.com.

QUERIES
For a confidential conversation about this opportunity, please contact:
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