

## **The Vice-Chancellor: Role and Person Specification**

The role of the Vice-Chancellor is to provide the vision and leadership required to ensure the future prosperity and success of the University. Harper Adams has a distinctive and high-performing position within the higher education sector. The Vice-Chancellor must be able to build upon these strengths to ensure that the University continues to be a leading university whilst making valuable contributions to the rural economy, and society in general, on issues related to its mission. The positioning of the institution, in a time of considerable change within the sector and in the rural agenda, will be of particular importance, and the ability of the Vice-Chancellor to ensure the future sustainability of the University in the light of external developments will be critical.

In addition to being the Chief Executive Officer of the University the Vice-Chancellor will have formal responsibilities associated with the role of Accounting Officer under the regulatory and financial arrangements held by the University with the Office for Students (OfS), Research England and other statutory agencies. The Vice-Chancellor will therefore be responsible to the Board of Governors for ensuring compliance with the OfS regulatory framework, the financial health of the institution, the initiation, development and delivery of institutional strategies and the provision of staffing, services and facilities that meet the needs of the University's wide-ranging community.

The Vice-Chancellor will be responsible for, and will be expected to demonstrate, success in the following broad areas:

### **Vision and Strategy**

The Vice-Chancellor must have the vision to determine the future path of the institution in such a way that utilises and develops its strengths, has credibility within the higher education and rural sectors and has the support of the University's community. The vision, and the institutional strategy that emanates from it, must build upon the distinctive position of the University within the UK higher education sector and be related to its context and capabilities, whilst addressing critical issues of importance to society and, in particular, rural businesses and communities. The Vice-Chancellor must be able to motivate the University in the formulation and delivery of the institutional vision and strategy and ensure that communication with all sections of the University, and external agencies involved in the work of the institution, is maintained. The Vice-Chancellor must be able to clearly articulate the institutional strategy to wider audiences so that, where appropriate, they might be engaged in the work of the University.

*Candidates must demonstrate an ability to create an institutional vision and strategy in a complex working environment, and to lead their implementation in such a way that inspires and engages all stakeholders to ensure the participation and support of the University community. Candidates will also demonstrate their ability to be innovative in strategy development and to make difficult choices between multiple strategic imperatives so that the University's forward planning is both realistic and resource efficient. Evidence of previous experience in this area will be required.*

### **Leadership**

The Vice-Chancellor will lead the University whilst ensuring that all staff feel connected and have the opportunity to be productive, innovative and creative in their contributions to the work of the institution. Leadership will also be required to negotiate environmental constraints that impinge upon the institutional vision and strategy. The Vice-Chancellor will be directly responsible for leading the senior management team, evaluating their performance and ensuring that high quality, value-for-money, services are provided by them to support the institutional mission, vision and strategy. An empowering approach to delegation to the senior team is anticipated, but given the small nature of the team, it is likely that the Vice-Chancellor will need to be involved in operational delivery as well as high-level decision-making and policy setting. One such example is in the management of international activities, including oversight of international student recruitment. The Vice-Chancellor will lead change within the institution to better enable the delivery of core strategic objectives. The Vice-Chancellor will provide appropriate leadership to the student community, through personal

example and practical support, to provide an environment in which students of the institution can work to their full potential and the welfare of the student community is appropriately supported.

*Candidates will demonstrate their experience in leading a highly complex organisation with multiple stakeholders and competing priorities. Adaptability and responsiveness to a fast-moving external environment will be an essential requirement. Practical experience, at a senior level, in managing and motivating staff, team building, succession planning and in leading change, will be required. The ability to consult, listen and then be decisive about a chosen course of action will be of particular importance.*

## **Governance**

The Vice-Chancellor will serve as an ex-officio Governor of the University. In this capacity, the Vice Chancellor will play a major role in the governance of the institution, and to ensure that the Board of Governors is kept fully informed of developments, risks and challenges arising within the organisation. An open and candid approach with the Board of Governors on these matters will be expected. The Vice-Chancellor will develop an appropriate working relationship with the Chair of the Board and the University Secretary, who acts as Clerk to the Board, to ensure the efficient management of the business of the Board and its Committees, and the delivery of appropriate information to these bodies by members of the senior management team. The Vice Chancellor will act as Chair of the Academic Board, as a Trustee of the Harper Adams University Development Trust and as a Director of subsidiary companies operated within the Harper Adams University Group.

*Candidates will demonstrate experience of higher education governance and an understanding of the regulatory environment in which the University operates. Experience of leading senior institutional committees and of contributing to major institutional decision-making at Board level would be an advantage.*

## **Organisational Management**

Harper Adams operates in a complex funding and policy environment that requires the Vice-Chancellor to be aware of, and engaged in, a wide variety of public arenas of importance to the institution. At the same time, the Vice-Chancellor is ultimately responsible for the delivery of effective and efficient academic and administrative functions and must therefore be capable of balancing external and internal priorities to ensure that both receive sufficient attention. As Chief Executive, the Vice-Chancellor will ensure that the financial management of the institution is sound and that organisational structures, policy formulation, mechanisms for delivery of strategic objectives and devolved managerial responsibilities operate to the highest possible standard. The Vice-Chancellor will ensure that management at all levels within the University is effective and continues to be developed across the organisation. As Accounting Officer for the University, the Vice-Chancellor will ensure that appropriate organisational arrangements are in place to safeguard the assets of the University and to ensure that investment decisions are taken in an appropriate manner, with due regard to the governance arrangements of the institution. The Vice-Chancellor will also be required to ensure that the institution operates in compliance with legal requirements, including those associated with its charitable status.

*Candidates will demonstrate a wide understanding and experience of the organisational and service delivery functions in a university environment and of the successful management of an organisation of the scale of the University. The ability to balance competing priorities to deliver high quality management is an essential requirement. Candidates will be expected to be financially literate.*

## **Academic Activities**

As the academic head of the institution the Vice-Chancellor will lead academic direction-setting and, in so doing, ensure that the University's contribution to wider society is of the highest possible quality across all aspects of its intellectual activities. The Vice-Chancellor will play a major role in setting academic strategy, academic standards and delivering, through appropriate academic structures, the best possible education, research, innovation and engagement with business and society by those involved in the work of the institution. The Vice-Chancellor will also ensure that the principles of free

enquiry and independence of thought are maintained by the University such that it can fulfil its role as an academic contributor to the pursuit of knowledge and debate on topics of significance to wider society. The Vice-Chancellor will ensure that the Governing Body is engaged with academic developments within the University, and that their impact on institutional strategy is properly co-ordinated. Leadership of the academic community will be a critical function of the role.

*It is anticipated that candidates will have experience, credibility and considerable understanding of the academic nature of the University, and the need to maintain high standards across all areas of its academic activities. A thorough understanding of policy developments and emerging issues within the higher education sector will be required. Senior management experience in the setting of academic policies, and their relationship to institutional strategy-setting, will also need to be demonstrated.*

## **External Profile**

The University must continue to raise further the profile of the institution over its next strategic planning period. The aim of this is to improve the influence that Harper Adams has on national policy determination, engagement with regional and local organisations and communities that impact upon its mission and to ensure that the wider public is aware of the high-quality contribution made by the University to innovation and knowledge creation. The Vice-Chancellor will therefore provide a credible external 'voice' for the University across a wide range of audiences, and to influence positively decision-makers at all levels within and outside the rural sector. The Vice-Chancellor will act in an ambassadorial capacity for the institution and will ensure that its activities are made known to key people within and outside the university sector so as to ensure that the contribution made by the University reaches as wide an audience as possible. The Vice-Chancellor will take direct responsibility for the development and implementation of a communications strategy that will guide this area of the University's work and will help promote the work of the institution within the UK and overseas. The Vice-Chancellor, with the agreement of the Chair of the Board of Governors, will also take on appropriate external appointments that will support the University's work or otherwise make a contribution to the higher education or rural sectors, so long as these do not interfere, or cause conflict with, the work of the University.

*Candidates will be able to demonstrate their ability and achievements in ambassadorial, networking and influencing activities across a range of sector and non-sector organisations. Experience of working with rural organisations would be desirable, but of equal importance is the ability to develop appropriate networks of importance to the University where they currently do not exist. Candidates must be prepared to work flexibly, on and off campus, to satisfy the requirements of this aspect of the role. The role will involve a significant requirement for travel within the UK and, from time to time, overseas travel to meet the above requirements. Candidates will need to hold a current UK driving licence.*

## **The University Community**

Harper Adams has a strong sense of community, which is an important factor in the University's ability to deliver a high-quality student experience, recruit high quality staff and encourage all members of the institution to value its role in the locality as well as on the national and international stage. The Vice-Chancellor will foster and develop that sense of collegiality through the effective management of people and a clear understanding of the relationship between their contribution to the work of the University and the overall success of the institution. The Vice-Chancellor will be accessible and visible in their role, bringing people together and working across levels – up and down the hierarchy and across boundaries within the university and externally

*Experience of inspiring, engaging and motivating large teams of people undertaking disparate functions to ensure that they understand and are aligned with and feel connected to common institutional objectives will be essential aspects of the Vice-Chancellor's role. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate these capabilities.*

*Particular knowledge of current and planned workforce development needs, issues of equality and diversity and staff wellbeing within the higher education sector, and their potential impact upon the strategy of the University, would be an advantage.*

### **Generating New Source of Income**

In the next few years all higher education institutions will face continued pressures from the higher education market, cost pressures and the need to secure income from a wider range of sources. The University will require such income to develop its academic profile and core facilities which will support the delivery of its strategic objectives. The role of the Vice-Chancellor will be to lead the University in such a way that it is agile enough to identify and capitalise on new income sources that will support and enable the further development of the institution. Working with the Harper Adams University Development Trust, the Vice-Chancellor will play a leading role in working with potential donors to generate philanthropic donations by benefactors to the University. They will create and lead innovative strategies to deliver the institution's further fundraising objectives.

*Candidates will need to demonstrate successful experience of donor engagement, fundraising, or the ability to demonstrate sound income generating skills through the identification of new sources of income, the ability to assemble cases for funding and successful outcomes that have delivered significant new funding streams in their former role(s).*

### **Personal Characteristics**

Given the broad nature of the post, the Vice-Chancellor will demonstrate exceptional ability across a wide range of working situations, together with the requisite degree of authority, integrity, financial probity, commercial acumen and intellect required of a role of this seniority in an academic institution. Candidates will need to demonstrate a firm understanding of the environment in which the University operates and have the capacity to undertake the role with the gravitas and credibility within and outside the organisation, to command the respect of a wide range of stakeholders.

*As the leading spokesperson for the institution the Vice-Chancellor will act as an advocate and ambassador for the University in a range of settings. Candidates will need to demonstrate well-developed interpersonal skills, empathy and respect, providing evidence of their ability to build strong, supportive, positive and sustained relationships, recognising that relationships and people are at the heart of much of what they do and how they do it. Candidates will need to demonstrate their ability to inspire and unite people to ensure that the University's mission and vision are successfully delivered.*

### **Terms of Appointment**

A competitive remuneration and, if applicable, a relocation package will be offered commensurate with the seniority of the post and the nature of the University as a smaller specialist Higher Education institution. In addition, the university also offers a range of pensions options through TPS, LGPS or a Defined Contribution Scheme and individual private medical insurance.

The post is offered on a permanent basis. The appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references and Disclosure and Barring (formerly CRB) checks.

The post will be available to the successful candidate as soon as they are able to commence employment with the University. Candidates will be required to give a nine-month notice period.

## Appointment Process and How to Apply

The Vice-Chancellor will be appointed by the Board of Governors. A Search Committee, chaired by the Chair of the Board of Governors and including other members of the Board of Governors and senior staff, will lead the process and will ultimately make a decision on the appointment.

Informal questions regarding the post should be directed to the University's appointed advisors, GatenbySanderson. Please contact Alison Elton or Ross Highfield E: [ross.highfield@gatenbysanderson.com](mailto:ross.highfield@gatenbysanderson.com) T: 07891 138 886

There are three elements to this application:

- 1) Please submit an up-to-date CV no longer than 4 pages
- 2) Please answer the following competency questions within your supporting statement
  - a. Why would you like to join Harper Adams as our next VC and what is your vision for our future
  - b. Please give us an example of how you have developed and delivered a strategy that has transformed your organisation?
  - c. What are the biggest challenges facing higher education and how has your previous experience equipped you to lead a university during this time of change?
  - d. Please describe your core leadership qualities and provide examples of how you integrate these into your overall leadership style?
  - e. How have you effectively worked within the wider higher education community to shape policy at a national level?
- 3) Once you have submitted your CV and supporting statement, you will receive an email inviting you to record a two-minute video which addresses why the Selection Committee should consider you for this position.

Please provide your home, work, mobile and email contact details and any dates when you are not available or where you may have difficulty with the indicative timetable. You should also provide the names, positions, organisations and contact details of two referees, one of whom should be your current or most recent employer.

If you do not wish your referees to be approached without your prior permission, please state this clearly.

Please click the link to apply [www.harper-adams-appointments.com](http://www.harper-adams-appointments.com) Applications must be submitted as above by midnight on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

Our equal opportunities and diversity monitoring has shown that women and minority ethnic groups are currently underrepresented within the university. We therefore actively encourage applications from eligible candidates from these groups, in addition to other underrepresented protected characteristic areas, such as disability and LGBTQ+.

## Timeline

Applications should be submitted by **midnight on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021**

Preliminary interviews will be held virtually with GatenbySanderson on **w/c 5<sup>th</sup> and w/c 12<sup>th</sup>**

### March 2021

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the campus (restrictions allowing) **w/c 26 April**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to facilitate a series of virtual discussion groups on **6<sup>th</sup> May 2021** followed by final interviews will be held **on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Subject to current restrictions, all shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the University. If this is not possible, candidates will be able to review digital information. Participation in selection activities will be via MS Teams. The selection activities will require candidates to facilitate a discussion on given topics with groups of staff and attend a formal panel interview, in which they will be asked to present briefly without visual aids on another given topic. Candidates are asked to ensure that the selection dates are kept free as unfortunately it will not be possible to arrange alternative dates.

