

Brief for the position of  
**Executive Director of Business  
and People Services**

Royal Holloway, University of London



November 2023



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# Welcome message from the Principal, Professor Julie Sanders



Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Executive Director of Business and People Services at Royal Holloway. This is a significant moment for the university. As a community and as a senior leadership team, we are seeking to shape a future that is as brave, bold and future-facing as the principles which were at the heart of our two founding colleges, Bedford and Royal Holloway, which opened to enable women’s education in the 19th century.

I am very proud to be responsible for an institution of dedicated colleagues, working together across academic and professional services, and an astonishing global community of students, past, present and future.

Walking around our stunning Egham campus and learning about the exciting educational and research activities going on in our six schools, as well as the creative, discovery-led endeavours taking place in our performance spaces, sound studios, research laboratories and volunteering and enterprise hubs is endlessly inspiring. Similarly, we now have a thriving presence in central London through our expanding portfolio of postgraduate programmes and our partnership work as a member of the globally recognised University of London federation. At Royal Holloway, we have the best of both worlds, with everything a close-knit campus provides alongside access to all the stimulus and possibility of a great world city.

We are dedicated in everything we do to the principles of academic excellence, inclusivity and social justice. That shared purpose is threaded through our education, our research and the ways in which our students and colleagues engage with wider society in local, national and global contexts. This academic year we are developing our RH2030s vision and strategy with colleagues, students, alumni and partners, and seeking to ensure that shared values underpin our strategic ambitions in a meaningful way. We hope this is a vision and mission you would like to be part of and make a contribution to.

The Executive Director of Business and People Services is a key role in the University’s senior leadership team, responsible for leading a group of directorates with a strong focus on business-critical services from people to digital. They are responsible for ensuring those services are strategically aligned and change-enabling. Together with their leadership colleagues, the Executive Director will support the Vice-Chancellor and Principal in the management and successful operation of the institution, contributing to its success as a university of social purpose, delivering its education and research objectives in ways that opens up choice and opportunity for all its stakeholders.

We are looking for someone who is imaginative in their horizon scanning capabilities and compelling in their communication of possibilities. We are hugely ambitious for the future of Royal Holloway and we really hope that you will want to join us. I look forward to speaking with you about the opportunity.

*Julie Sanders*

**Professor Julie Sanders**  
**Principal**

# About Royal Holloway, University of London

Royal Holloway, University of London, is ranked in the top 30 universities in the UK\*. Through world-class research that expands minds and changes lives, the dedication of our teachers and the feel of the Royal Holloway experience, ours is a community that inspires individuals to succeed academically, socially and personally.

The university was founded by two social reformers who pioneered the ideal of education and knowledge for all who could benefit. Their vision lives on today. As one of the

UK's leading research-intensive universities we are home to some of the world's foremost authorities in the sciences, arts, business, economics and law. We are strengthened by diversity, and welcome students and academics who travel from all over the world to study and work here, ensuring an international and multicultural perspective within a close-knit and historic campus.

*\*Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, 2023*



# Key facts

- Royal Holloway is currently ranked in the top 30 in the UK in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, 2023. We are also ranked in the top 400 in the world and 41st overall in the UK in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2023. In its category 'International Outlook', Royal Holloway is ranked in the UK's top 40 universities.
- Royal Holloway sits within the top 25% of universities in the UK for research rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.
- Five submissions were ranked in the top 10 for 4\* outputs.
- The National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 revealed that Royal Holloway, with a rating of 79%, remains above the sector average.
- Our world-leading researchers continue to address global challenges, including the development of treatments and therapies for rare diseases and life-limiting conditions, the rapid decline of bees and protecting the UK's national infrastructure from cyber-attack.
- Recognised as world-class experts in the arts, humanities and sciences, many Royal Holloway academics act as advisors to policy-makers and the Government on issues ranging from cybersecurity to climate change.
- Royal Holloway has a total of 11,844 students (FTE, at December 2022). Of these 9,421 are from the UK, 601 are from the EU and 2,002 are from further afield internationally. We currently have 9,943 undergraduates, 1,308 postgraduate taught and 595 postgraduate research students.
- In addition to the main campus in Egham, Surrey we also have a growing campus at Bedford Square in central London where over 300 of our postgraduate students are taught.
- We have 1,671 FTE of staff working at Royal Holloway across academic, professional services and support areas.
- Royal Holloway has an annual income of around £201 million (2021/22). We estimate that in the same year, we contributed c.£657.1m to the UK economy\*.
- There are over 95,000 alumni of Royal Holloway and Bedford College worldwide. Notable alumni include novelist George Eliot, suffragette Emily Wilding Davison, the first woman doctor in the west Dr Elizabeth Blackwell, actor Mark Strong, EU Foreign Minister Baroness Cathy Ashton, writer, actor and campaigner Sir Lenny Henry, and Paralympic triple gold medallist Sophie Christiansen.

*\*Biggar Economics*



# Our strategic plan 2021-2024

We have a bold vision for Royal Holloway’s future and a clear strategy for how to make this happen.

The strategic plan considers how we can meet the needs of our modern times in terms of the provision of higher education and research based innovation. By building on our well regarded academic strengths, and by aligning to needs, for example in graduate employability, programme portfolio, access, civic influence, partnership and knowledge exchange, we can deliver on our purpose as a university.

Our three year strategic plan, covering 2021 to 2024, was inspired by the Deed of Foundation which established Royal Holloway College in 1896. Royal Holloway College merged with Bedford College in 1985, providing the foundations of the university we are today.

- Our strategic plan has three strategic priority pillars:
- Respond to the higher education needs and ambitions of an expanding London population.
  - Build strong and sustainable international partnerships that expand the horizons of all our students.
  - Develop strengths in challenge-led research and contribute to addressing key issues of our modern time.



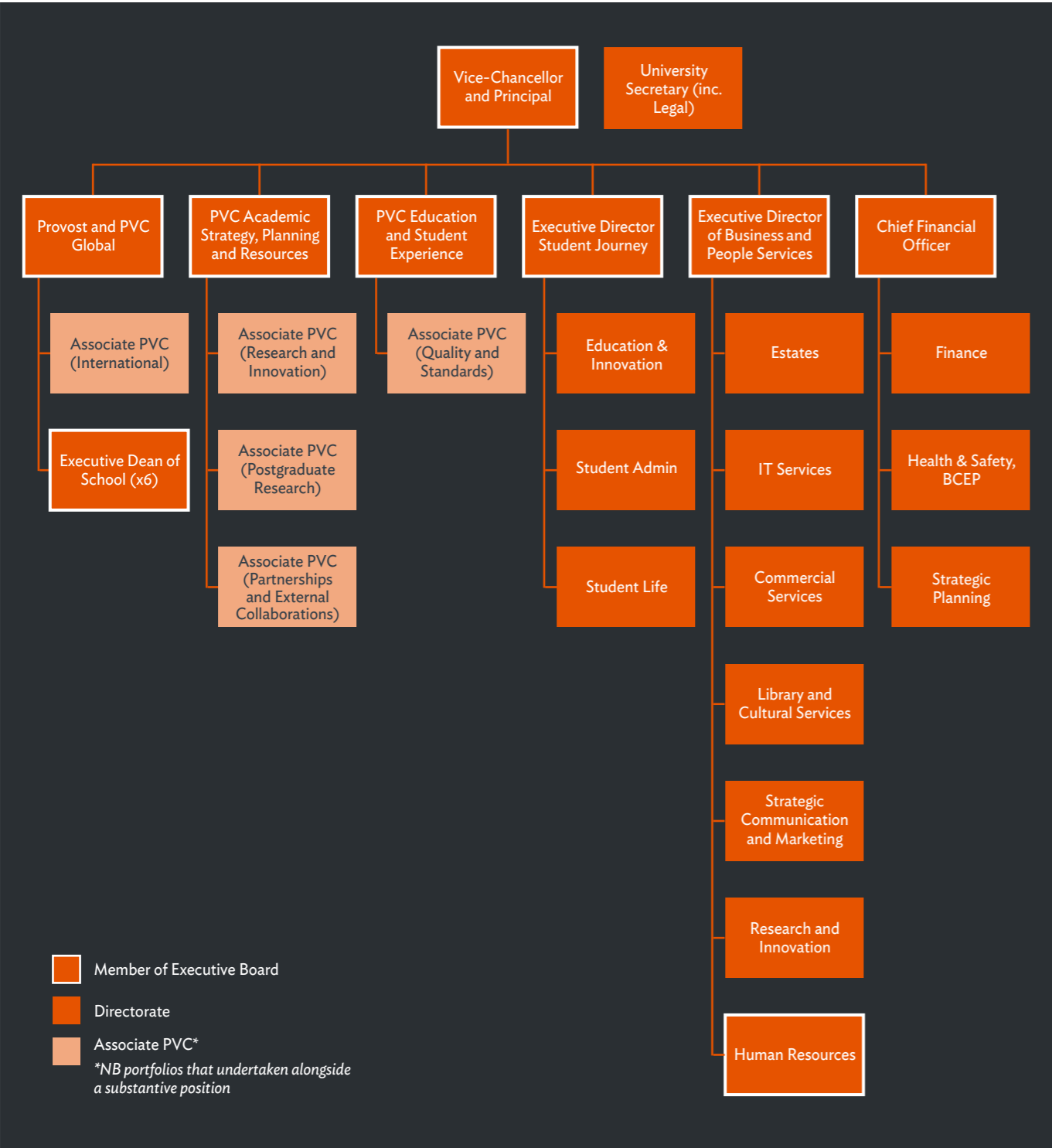
## Vision for the future

- Throughout the plan is a strong focus on managing our resources effectively and efficiently. In doing so we protect the legacy of our founders and enable Royal Holloway to meet the modern needs of future generations.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion are a central part of our efforts to realise this future. As a university we are ambitious to cultivate an inclusive environment which supports excellence in teaching, research and student and colleague experience.

## Straegic plan 2021-2024

Deed of Foundation, 1883	The Founder believes that the education of women should not be exclusively regulated by the tradition and method of former ages; but that it should be founded on those studies and sciences which the experience of modern times has shown to be the most valuable, and the best adapted to meet the intellectual and social requirements of the students.		
Strategic ambition	Aligning to the opportunities and requirements of our modern times to address local and global needs.		
Strategic priority pillars	Respond to the higher education needs and ambitions of an expanding London population.	Build strong and sustainable international partnerships that expand the horizons of all our students.	Develop strengths in challenge-led research and contribute to addressing key issues of our modern time.
	Manage resources effectively and efficiently to ensure a financially sustainable future, creating value through and for our people.		
Strategy to action: Academy and Professional Services	Operational routes to delivery	Academic routes to delivery	
	Simplify and rationalise professional services/ processes/procedures.	Strengthen employability, inclusion, reasons for firm choice recruitment.	
	Maximise benefits of information technology and digitisation.	Grow international experiences for our students.	
	Relentless focus on service/continuous improvement/partnership working.	Expand challenge-led research from investigator-led research basis.	

# Royal Holloway Leadership Structure



# The role

**Accountable for:** The Directorates of Marketing and Communications, Research and Innovation, Human Resources, Estates, Commercial Services (including student accommodation), Library and Cultural Services, and Information Technology.

The Executive Director (ED) of Business and People Services is a key role in the University's senior leadership team, responsible for leading a group of Directorates with a strong focus on business-critical services from people to digital. They are responsible for ensuring those services are strategically aligned and change-enabling. Together with their leadership colleagues, the ED will support the Vice-Chancellor and Principal in the management and successful operation of the institution, contributing to its success as a university of social purpose, delivering its education and research objectives in ways that opens up choice and opportunity for all its stakeholders.

The ED of Business and People Services will make a significant contribution to the development and implementation of institutional strategy and decision-making and help to drive excellent performance across our key people and service-related areas. Organisational transformation and development as well as teamwork are at the heart of this role.

The role shares responsibility with the wider Executive team for promoting the University and enhancing its standing in local, national and global contexts.

## Main duties and responsibilities of the post

As a key member of the University's senior leadership team contribute to the ongoing development of the University's strategy and play an active role in executive, decision making and governance.

Work with the Executive Director Student Journey and Chief Financial Officer to embed a shared commitment to service standards and ensure the Professional Services operating model is optimised.

Across the Directorates within the portfolio:

- Using external insight, and working alongside the relevant director, develop our human, physical and digital resources, commercial services and public-facing cultural assets such as the picture gallery and performance and exhibition spaces to be responsive to emerging needs. Ensure these are inclusive in their design and the user experience, whether student, colleague, partner or wider community is central to their management.
- Use business and budget planning processes alongside appropriate performance metrics and KPIs, to ensure all Directorates operate in alignment with the strategic goals delivering effective, efficient, value adding services.

- Ensure that approaches for emergency planning, business continuity and risk management are robust, reliable and effective in protecting the University's ambitions, operation, assets and communities as well as responding to situations of challenge and crisis. Personally act as a key member of Gold Response.
- Build, mentor and lead a team of professional Directors, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation and values-led service excellence. Empower Directors to achieve excellent performance across all operations, ensuring digitally enabled services, streamlined processes, innovation and efficiencies, and clear accountability.

Work in partnership with experts across the University to enable a culture of compliance in relation to legislative and regulatory requirements and our own policy framework ensuring the highest standards are met at all times. Use monitoring and reporting as necessary to provide assurance.

Advise and support members of the University's Council in the discharge of their responsibility for the safe stewardship of assets.

As a member of Executive Board, the role holder will be expected to champion our emerging values and principles in decision making, planning and prioritising, act as a trusted and visible senior leader and role model for the University's commitment to deep principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Environmental Sustainability.

The duties listed are not exhaustive and may be varied from time to time as dictated by the changing needs of the University. The post holder will be expected to undertake other duties as appropriate and as requested by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. The post holder may be required to work at any of the locations at which the business of Royal Holloway is conducted.

## Internal and external relationships

The following list is not exhaustive but the post holder will be required to liaise with:

- Vice-Chancellor and Principal
- Senior Leadership Team
- Executive Board members and broader senior management teams
- Council and University Secretary
- Students Union

*These responsibilities may evolve over time as both the role and the senior leadership team portfolios develop.*

# The person

## Knowledge, Education, Qualifications and Training

### Essential

- Degree level qualification or equivalent.
- High levels of financial acumen and data literacy.
- Understanding of legislative and regulatory standards relevant to the role (Consumer Marketing, Health and Safety, UKVI, Data Protection, Employment law).

## Skills and Abilities

### Essential

- Confidence, capability, and agility to work as part of a high-performing senior leadership team and with institutional objectives and achievements as their main objective.
- Strong strategic planning, horizon scanning and delivery focus with a track record of achieving results personally and through teams.
- Strong organisational skills and the ability to determine priorities in the face of changing and competing demands and tight deadlines.
- Demonstrable track record of successfully leading and developing diverse professional services teams to deliver optimised performance.
- Ability to manage a number of significant projects and agendas in tandem providing appropriate oversight.
- Proven application of solutions-focussed and risk-informed approaches to complex problems.

- Ability to work collaboratively and build effective relationships with diverse stakeholders and audiences.
- Ability to successfully deliver change through both continuous improvement and larger change initiatives.
- Evidenced commitment to promoting and advancing equality, diversity and inclusion. approaches to people, services and infrastructure.
- Ability to inspire teams and individuals to achieve their best through values-led leadership and management approaches

## Experience

### Essential

- Proven leadership experience in senior management role within a large and complex organisation. Higher education experience is desirable but not essential.
- Experience of coordinating complex budgets, physical and digital resources, and business planning processes which are strategically aligned.
- Experience of leading cultural and operational transformation, embedding new ways of working and taking colleagues as with you in the process.
- Experience in emergency planning, business continuity arrangements and crisis management.

### Desirable

- Experience of significant involvement in major projects with experience of infrastructure projects is desirable.



# How to apply

Royal Holloway, University of London has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson, to whom applications should be sent by the closing date of **8th December 2023 at 5pm.**

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive curriculum vitae (CV) 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 of the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

*In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children/family members 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. 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.*

The preferred method of application is online at [www.odgers.com/90223](http://www.odgers.com/90223)

If you are unable to apply online, please email your application to [elysha.sale@odgers.com](mailto:elysha.sale@odgers.com)

All applications will receive an automated response.

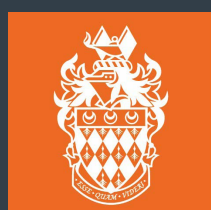
All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist the university in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

For a detailed conversation about this opportunity, please contact:

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