



Job Description

Job Title:	Director of People
Directorate:	People, Culture and Transformation Directorate
Job type:	Professional Services
Grade:	RHUL 10
Accountable to:	Chief People Officer
Accountable for:	A team of HR professionals at varying grades covering the following disciplines/specialisms: HR transactions, HR information and systems, pay and reward, talent attraction, acquisition and retention, strategic business partnering, employee and industrial relations.
Main purpose of the post	
The Director of People provides strategic and operational leadership across the University's People function, ensuring the delivery of high-quality, efficient and customer-focused people services that support the University's strategic ambitions. Reporting to the Chief People Officer and acting as deputy where appropriate, the postholder will lead operational workforce strategy and delivery across areas including employee and industrial relations, strategic business partnering, workforce planning and HR service modernisation. The role will ensure the function operates with credibility, consistency and operational effectiveness, while supporting leaders across the University to deliver organisational change and manage workforce risk effectively. Working closely with the Head of Organisational Development, Culture and Transformation, the postholder will help translate organisational development and transformation priorities into sustainable operational practice.	
Key tasks	
1. Strategic & Operational Leadership of the People Function	
• Provide strategic and operational leadership across service delivery functions. • Lead operational improvement, service modernisation and workforce planning activity across the function. • Ensure services are efficient, customer-focused, compliant and aligned to institutional priorities. • Maintain effective operational workforce management arrangements that support organisational stability, performance and organisational resilience. • Represent and embed values-led working and to champion Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion informed approaches across all areas of responsibility.	

2. Employee, Industrial Relations & Workforce Risk Leadership

- Act as the University's senior operational lead for complex employee and industrial relations matters.
- Provide authoritative advice to senior leaders on workforce risk, organisational change and industrial relations matters.
- Lead the development of constructive, credible and effective relationships with recognised trade unions.
- Support the University in maintaining effective industrial relations arrangements within a complex and evolving higher education environment.
- Lead the management of high-risk and institutionally significant employee relations matters, ensuring appropriate judgement, consistency and risk mitigation.
- Provide operational leadership for workforce consultation and engagement activity associated with organisational change and transformation.
- Ensure employee relations approaches support organisational effectiveness while maintaining fairness, legal compliance and institutional credibility.
- Support leaders to navigate complex organisational, cultural and political issues with confidence and consistency.

3. Strategic Business Partnering

- Lead the development of a strategically aligned and operationally effective business partnering model.
- Strengthen the quality, consistency and impact of business partnering across the University.
- Support leaders in addressing organisational, workforce and people management challenges effectively.
- Promote a proactive, evidence-informed and solutions-focused approach across the HR function.

4. Organisational Change & Strategic Implementation

- Support the implementation of organisational change and transformation activity across the University.
- Translate strategic priorities and people strategies into effective operational delivery and sustainable organisational practice.
- Work collaboratively with the Head of Organisational Development, Culture and Transformation and others to align organisational development activity with operational implementation.
- Contribute to organisational design, workforce change and transformation activity where appropriate.

5. Leadership & Management

- Act as a senior leader within the People, Culture and Transformation Directorate and more broadly in the University community, with both an inward and outward lens, networking across the sector and beyond.
- Lead, develop and motivate teams across the function.
- Build a culture of accountability, collaboration, continuous improvement and professional credibility.
- Establish clear expectations, performance standards and service outcomes.
- Lead teams effectively through periods of change, ambiguity and transformation.

6. Governance, Risk & Insight

- Ensure activity is compliant with relevant legislation, policy and governance requirements.
- Contribute to both University Council and Executive Board, governance and committee reporting where appropriate.
- Use workforce data, insight and organisational metrics to support effective institutional decision-making.
- Ensure workforce-related risks are identified, escalated and managed appropriately.
- Support the development of meaningful workforce insight and operational performance measures.

Other duties

The above list of duties may be adjusted in the light of the expertise of the appointed candidate.

As the needs of Royal Holloway change so the above job profile, duties, and location of the role within the University will be adjusted accordingly. The role is part of the University emergency response roster (rotational basis). There is a need for a presence at all RHUL locations, including our central London campus.

Our Values

Advancing equity and inclusion is central to our identity as a University of Social Purpose, guided by our values of being Respectful, Innovative, Open, and Daring. We strive to build a fair and inclusive environment for all colleagues and students, where we challenge ourselves and others with integrity, and approach difference with understanding and kindness. Every member of our community is expected to treat others with dignity, work collaboratively across a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives, and contribute to a place where everyone can participate fully and feel valued.

Person Specification

Details on the qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge, and abilities that are needed to fulfil this role are set out below.

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Criteria NB: Criteria marked with a star will be considered weighted in order to assist with shortlisting	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment (application, interview, documentation, test)
Knowledge, Education, Qualifications and Training			
Educated to degree level or equivalent professional experience *	X		A, D
Postgraduate qualification (at L7 or above) or exceptionally, advanced professional development in HR, employment relations, leadership or organisational change *	X		A
Chartered Member (or above e.g.: Fellow/Companion) of a relevant professional body (e.g.: CIPD or equivalent) *	X		A, D
Evidence of ongoing CPD	X		A
Experience			
Significant senior HR leadership experience within a large, complex and politically nuanced organisation*	X		A, I
Knowledge / understanding / experience of UK HE sector and its challenges		X	A, I
Extensive and deep knowledge of good practice across all aspects of human resources, including UK employment law and its application	X		A, I, T
Experience leading operational HR functions and complex people services at scale	X		A, I
Experience operating effectively as a trusted adviser to Executive and senior leadership teams	X		A, I
Experience leading teams and functions through periods of organisational change, ambiguity and transformation	X		A, I, T
Experience improving operational effectiveness, accountability and service delivery within HR functions	X		A, I, T
Experience leading and developing strategic business partnering capability	X		A, I

Experience leading service modernisation, operational improvement or digitally enabled transformation activity within complex organisations	X		A
Employee & Industrial Relations Leadership			
Substantial senior-level experience leading employee and industrial relations activity within complex, unionised environments	X		A, I
Demonstrable experience managing high-risk and institutionally significant employee relations matters with sound professional judgement	X		A, I, T
Significant experience supporting organisational change, workforce consultation and organisational restructuring activity	X		A, I
Experience building credible and constructive relationships with recognised trade unions and workforce representatives	X		A, I
Strong understanding of workforce risk, industrial relations strategy and organisational consultation approaches	X		A, I
Experience advising senior leaders on politically sensitive workforce and organisational issues	X		A, I, T
Strategic Thinking and Innovation			
Ability to balance strategic thinking with operational delivery and implementation	X		A, I
Strong operational leadership capability within complex organisational environments	X		A, I
Experience translating strategic priorities into effective operational delivery and sustainable organisational practice	X		A, I
Strong workforce and organisational risk awareness	X		A, I
Ability to identify opportunities to simplify, modernise and improve people processes and services through technology, data and new ways of working and experience of improving customer experience through process redesign and operational innovation	X		A, I
Experience using workforce insight, systems and data to support operational decision-making and	X		A, I

service improvement, both within and outside of HR			
Ability to manage competing priorities and operate effectively at pace	X		A, I
Strong analytical capability and ability to use workforce insight to support organisational decision-making	X		A, I
Experience leading operational implementation of transformation or organisational change programmes	X		A, I
Demonstrable track record of horizon-scanning and translating external insight, emerging workforce trends, innovation and sector developments into practical organisational and people improvements	X		A, I
Understanding of emerging trends in digital HR, workforce technology and AI-enabled people services		X	A, I
Values-Led Leadership and Interpersonal Skills			
Calm, credible and resilient leadership style	X		I
High levels of professional judgement, integrity and accountability	X		A, I
Ability to influence and build credibility with senior stakeholders across complex organisational environments	X		A, I, T
Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of ways (written, verbal etc) with a wide range of stakeholders	X		A, I, T
Strong leadership capability, including experience developing high-performing teams and establishing accountability	X		A, I
Ability to challenge constructively and make difficult decisions where required	X		I
Collaborative and collegiate approach, with the ability to work effectively across organisational boundaries	X		A, I
Commitment to continuous improvement, innovation and service modernisation	X		I
Ability to navigate ambiguity, complexity and organisational politics effectively	X		I
Pragmatic, solutions-focused and outcomes-oriented approach	X		I

Values and commitment			
Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion	X		A, I
Commitment to creating respectful, high-performing and psychologically safe working environments	X		A, I
Demonstrated alignment with organisational values and institutional mission	X		I