



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

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# Candidate brief for the position of Vice-President and Chief Finance and Resources Officer Queen's University Belfast

01 March 2023



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# About the role

## The Opportunity

The Vice-President and Chief Finance and Resources Officer is a member of the University Management Board and reports directly to the President and Vice-Chancellor. The University Leadership Structure may be accessed via the following link: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/StaffGateway/Filestore/Images/Fileupload,1568790,en.pdf>

Priorities for the role include Strategic Leadership, Organisational Development and Effectiveness, building strategic partnerships and relationships as lead three Professional Service Teams – Finance, Estates and Infrastructure and Digital and Information Services.

Queen's University Belfast employs over 4500 people from in excess of 98 countries and has a student body of approximately 25,000. The University is a member of the Russell Group of research-led UK universities, has an annual turnover of £450m and net assets of circa £700m. The University plans for £900m of capital expenditure over the next 10 years. This includes the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and Digital Transformation project for which the Chief Finance and Resources Officer is directly responsible.

This role offers a highly competitive salary and benefits packages pitched to attract the best talent in the marketplace.

## Key relationships

Department/School/Unit: Vice-Chancellor's Office  
Report to: President and Vice -Chancellor

The Vice-President and Chief Finance and Resources Officer is expected to work across all aspects of the University's business and to engage with senior colleagues, including University Management Board (UMB) and the President and Vice-Chancellor. Externally, important relationships may include Belfast City Council, the Russell Group, the British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG), external and internal auditors, banks, investment advisors, QUBIS (a wholly owned subsidiary), tax advisers, research councils and other funding bodies, government, USS pension fund trustees and RBP pension fund trustees.

## Job Purpose

The Vice-President and Chief Finance and Resources Officer is a key leadership role which is responsible for the effective delivery in three key directorates:

- Finance
- Estates
- Information Services

Between them, these directorates employ c.600 employees with a total annual payroll cost of £18m. The total annual expenditure of these three directorates is circa £73m, the Estates and Infrastructure Directorate alone accounting for £32m annually.

The focus of the role in relation to each of those three areas is set out below:



Finance - the key focus of the role will be to provide leadership for an effective and proactive financial service that provides robust and regular financial management and information; ensures institutional financial sustainability; and supports the achievement of the University's strategic objectives particularly growth and diversification.

Estates and Infrastructure - to lead the development of the Estates Strategy and then delivery of components of that strategy which will involve delivering viable funding options. In addition to lead on the successful delivery of the significant BRCD building projects.

Digital and Information Services - to provide leadership and support to enable delivery of the Digital Transformation programme as part of Strategy 2030.

## The Role

### Strategic Leadership – Institutionally

1. Lead and set the direction for the Director of Finance and the Directorate of Finance, ensuring that staff are motivated, engaged and appropriately developed. Providing leadership that promotes a culture of excellence, innovation, collegiality, continuous improvement and promotes a high-performance culture.
2. Lead, develop and implement the University's financial strategy, ensuring Queen's University has a robust sustainable financial position generating surpluses and cash to invest in people and infrastructure.
3. Develop our commercial strategy for growth and diversification of the University's income sources, including oversight of its commercial subsidiaries, and ensure business cases are evaluated for new activities.
4. Manage the University's investment portfolio and ensure that treasury activities and cash management are conducted efficiently and effectively.
5. Advise and guide Senate (and its committees and sub-committees) and the senior officers on all financial and commercial matters, including the financial implications of internal and external developments.
6. Lead on and work with the Director of Finance to deliver all transparent internal and external financial reporting and forecasting in an accurate and timely manner to inform decision-making and comply with statutory requirements.
7. Influence the Higher Education sector and relevant stakeholders in relation to financial strategies and policies.
8. Work with colleagues to ensure that the University delivers the required financial performance to enable investment in strategic development and delivery of the University's strategic vision and plan.
9. Act as an ambassador for the University to external stakeholders and interested parties.
10. Play a leading role in strategic planning and institutional performance.
11. Collaborate with the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) and Vice Presidents/Chief Officers to develop a matrix leadership approach.
12. Develop innovative and enabling approaches to financial management which delivers transparent internal financial information to aid decision making within the Faculties and Professional Service areas - allowing the University to achieve its full potential.

### Strategic Leadership – Portfolio Specific

13. Build the leadership and management capability ensuring the development of synergies across the three directorates (Finance, Digital and Information Services and Estates and Infrastructure) to the benefit of students and staff.
14. Work with the Director of Estates and Infrastructure on the development and delivery of the Estates Strategy 2022-2032.



15. Work with the Director of Digital and Information Services on the development and delivery of the Information Services Strategy.
16. Lead on the development of funding options and deliver plans from a finance perspective for the delivery.
17. of Strategy 2030 and the Estates Strategy.
18. Embed a culture of excellence and continuous improvement in the services offered by the portfolio – work as a key enabler of strategic planning, development, and change.
19. Any other duties that fall within the general ambit of the post.

# The Individual

## Essential criteria

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### Qualifications

- Educated to minimum of degree level or equivalent qualification.
- Recognised professional accountancy qualification (eg CCAB)

### Experience

- Significant experience, with a personal track record of success, as strategic leader with lead responsibility for financial management in a large and complex operating environment (£100m+ budget and 500+ employees).
- A proven track record at Director level or above in a large and complex organisation with responsibility for strategic planning and delivering challenging targets. Applicants must have significant experience of reporting at Board level on strategic, finance, estate, and information services matters.
- Recent and substantial experience in developing an effective senior management team and high-performance culture in a multi-disciplinary and diverse environment.
- Demonstrable evidence of success in developing and leading important strategic initiatives and solutions with successful Institution-wide impact.
- A broad financial skill set including financial reporting and accounting, financial control, financial planning and analysis, commercial business insight, business partnering skills, procurement, tax and treasury.

### Personal qualities

- Robust and resilient, with strong presence and executive impact with the ability to confidently deliver complex messages to a diverse and demanding audience and the ability to negotiate and influence at all levels.
- An analytical mindset with the ability to manage and mitigate risk, with a positive creative instinct to develop solutions to support the University's sustainable growth and change.
- Excellent communication skills – ability to communicate effectively with colleagues across the institution as well as with outside agencies and a strong commitment to collaboration and collegiality.
- Demonstrable ability to build networks with and to influence funding bodies, political contacts and major corporate partners.
- Proven ability to work within a regulatory framework and to articulate its potential as a tool for continuous improvement.



- Demonstrable commitment to the mission and values of Queen's University Belfast and an understanding of the transformational impact of education.
- Commitment to and understanding of low-carbon and green infrastructure finance, and the ability to balance financial returns with environmental sustainability.

### Desired criteria

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- Evidence of the successful creation and implementation of a strategic vision within a complex team in a large and complex organisation (£300m budget, 750+ employees).
- Recent relevant experience of representing a large organisation at a strategic level in dealings with government as well as other external advocacy, maximising local, regional and national networks as well as developing strong relationships at a senior level with diverse stakeholders across public and private sectors.
- Demonstrable experience of driving business growth and revenue both in existing and new markets.
- Evidence of entrepreneurialism with an ability to identify innovative ways to improve performance and deliver value for money.
- Demonstrable and proven understanding of the challenges and strategic issues facing higher education.



# Candidate Charter

## Talented people are our lifeblood

Whether we approach you about a specific opportunity, or you contact us to share your biography and career ambitions, we want you to have a constructive experience of engaging with Odgers Berndtson.

We recognise that we have a commitment to you as well as to our client, and we undertake that our dealings with you will be professional, courteous, rigorous and honest.

We will:

- Approach you after considered analysis and in relation to roles where we think there is a strong match. Your time is valuable; we don't want to waste it.
- Work to make your candidacy as strong as it can be.
- Represent you effectively and discreetly to our client, based on accurate information that you give us in confidence.
- Be inclusive, open and fair-minded.
- Keep you informed, communicating outcomes promptly, and giving fair and honest feedback where we can.
- Celebrate your success in the event of a successful outcome, and share any lessons in the event of disappointment.
- Take a long-term view, recognising that you have a multi-year view of your own career. Where possible, we will help you fulfil your ambitions.
- Embrace continuous improvement, for example by carrying out regular independent audits of those we shortlist for roles.

If at any stage you feel we have not lived up to the letter or spirit of our values, please tell us. We do want to know and invite you to email Helen Thomas, Research Principal and Head of Candidate Care at [helen.thomas@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:helen.thomas@odgersberndtson.com).

## Contact details

If you are interested in this role and would like to discuss any aspect of it further, in confidence, please contact:

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