

Chief of Staff to SVP Academic

Job description

September 2021

Post title	Chief of Staff to SVP Academic
Grade/salary	Grade tbc – Personal Salary
Hours of work	Full time-Open-ended
Responsible to	DVP Operations with dotted line to SVP-Academic
Responsible for	No direct line reports

Role purpose

King’s College London is one of the top 10 UK universities in the world (QS World University Rankings, 2019) and the fourth oldest university in England, based in the heart of London. King’s has over 31,000 students (including more than 12,800 postgraduates) from some 150 countries, and over 8,500 employees.

The Chief of Staff to the SVP Academic will deliver effective and efficient management of the SVP’s Office, and will take on a range of responsibilities from ensuring the regular committees and meetings run smoothly and are appropriately focussed, to coordinating business planning and budgeting on the SVP’s behalf, and to include taking the lead on sensitive and important initiatives and issues for the SVP.

In all aspects of the role, the Chief of Staff will act as the eyes and ears of the SVP and will speak with the authority of the SVP. It is critical therefore that the Chief of Staff is seen as a highly trusted and discreet interlocuter and advocate, by the SVP, by the wider leadership team at King’s and by other stakeholders.

Role profile

This role will have a matrix reporting line into the DVP Operations and the SVP Academic and attend key meetings and committees alongside or for the SVP Academic. The CoS will have four principal areas of responsibility:

1. Manage the SVP's office. This includes helping the SVP design the necessary meeting structures, and once established, ensuring these meetings are focussed and well run. Outside of the formal meeting structures this aspect of the role includes co-ordinating information flow between the SVP Academic's office with Faculties, the University Executive Team and other stakeholders, coordinating key academic appointments such as Faculty Deans and other duties.
2. Working closely with colleagues in Finance and SPA, co-ordinate the faculty business planning and budgeting process, resource allocation approval processes and regular financial monitoring and control.
3. Leads on specific issues, special projects or initiatives, on behalf of the SVP Academic, ensuring these are progressed in a timely manner and in consultation with affected stakeholders. This area of responsibility is often driven as much by external or unplanned events as University strategy; it is therefore hard to define in advance the precise nature of the portfolio. Typically these issues or initiatives will have a political and reputational dimension.
4. Working closely with colleagues in the Principal's office to ensure that the SVP Academic's work is closely aligned and complementary to that of other SVPs and of the President & Principal.

In undertaking these responsibilities, the Chief of Staff to the SVP Academic will exhibit the following skills and behaviours:

- air traffic control for the SVP and senior team, providing both a formal and informal route into the SVP's office, triaging activity, issues and concerns, handling directly but referring up where necessary.

- integrating and connecting work streams, activities and issues that would otherwise remain siloed, and working in partnership with colleagues across the Principal's office to integrate the work of other SVPs with the Faculties.
- strong communication skills and transparent by default, linking the academic leadership team and the broader organization.
- facilitation and problem-solving, acting with the authority of the SVP to resolve sensitive issues arising.
- project management of sensitive projects and initiatives.
- strong political and commercial acumen.
- an honest broker and truth teller to the SVP & Provost (A&S), the DVP Operations and others.
- strong management capability, ensuring that the regular committee and meeting cycle of the SVP and Provost's office runs smoothly and is focussed appropriately.

Desirable qualifications and experience

- a. Experience in leading, planning and delivery of multi-stakeholder projects.
- b. Ability to understand and work with various University Faculties, Schools and Departments from across the wider academic community and with Professional Service Directorates.
- c. Robust and resilient, demonstrating energy, enthusiasm and self-motivation.
- d. Strong organisational skills and the ability to determine priorities in the face of changing and competing demands and tight deadlines.
- e. A positive and solution focused approach to conflict resolution, with a proven track record in managing complex partnerships and situations.
- f. Strong analytical and critical reasoning skills with the capability to effectively problem solve in complex and dynamic situations.
- g. Clear commitment to personal responsibility and corporate obligation commensurate with the university's overarching ethos as an education provider and its charitable status.
- h. Very high levels of personal credibility – can credibly act on the SVP's behalf.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	How identified and assessed*
* For 'How identified and assessed' use: AP - application, AS - assessment, I - interview, P - presentation, R - references			
Education / qualification and training			
Bachelor's degree	X		
Master's degree in relevant topic		X	
Professional training in finance, change and project management, strategy, operations & leadership		X	
Knowledge & experience			
Irrespective of background, candidates should have solid understanding of the ethos, drivers and culture of UK Higher Education	X		
Skills in strategy development and execution	X		
Experience of working with, coordinating and influencing a wide range of internal and external stakeholder groups to build alignment	X		
Resource allocation and financial control	X		
Strong experience and aptitude for resolving political issues, internally and externally	X		
Personal characteristics/skills			
Outstanding influencing and communication skills – both written and verbal – including at senior level both internally and external stakeholders	X		
Sensitive and responsive to different working cultures	X		
Comfortable with dual reporting lines		X	
Comfortable with maintaining progress on multiple agendas simultaneously	X		
Demonstrable integrity and values	X		