



**University of
Nottingham**
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Chief Operating Officer

University of Nottingham

Contents

01.	Executive summary	2
02.	About the university	3
03.	Fact file	5
04.	Governance and management	6
05.	Vision, mission, and values	8
06.	Strategic goals	9
07.	Research-led education	10
08.	Role description	11
09.	Person specification	13
10.	Expectations and behaviours	14
11.	Appointment details and how to apply	15
12.	Living in Nottingham	16



01. Executive summary

The University of Nottingham is currently undertaking a major organisational transformation programme led by its new President & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jane Norman. To help deliver this, the university is reshaping the structure of its University Executive Board (UEB) and hiring to several senior leadership roles within the Professional Services domain. A new Chief Operating Officer (COO) will become the driving force behind enhancing, streamlining and integrating the critical operational functions that underpin the university's teaching, student experience, and research.

Reporting directly to Professor Jane Norman, and serving as a key and collaborative member of the UEB, you will be accountable for the delivery of Nottingham's Strategic Plan and of the 'Future Nottingham' transformation programme. Through embedding operational excellence, you will ensure that the university can meet its academic ambitions, achieve its strategic objectives, and further elevate its ranking and reputation.

The university is seeking an inspirational and visionary leader with experience of reshaping the performance and culture of a comparably sizeable and complex organisation. You will possess a track record of delivering, and reshaping diverse operational functions. As a decisive and collegiate leader, you will be capable of deploying multiple approaches to achieve positive change on a sustained basis. You will furthermore ensure that the university's values, including equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), are embodied in all aspects of your work.

This is a chance to join a high-performing team shaping the future of one of the UK's largest and most respected universities.

With a proud history dating back to 1881, Nottingham's campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia are home to a combined total of 45,000 students and 9,000 staff. Its pioneering research

has been transforming lives and societies for generations. The university is a member of the Russell Group and is known around the world for its exceptional educational experience, its distinctive global footprint, and its beautiful estate.

Applications should consist of a CV accompanied by a brief covering letter addressing the criteria in the Person Specification. These can be uploaded [here](#).

The deadline for receipt of applications is midday (GMT) on Monday 24th March 2025.

Click below to watch a short introductory video from the university's new President & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jane Norman:



02. About the university

The University of Nottingham is home to a global community of defiant pioneers at the forefront of world-leading research. This is a place where lives are transformed, where barriers are broken, and where change is made together. This is 'a world beyond ordinary'. The university provides an exceptional research-led education and an outstanding student experience. Its research changes lives for the better and tackles some of the biggest challenges facing our planet today.

History and heritage

The University of Nottingham was established in 1881. In 1928, the businessman and philanthropist Jesse Boot donated the land that is now University Park Campus. Boot's vision of a university devoted to discovery, enterprise and the advancement of the human condition, combined with his lifelong commitment to improving health and wellbeing, remains intrinsic to the culture of the university today.



Mahatma Gandhi visits the university in 1931

It was at Nottingham that the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory 'Ibuprofen' was invented, and where two Nobel Prize winners – Professor Sir Peter Mansfield and Professor Sir Clive Granger – did their ground-breaking respective work on MRI and

the analysis of time series data in economics. The university will soon host the UK's most powerful MRI scanner and its innovations in medical imaging continue to revolutionise the understanding of brain function and human disease today.

At the turn of the millennium, whilst other UK universities were still debating the possible impact of globalisation on Higher Education, Nottingham's pioneering spirit led it to set up overseas campuses first in Malaysia and then in China. These are now both fully-fledged entities, welcoming thousands of students to Nottingham's international community every year. In all three countries, the university has maintained its commitment to beautiful campus surroundings that cherish the natural environment. Famously, both the Malaysia and China campuses have their own version of Nottingham's Trent Building and its iconic clock tower.

The University of Nottingham is a member of the UK's prestigious Russell Group and of Universitas 21. In the last Research Excellence Framework (REF), 90% of its research was classed as 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' (4* or 3*), with 51% of that assessed as 'world-leading' for its impact. The university has also achieved Silver rating in the national Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Nottingham has a long-standing alliance with the University of Adelaide, which amongst other things aims to increase the impact of each institution's research at local, regional and national level. It also has a twinning relationship with the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, offering a collaborative joint master's degree programme together.

The challenging present

The University of Nottingham has grown considerably in recent years, without much chance to reflect on whether its existing approaches, processes, systems and culture are fit for purpose. As a consequence, a certain amount of hierarchy and duplication has built up, its financial transparency and forecasting has not always been strong enough, and a sizeable maintenance and capital investment backlog has accumulated. The entire UK higher education sector now faces additional headwinds in the form of cost inflation, static domestic UK student fees, and difficulties with recruiting international students.

Nottingham is not immune from these pressures, but it is determined to face them with confidence and optimism.

The new President & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jane Norman, is leading an ambitious modernisation programme called 'Future Nottingham' which will help to reconfigure and restructure the operating model of the institution. To help deliver this plan, the university is hiring to several senior leadership roles in the Professional Services domain.

For more information about the university visit:

www.nottingham.ac.uk

Campuses



University Park

The original 300-acre campus built amidst extensive greenery and around a lake, only two miles from the city centre



Jubilee

A 65-acre site located only one mile from University Park. Built on the site of the former Raleigh factory



Sutton Bonington

A 110-acre rural site on the Leicestershire border, hosting specialist facilities for biosciences and veterinary medicine



Castle Meadow

Rooted right in the heart of the city, this is the university's new hub for enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship



Ningbo

A 140-acre campus on China's eastern coast, opened in 2004 in partnership with the Wanli Education Group



Malaysia

A 48-acre site in Semenyih, and the first ever branch campus of a British university established outside the UK

The university also has a number of University Hospital sites and its King's Meadow Campus, where some of its Professional Services teams and Manuscripts and Special Collections are currently based.

03. Fact file

The University of Nottingham was the first institution to achieve the prestigious Athena SWAN Gold Award for advancing gender equality. It is ranked in the Top 200 in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024, which are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and it was additionally named 'No. 1 Sports University of the Year' by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024.

We are pioneers Breaking barriers, forging change and leaving ordinary far behind.	We unlock potential Nurturing challengers, innovators and change-makers across subjects and specialisms.	We are globally connected Our community of defiant pioneers has no boundaries.	We transform lives Sparking extraordinary careers, influential connections and world-changing ideas.
--	--	--	--

The university by numbers

- 45,000 students and 9,000 staff worldwide, drawn from more than 150 countries
- 34,000+ students studying in the UK
- 9,000+ students studying in Ningbo, China
- 4,000+ students studying in Malaysia

League tables

UK Ranking	World Ranking	
18	108	QS World University Rankings 2025
10	66	QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2024
16	130	THE World University Rankings 2024
30	-	UK Complete University Guide 2025
32	-	The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024
59	-	Guardian University Guide 2024
3	-	High Fliers Graduate Report 'Top Employers' Ranking 2024
7	-	Research Excellence Framework 'Power' Ranking 2021

04. Governance and management

The university is structured into five faculties: Arts, Engineering, Medicine and Health Sciences, Science, and Social Sciences. It is led on a day-to-day basis by the University Executive Board (UEB), chaired by the President & Vice-Chancellor.

A new University Executive Board

As part of 'Future Nottingham', UEB has been reimagined along lines that will provide for clearer accountability and enhanced collaboration. This refreshed group will lead the institution in simplifying and integrating, in being more decisive, and in becoming more comfortable with constructive challenge.

An org chart is shown over the page.

The Chancellor

The Chancellor acts as an external figurehead for the university. Nottingham appointed Crossbench peer **Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey OBE**, as its Chancellor in 2020. Baroness Young is an author, actor, and peer. She became an independent member of the House of Lords in 2004, working on legislation to eliminate modern slavery and she recently chaired an independent Commission on Culture and Local Government.

University Council

The university's governing body is Council, which approves its strategic plan and is ultimately responsible for its finances, buildings and staff. **Sir Keith O'Nions** took up the role of Chair of Council in 2020. He is a renowned scientist and the former President and Rector of Imperial College London. His career includes roles as Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence, Director-General Science and Innovation in the Department for Innovation and Universities and Skills, and Chair of Cambridge Enterprise at the University of Cambridge.

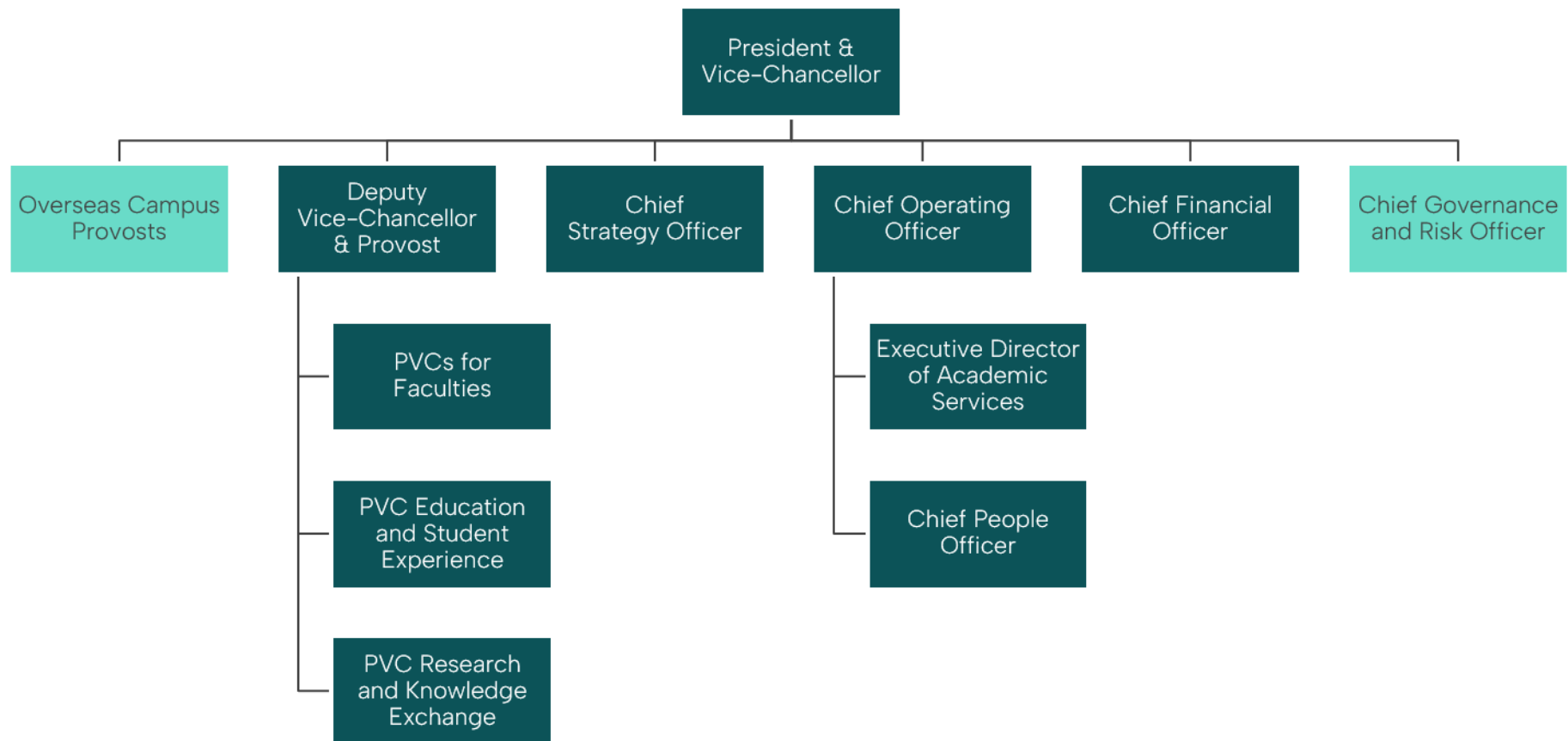
University Senate

The academic authority of the University of Nottingham is the Senate, which has responsibility for directing and regulating teaching and examinations and promoting research. The Senate is chaired by the President & Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Jane Norman**.



The new University Executive Board structure

There will be 12 substantive members of the new UEB. In addition, the Overseas Campus Provosts will attend as required and the Chief Governance and Risk Officer will attend but not be a voting member. These roles are consequently shown in a different colour below.





05. Mission, vision, and values

Mission

"We have inspiring campuses in three countries, energising us to be a globally engaged university that is also committed to making a difference in our cities and regions. We empower and support students and staff to collaborate in learning, scholarship and discovery across all realms of knowledge, solving problems and improving lives. We are stewards of a pioneering and entrepreneurial tradition of creativity and innovation."

Vision

"Our vision is to be a university without borders, where we embrace the opportunities presented by a changing world, and where ambitious people and a creative culture will enable us to change the world for the better."

Values

"Inclusivity – We are a community where everyone can contribute and be appreciated for who they are."

Ambition – We set the highest standards for ourselves and our work and support each other to achieve them."

Openness – We adopt a straightforward and transparent way of communicating with each other and with the world, championing the free exchange of ideas."

Fairness – Our decisions and actions are consistent, impartial and ethical."

Respect – We have regard for each other's rights and feelings, and demonstrate this in our behaviour, treating each other with kindness."

06. Strategic goals

Solving problems and improving lives	Solving problems and improving lives through education, research and knowledge exchange of the highest quality, through application to local and global challenges and through preparing students to lead rich and fulfilling lives, thriving in the rapidly changing world of work.
Supporting potential	Recruiting students and staff with the highest potential and a desire to succeed, and supporting them to achieve their goals. Working with local communities in the region and beyond to identify and encourage people who would benefit from a Nottingham education. Putting measures in place to help to eliminate attainment gaps between students from diverse backgrounds and embed equality in decisions about staff recruitment, reward and progression.
Developing the campus experience	Cherishing the natural environment and beauty of the estate while building on Nottingham's reputation as an outstanding campus university. Developing the campuses to answer the contemporary needs of staff and students. Reaching out to new potential students across the world, attracting those who wish to access online resources, continuing professional development and lifelong learning.
Cultivating a global mindset	Continuing to evolve the principle of being one university with campuses in three countries. Providing an international experience for everyone, whether or not they leave their local campuses. Deepening existing international research and teaching partnerships, refining the curricula in the light of new global demands, providing appropriate mobility opportunities for students, and creating an on-campus culture of positive interaction among people from different parts of the world.
Fostering creativity, discovery and experiment	Staff, students and graduates are known for a willingness to experiment and innovate. Fostering an appetite for enterprise and creativity, celebrating new discoveries, tackling societal challenges and equipping students with the curiosity, entrepreneurialism and emotional intelligence to enable them to be innovators and problem solvers. Developing incentives to ensure people are empowered to experiment without fear of failure.
Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals	Making an outstanding contribution to supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through research and education, engagement with partners, our behaviour on campus and in the community. Placing a special emphasis on environmental sustainability, supporting the City of Nottingham's desire to be a Net Zero Carbon City by 2028 and working with partners in China and Malaysia to improve sustainability within their regions.
Embedding collaboration in all that we do	Endeavouring to become a university without borders, reaching out to students, alumni and civic partners, industry, governments and citizens to ensure Nottingham's research and education is developed in collaboration with its stakeholders and that the University is recognised for the many benefits it provides to society.

Learn more about the University of Nottingham's Strategy and its key enablers here:

www.nottingham.ac.uk/Strategy/Home.aspx

07. Research-led education

Teaching and learning at the University of Nottingham is led and delivered by some of the brightest minds in their fields and is shaped by the latest ground-breaking insights. Students are able to benefit from exposure to world-changing fundamental and translational research, and are immersed in a climate of collaborative inquiry focused on developing solutions to complex global challenges.

Nottingham's pioneering researchers and students work with communities, locally and globally, to make a difference in a wide range of areas, including:

- advancing us towards Net Zero aviation and establishing the East Midlands as a top location for low-carbon aerospace innovation
- shaping national and international strategies for ending Modern Slavery through the work of the University of Nottingham Rights Lab
- setting Tourette's sufferers free through a revolutionary wearable device that uses nerve stimulation to reduce physical and verbal tics

The university endeavours to offer a secure and inclusive environment that supports the wellbeing of its community; an education that is more than a degree; and a rich and stimulating social, cultural and sporting life, open to all. This is enabled by specialist teams across Admissions, Accommodation, Disability Support, Careers, Sport and Fitness, Libraries, Visa and Immigration Advice, and more.



Students' Union

At the heart of student life is the independent, student-led Students' Union (SU) that represents the needs and protects the rights of the student community. Based in the Portland Building, on the University Park Campus, the SU supports students through sports, societies, events and volunteering opportunities, as well as providing opportunities to make change and to find support.

Alumni

The University of Nottingham has a global community of 340,000 graduates who provide opportunities for lifelong learning, volunteering, and networking. Nottingham graduates are often talented trailblazers in their fields, sought after by leading employers worldwide. That is why the university was ranked as the third most targeted HEI by the UK's top employers (High Fliers 2024).

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The university is the place where quick minds and diverse cultures are able to learn, challenge and create. It warmly welcomes those of different cultures, ethnicities and beliefs – indeed this very diversity is vital to its success, fundamental to its values, and enriches life on campus.

Nottingham strives to create an inclusive, respectful and considerate environment where all students and staff can bring their authentic selves to work and feel they belong.

08. Role description

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will be the driving force behind the operational and strategic performance of Professional Services across the university. Setting the tone, and serving as a role model, they will oversee the critical functions that ensure the university's foundational success and operational performance. This role is crucial in enhancing performance across Professional Services, which support the delivery of teaching, student experience and research.

Responsible to the President & Vice-Chancellor, the other key relationships of the COO will be:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
- Chief Financial Officer
- Thematic Pro Vice-Chancellors and Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors
- Chief Governance and Risk Officer

Role purpose

- ensuring competitiveness in resources, efficiency, and service quality
- playing a vital role in promoting and elevating the university's stature and reputation as a leader in organisational culture and values
- ensuring that Professional Services align seamlessly with academic excellence, supported by a forward-thinking digital and physical infrastructure
- overseeing change portfolio management – led by the Chief Strategy Officer, working closely together with the Chief Financial Officer – including leadership of the capital plan and oversight of long-term infrastructure development
- overseeing progress on delivering the university's strategic goals, adapting and adjusting where necessary
- helping ensure the future viability and sustainability of the university's core offer through analysis and sector insights

- managing the university's brand, reputation and income from end-to-end – including student recruitment, alumni and fundraising – whilst maximising opportunities to build reputation and reach through civic, regional and global partnerships and relationships
- focusing on cohesion and efficiency, guaranteeing high-quality service to staff and students while driving the university's strategic objectives
- contributing significantly to broader university strategies and fostering strong corporate and civic partnerships that support academic goals and innovative service delivery



Key accountabilities

- serving as a key member of the university's Executive Board, driving the execution of Nottingham's Strategic Plan
- leading on strategic planning for the university, ensuring strategy goals are delivered, benefits from investment are realised and maintaining the future viability of the university into the future
- managing commercial entities and campus enterprises
- driving high performance across operations (technology, infrastructure, ESE, RKE, strategy and HR) fostering collaboration and accountability and value for money while instilling confidence in service delivery
- providing senior managers with insights and advice on operational efficiency to enhance their areas of responsibility
- overseeing the university's annual planning and resourcing process to maintain strategic alignment
- leading capital projects and optimising returns while aligning with institutional priorities and providing assurance for operational activities
- overseeing corporate technology and digital systems strategy, ensuring data integrity and compliance with legal and university policies
- responsibility for the university's brand, reputation and income from end-to-end, which includes student recruitment, alumni and fundraising
- leading civic, regional and global partnerships to build reputation and leverage opportunities
- championing university-wide environmental sustainability initiatives
- ensuring compliance with legislation related to financial matters and operational procedures
- identifying and assessing risks and developing strategies for risk management using the university's risk management framework
- staying informed about national and international higher education policies, adapting strategy and delivery as needed
- implementing business continuity plans
- providing collective leadership on equality and diversity, related to RKE and ESE, data protection, fraud, and bribery, to maintain the university's highest standards
- compliance with health and safety legislation to provide safe working environments for staff, students, and visitors
- development and leadership of teams and colleagues to deliver high performance and meet the university's objectives and KPIs
- embedding equality, diversity and inclusion principles, in line with expectations set by the university



09. Person specification

This is a new role for the University of Nottingham and will require an expansive, long-term strategic leader with demonstrable experience of reshaping the performance and culture of an organisation on a sustained basis. You will need to be comfortable with and conversant in behavioural capability assessment and development. Decision-making and judgment attuned to cultural and political dynamics will be required from day one.

Qualifications

- educated to a relevant degree level (or relevant equivalent experience)

Experience

- demonstrable experience of leading, delivering, and developing diverse professional services and infrastructure for a large, complex HEI or an allied/comparable organisation
- experience in coordinating and managing intricate capital and revenue budgets, digital and physical resources, and strategic business planning processes
- proven experience in designing and delivering major projects with the appropriate rigour to manage risk vs gains
- background in leading strategies that drive long-term cultural and operational change, embedding new working practices
- demonstrable experience in leading teams and supporting them to strive to deliver high quality outcomes

Skills, knowledge and behaviours

- an inspiring leader with strong leadership skills who works swiftly and displays the drive and

determination to create seamless, integrated operations and infrastructure

- demonstrated ability to influence and inspire others, fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and high performance across the university
- exhibits foresight and courage to act in the organisation's strategic interests, ensuring the university's long-term sustainability
- demonstrates sound judgment and decision-making, with strong commercial and political acumen
- skilled at translating strategic goals into effective operational execution, maximising impact, return on investment, quality, and efficiency
- capable of optimising operations in the digital landscape and realising future digital potential
- committed to academic excellence in research, teaching, knowledge exchange, and internationalisation, believing in the transformative power of education and research
- proven ability to drive change quickly and manage multiple high-stakes projects and programmes simultaneously
- quick to assess situations and act decisively through effective horizon scanning
- offers a creative, solution-oriented approach to complex problems, maintaining attention to detail without losing sight of the bigger picture
- focused on solutions and committed to fixing and resolving challenges
- resilience and flexibility to navigate a dynamic and evolving higher education environment

10. Expectations and behaviours

The university has developed a clear set of core expectations and behaviours that its people should be demonstrating in their work, and as ambassadors of the university's strategy, vision, and values. The following attributes are considered essential:

Valuing people

Role models the highest ethical standards to cultivate a collaborative workplace that develops talent and enhances wellbeing, whilst also balancing the needs of the various stakeholders.

Taking ownership

Translates the vision into a strategy for own area, enabling people to take the right action for the wider organisation. Can resolve complex problems, balancing the needs of varied stakeholders.

Forward thinking

Always has the overall strategic goal in mind, manages to stimulate agile and forward thinking in others, motivating them and giving them the confidence to drive for continuous improvement.

Professional pride

Goal is to be best in class; ensuring this can be achieved in line with long term strategy regardless of short-term challenges. Supports people to do what is best for both the organisation and the department.

Always inclusive

Promotes how collaboration and positive partnerships are essential to success, constantly looking ahead to explore how to involve other potential stakeholders.



11. How to apply

The University of Nottingham is being assisted in this appointment process by the executive search firm Society (www.society-search.com).

Applications should consist of:

1. a concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification
2. an up-to-date curriculum vitae
3. names and contact details of two referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission)

To upload your documents via Society's website, [click here](#).

The deadline for receipt of applications is midday on Monday 24th March 2025.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview first with Society and then with the university itself.

An appointment will then be made subject to references and other pre-employment checks.

The appointed candidate will be offered:

- a competitive pay package in the region of £225,000 to £250,000 GBP (gross) per annum, increasing yearly in line with UCEA negotiations
- 30 days of annual leave per annum, plus UK Bank Holidays and five annual closure days
- a Universities Superannuation Scheme pension (6.1% employee contribution plus 14.5% employer contribution)
- the potential for hybrid working arrangements
- discounted access to onsite health and fitness facilities, including exercise classes
- a free counselling service
- an onsite doctor and dentist
- private AXA medical insurance
- an annual leave purchase scheme

Nottingham is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace where everyone – regardless of background, identity, or lived experience – can thrive. As such, it welcomes applications from all qualified candidates and actively encourage those from underrepresented or marginalised groups to apply. If you require any adjustments during the recruitment process, please let us know.



12. Living in Nottingham

Located in the very heart of England, Nottingham is a vibrant and versatile city, rich with heritage, culture, creativity, and originality. The city has a long history, shrouded in drama, mystery, and legend. It was the home of the world-famous mythical outlaw Robin Hood, as well as of the real-life literary giants Lord Byron and DH Lawrence.

The city centre is packed with independent shops, bars, and restaurants, alongside major retail outlets, ensuring that whether you're looking for boutique finds or high-street favourites, you'll never be short of options.

Nottingham is rapidly developing and benefiting from major infrastructure and regeneration projects, in which the university is playing a vital part.

One of Nottingham's greatest strengths is its affordability compared to other major UK cities. Housing costs are significantly lower than in London, Manchester, or Birmingham, offering excellent value whether you're renting or buying. The city has a wide range of neighbourhoods to suit different lifestyles, from the creative quarter of Hockley to the family-friendly suburbs of West Bridgford and Beeston.

Nottingham's connectivity is another major advantage. The city enjoys excellent transport links, with direct rail connections to London in under two hours and easy access to other major UK cities. East Midlands Airport is just a short drive away, offering flights to numerous European destinations. Locally, Nottingham's award-winning tram system and extensive bus network make commuting and getting around effortless, reducing reliance on cars and making city living more convenient.

For those who enjoy green spaces and outdoor activities, Nottingham offers an abundance of natural beauty. Wollaton Park, home to a stunning Elizabethan mansion and a large deer park, provides a picturesque escape right in the heart of the city. Just outside Nottingham, Sherwood Forest and the rolling hills of the Peak District offer fantastic opportunities for hiking and cycling.

Culture lovers will also feel right at home in Nottingham. The city has a thriving arts and music scene, with venues like the Nottingham Playhouse, the Theatre Royal, and Rock City, as well as the university's own Lakeside Arts. Nottingham Contemporary is a must-visit for art enthusiasts, while the city's literary heritage—it is a UNESCO City of Literature—means there are always literary events, festivals, and bookshops to explore. Sports fans, too, have plenty to get excited about. The city contains a wide range of sports centres, including the National Water Sports Centre, National Ice Centre, Nottingham Climbing Centre, and Nottingham Tennis Centre. Spectators can visit Nottingham Forest and Notts County for football, Nottingham Rugby Club for rugby union, and Trent Bridge for international cricket.





The university's recruitment partner **Society** is a global executive search firm and a certified B Corporation. 10% of our profits go to charitable causes through The Society Foundation. With colleagues in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, we solve senior hiring challenges for responsible businesses and purpose-driven organisations around the world.

