

SHAPE OUR SUCCESS

JOIN OUR REMARKABLE COMMUNITY

FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in the Executive Director of Communications position at the University of Southampton.

The Executive Director of Communications is responsible for leading, developing, and implementing a strategic approach to the University's internal and external communications to enable us to achieve our ambitions. The postholder will play an essential part in showcasing our [University Strategy](#).

The need for internationally excellent, research-intensive universities like Southampton to help tackle some of the world's biggest challenges has never been more important and urgent. At the University of Southampton, our aim is to change the world for the better. Bringing together our research, creativity, and knowledge, we educate the next generation and focus on creating groundbreaking impact.

We care about the challenges that humanity is facing and work to support others on both a local and global scale. Join us in this work as the Executive Director of Communications and you will have the opportunity to help us make a tangible difference to future generations.

Our Strategy, with people at its heart, uses a Triple Helix metaphor to describe how our excellence in research, education, and knowledge exchange and enterprise, work together to make the University of Southampton approach distinctive.

Since the launch of our Strategy in January 2021, we have made good progress towards our goals. We have approved significant investment to develop our estate, provided more support to students and staff, and are working towards greater recognition for successes within our community.

Currently ranked 81st in the world*, we have bold ambitions to advance this position and, as the Executive Director of Communications, you will be key to achieving this. We are already known as a founding member of the UK's prestigious Russell Group of leading research-intensive universities, and with a campus in Malaysia, others planned, and major partnerships across the world, we have a global outlook that attracts the most talented staff and students.

This is a fantastic opportunity to take your career to new heights. As the Executive Director, you will lead the development of the narrative that tells the story of the University of Southampton's success. You will lead a high-quality, effective, and customer-focused communications function, ensuring that the University's reputation and recognition grow as we deliver our ambitious Strategy.

*QS World University Rankings, 2024



Together we advance

Working collaboratively to make a real impact on society's biggest challenges.

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Our values

Activities underpinned by the values determined by our University community.

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Equality, diversity and inclusion

It matters to us in all that we do.

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Our influential research is leading the way to a sustainable future that puts the world's most vulnerable children at the heart of policy. Craig Hutton, Professor of Sustainability Science, and his team produced the first comprehensive worldwide analysis of the climate risks to children. The Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) has been supported by the Data for Children Collaborative, which includes UNICEF and Save the Children, plus a multi-university team led by the University of Southampton.

The results were presented at the UN Climate Change Conference, COP26.

Image: Flooded school in East Jakarta, Indonesia.
Credit: UNICEF/Wilander

TOGETHER WE ADVANCE

Together we can make a real impact on the future.

Our University community is committed to the highest quality in everything we do. We have a global reputation for our passion and ability to work collaboratively in delivering world-class education, research and innovation that makes a real impact on society's biggest challenges.

To meet those challenges head-on, we must have a team that is reflective of society and our students. We strive for greater inclusivity in our community. Diversity is a strength and makes us more creative, accelerating our impact on society. We celebrate an equal and respectful environment in which people from all walks of life and backgrounds are welcome to join us.

Our people inspire and empower one another to share and apply their knowledge to transform lives. They are key to what we do, and who we are. Working collaboratively and fostering a culture of transformational leadership are two of our five core values. These values form part of our University Strategy and are there to help us achieve our overall purpose and vision: to inspire excellence, to achieve the remarkable, and build an inclusive world. Find out more about our values on page six.

Our people are our University, which is why our Strategy and all of our activities focus on the communities that make up our institution. We are made up of brilliant minds, motivated leaders and passionate changemakers. By working collaboratively, we can achieve incredible things.

Our exceptional students share in the journeys of discovery and become confident thinkers who can realise their full potential. We attract high-quality students from over 130 countries, and educate students through University of Southampton Malaysia and collaborations with prestigious partners globally.

As our students become graduates of the University, they join our wider global community of over 280,000 alumni, with access to a network that can provide further opportunities across the world.

As a forward-thinking institution, we will strengthen our reputation, increasing our national and international rankings to secure a position in the top 10 in the UK and strengthen our position in the top 100 internationally.

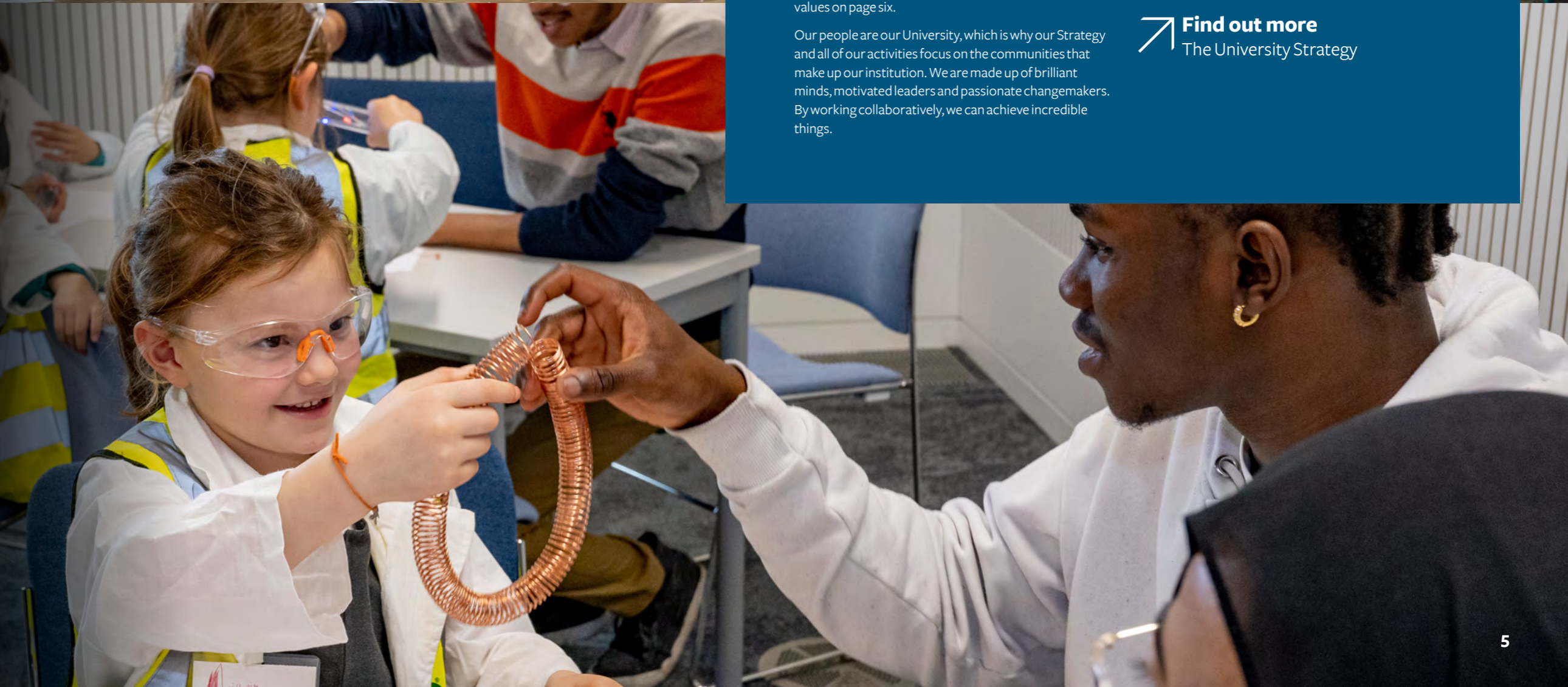
Our strong research partnerships, public engagement and achievements in entrepreneurial activities have been recognised in our very strong all-round performance in the first and second Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) exercises.

Collaborate with us: together we advance.

 **Find out more**
The University Strategy

Researchers at Southampton are encouraging schoolgirls to become scientists when they are older through in-person events and hands-on activities, thus reducing the gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM).

On 29 March 2023, a group of 15 Shirley Infant School six- and seven-year-old schoolgirls came to the University's high-voltage lab to learn about electricity. The activities the girls engaged in involved, batteries, wires, copper wire, and magnets. They were able to create circuits and learn about conductors and insulators.



OUR VALUES

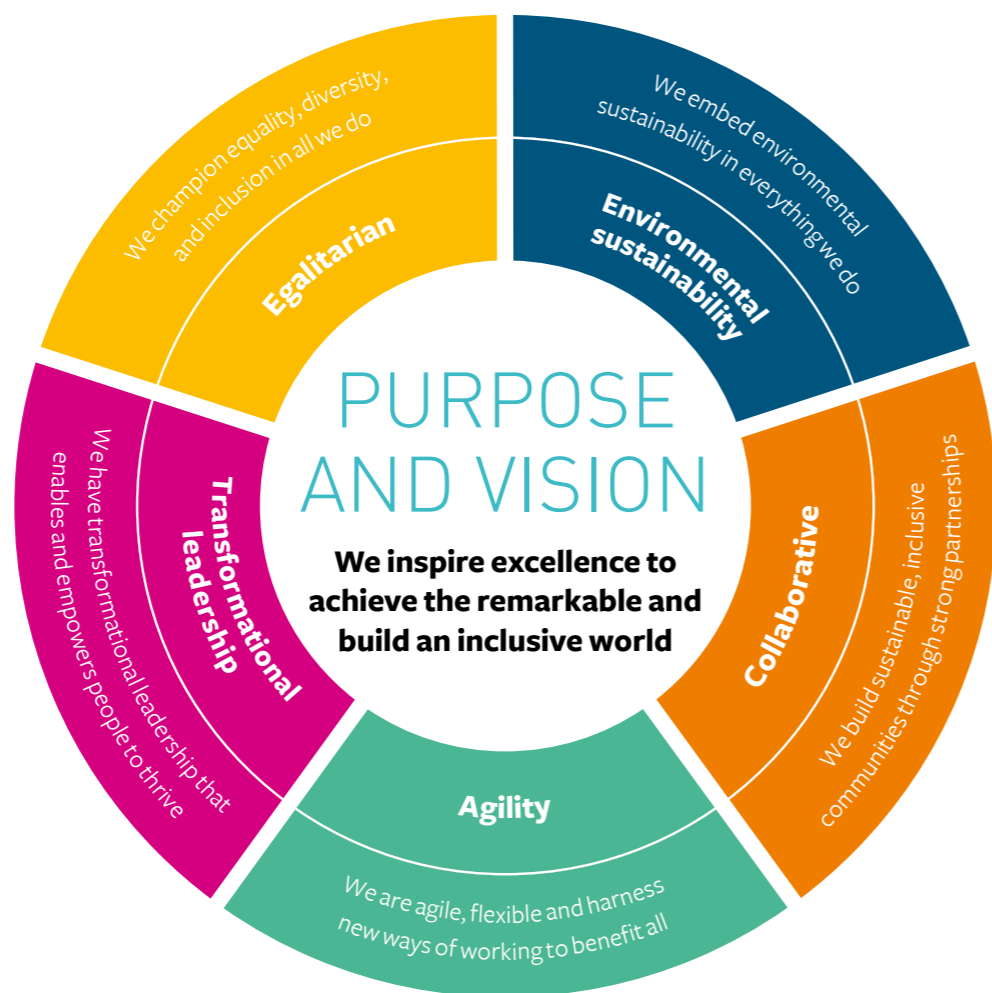
Our values provide the lens through which we make decisions, guiding our actions, collective behaviours and systems.

They are integral to our purpose of building an inclusive community that makes positive change.

We are ambitious, both personally and institutionally, which requires us to be collaborative and collegial.

As a community of talented individuals, our systems need to enable and empower us. Our community upholds academic freedom and develops through constructive, civil debate.

Ensuring different views are heard allows us to make the best decisions.



People are at the core of our Triple Helix



Our highly-ranked **education, research and knowledge exchange and enterprise (KEE)** are already distinctively intertwined.

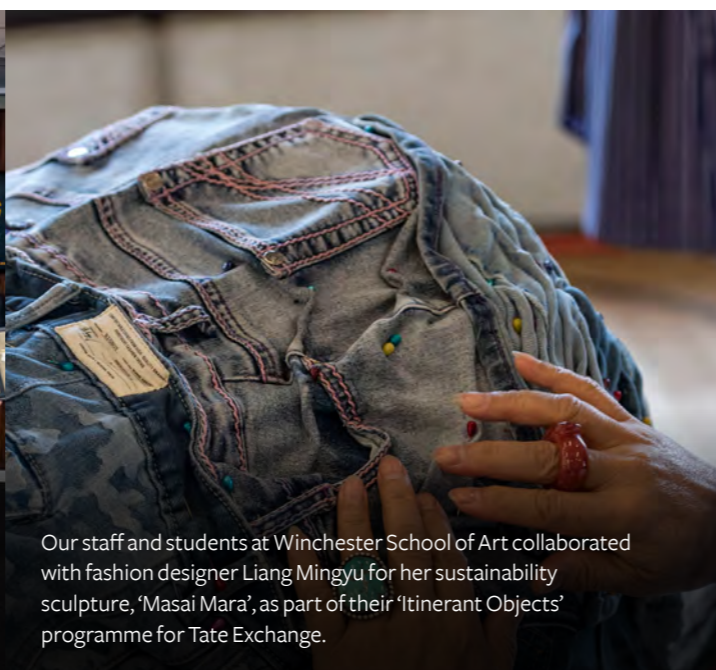
By strengthening and increasing these links, our Triple Helix approach will achieve greater impact and accelerate new ways to tackle the world's most complex problems.

This scaling up is a challenging goal we commit to achieve; its reach and ambition sets us apart.

Our values in action



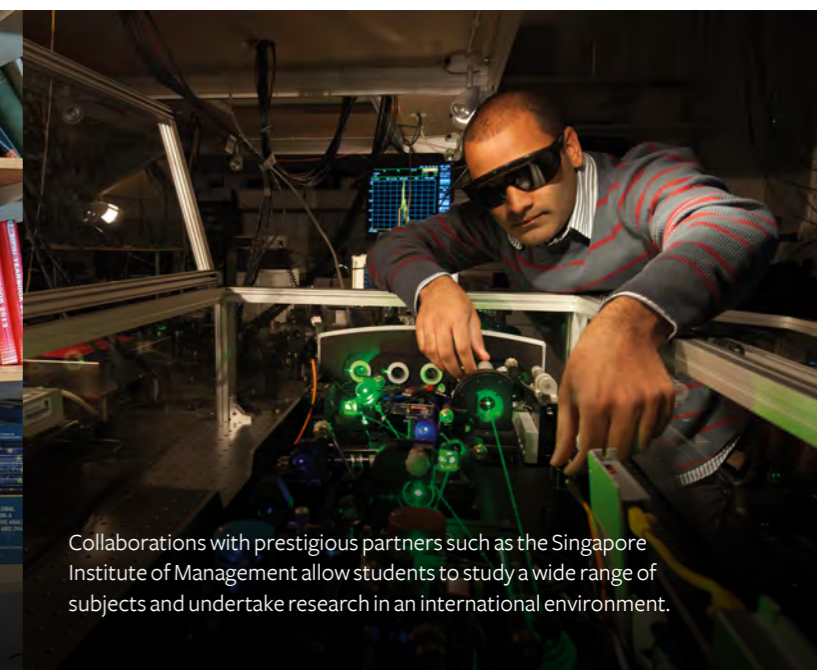
Our annual Vice-Chancellor's Awards recognise and celebrate the exceptional contributions made by our staff during the academic year.



Our staff and students at Winchester School of Art collaborated with fashion designer Liang Mingyu for her sustainability sculpture, 'Masai Mara', as part of their 'Itinerant Objects' programme for Tate Exchange.



Dr Kamil Zwolski, Associate Professor in International Politics, was awarded a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship in 2022 for his innovative approach to teaching.



Collaborations with prestigious partners such as the Singapore Institute of Management allow students to study a wide range of subjects and undertake research in an international environment.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

It matters to us in all that we do.

At the University of Southampton, we believe that we can only truly play our part in supporting society if we are reflective of society. We are therefore passionate about creating a working environment in which you are free to bring your whole self to work.

We are focused on creating supportive workplaces for all where discrimination has no place. The way in which you choose to live your life has no bearing on your ability to do your job. Likewise, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, social background, ethnicity or any other identifying factor will never be a consideration here. Instead, we are determined to always treat our staff equally, fairly and with respect.

We welcome people from all walks of life, and as such, we champion a uniquely diverse working environment in which every colleague is able to excel, regardless of their background or their life choices. Quite simply, we want to attract likeminded people to our team – people who care about the world, and who share our passion for creating an innovative and forward-thinking learning and research environment.

We are proud to support many staff and student networks, and we encourage these groups to get involved in helping us create a forward-thinking and desirable workplace. We are a Stonewall Diversity Champion and we are immensely proud to have our institutional Athena SWAN silver award renewed, which underpins our pledge to improve equality for women. We are also delighted to have received the Race Equality Charter bronze award from Advance HE, which recognises that we have a solid foundation for eliminating racial inequalities and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff and students.

We also support flexible working and are proud of our open and supportive working environment; with options such as job shares available, we ensure opportunities are equal and focused on the needs of our colleagues. We know that change and improvement is a continual process, and our community is a big part of this, so we always want to hear from our staff about how we can create the best possible working experience.



“

As the Associate Vice-President, ED&I and Social Justice, I believe this important role is a signal of our University's real commitment to become a more accountable and inclusive community, and to embrace a culture that reflects all students, staff and employees.”

Pascal Matthias

Associate Vice-President, ED&I and Social Justice



Dr Katy Rankin and Dr Neil Gostling appeared in a BBC Natural History programme revealing the secrets of a giant pliosaur, a ferocious predator which inhabited our seas about 150 million years ago.

The documentary, *Attenborough and the Giant Sea Monster* (BBC One and iPlayer, 20:00, 01 January 2024), followed Sir David Attenborough as he explored the fascinating story of the enormous marine reptile whose skull was found buried on the Dorset coast.

The University played host to Sir David and a BBC production crew in Spring of 2023.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

The University of Southampton is a dynamic global hub where passion, innovation, and talent merge to shape the future. Our mission is to address global challenges through groundbreaking research and education, and we invite an outstanding individual to join us on this exciting journey as our Executive Director of Communications.

This role is critical to advancing our position as one of the world's top 100 universities and gives you an exceptional opportunity to help the University achieve its strategic goals through effective communication initiatives.

At the heart of our institution is a vibrant community of enthusiastic, innovative, and talented individuals dedicated to making a positive impact on humanity. We are not merely a university; we are a force for change, crafting innovative solutions to today's global problems with amazing discoveries unfolding within our walls. In this narrative, we seek a visionary leader to bridge the remarkable work and the wider world.

As the new Executive Director of Communications, your role is multifaceted and pivotal in elevating our global standing. Reporting directly to the Vice-President (Operations) and collaborating closely

with the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive Board, you will be the architect of our communication strategy, and your expertise will guide our internal and external communications, providing strategic leadership to amplify our reputation, our recognition, and showcase the transformative work unfolding within our institution with a strong media presence.

This is an opportunity to be part of a community that values creativity and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Working in higher education means you'll be at the forefront of intellectual exploration and societal impact. As the Executive Director of Communications, you

will play a pivotal role in supporting the delivery of our University Strategy, engaging our staff community, and fostering a strong sense of unity within our professional services and diverse academic disciplines.

At the University of Southampton, we are committed to building a safe, supportive community where we can truly be ourselves. We are passionate about creating a diverse environment because we believe we can only truly meet our objectives if we reflect society.

How to apply

For a conversation in confidence or details of how to apply, please contact

Mark Holleran
southampton@talentedu.co.uk
020 3290 2907

The closing date for receipt of applications is midnight (GMT) on **Thursday 14 March 2024**.

Following a longlist meeting of the Search Committee, successful candidates will be invited to attend a virtual Engagement Day on **Monday 15 April 2024**.

Interviews are scheduled to take place in person on **Wednesday 1 May 2024**.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Job Purpose

- Provide strategic leadership to the management of the University's reputation and the delivery of comprehensive communication strategies and media engagement that enhance the University's reputation externally and creates engagement with a large and diverse staff community internally.
- Reporting directly to the Vice-President (Operations) and working closely with the President and Vice-Chancellor, and University Executive Board to provide confident and robust communications advice and guidance.
- Have specific ownership of the University's reputation in response to a range of high-profile and sensitive issues, including how the University prepares for threats to its business continuity, including security and cyber security, and how crises are dealt with effectively.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic communications planning

- Lead the development, implementation and delivery of a robust communications strategic plan that supports the delivery of the University's Strategy, its overall goals and objectives, maintaining and enhancing its reputation.
- Collaborate with the senior leadership team to ensure that our communication plans support business priorities and contribute to the achievement of organisational milestones.

External communications

- Support external communications with a coherent and up-to-date narrative of the University's strengths and achievements, including highlighting the endeavours of students and staff, emphasising the depth and richness of the University's research activity, civic engagement, and other innovative work with practical illustrations.
- Lead the development of new and creative approaches to share the University's stories and news. Establish and lead the approach to story development, ensuring the creation of

effective, multi-use, sharable content, which can be accessed and amplified by other teams within the University.

- Ensure that all corporate communications are accurate, coherent, consistent and produced to the highest standards.
- Write engaging communications for external publication.

Media relations

- Exploit and coordinate all appropriate media and social media channels, to communicate effectively and consistently with all stakeholders and members of the public, with a digital-first approach.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with media outlets, journalists, and influencers.
- Act as the primary spokesperson for the University, managing media inquiries and interviews effectively.
- Support colleagues to be equipped to deal with media interviews.

Internal communications

- Develop and implement internal communication strategies to engage and inform employees at all levels.
- Facilitate communication channels that foster a positive organisational culture and employee engagement, working closely with senior leaders across the University.
- Collaborate with student communications teams to ensure a consistent approach and style across the University.
- Proactively engage, and collaborate with Faculties, Schools, Professional Service Divisions, and the Students' Union to deliver the University's objectives and foster excellent working relationships and a strong sense of membership of the University.

Reactive and crisis communication

- Lead on the creation and implementation of effective crisis communication plans, ensuring the University's reputation is safeguarded in challenging situations. Develop reputation management protocols to support this activity.
- Provide calm but confident, robust advice and guidance to the President and Vice-Chancellor, Council, and the University

Executive Board where appropriate and act as our spokesperson when required.

- Advise on complex matters and create communications that respond to the different and challenging situations that face universities.
- Prepare responses to correspondence on behalf of the President and Vice-Chancellor and other members of the University Executive Board.
- Play a key role in crisis responses and business continuity planning.

Stakeholder engagement

- Ensure effective support for the University's civic engagement in Southampton, Winchester, and the wider South Hampshire region, working closely with the Vice-President (Engagement and International) and the Director of Civic and Arts.

Budget management

- Develop and manage the communications budget, ensuring efficient allocation of resources to achieve strategic objectives.

Internal and External Relationships

Internal

All colleagues in the University, members of the University Executive Board, Professional Services Executive Group, and other senior managers in the University, Council, and their committees.

External

SUSU (Southampton University Student Union) and University alumni, equivalent post holders in other relevant organisations, nationally and internationally, external customers, agencies, and bodies, including government and commercial organisations, media outlets and journalists.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Qualifications, knowledge and experience

- Skill level equivalent to achievement of a professional qualification or postgraduate degree in a relevant field (such as a postgraduate diploma in media, marketing or public relations), supported by demonstrable professional experience at a strategic level.
- Proven experience in a senior communications role, within a complex multi-faceted operation, with a track record of success in strategic communication planning and execution, including the exploitation of digital communication tools and platforms.
- Demonstrable success as a first-rate media relations operator, with excellent news sense, spot-on judgement, acute political savvy and highly developed writing skills.
- Proven experience of leading communication responses to unplanned events and in crisis communication and issues management.
- Proven leadership experience in a range of demanding and influential roles.
- Proven experience of managing significant organisational change.

Management and teamwork

- Substantial leadership and management experience at a senior level.
- Ability to lead and develop diverse teams, empowering and supporting people, creating effective organisational structures and managing through influence as well as through executive authority.
- Able to demonstrate leadership and to raise performance standards throughout own work areas.
- Able to recognise and deal with obstacles and difficulties so that teams can deliver.

Planning and organising

- A strategic thinker with the ability to plan and evaluate in the short, medium and long term, alongside the day-to-day demands of a fast-paced news agenda.
- Able to champion and oversee the department's contribution to the University's Strategy and to lead on the department's strategies and plans.
- Able to implement successful change management initiatives and formulate strategic plans that reflect and support the priority needs of the University.

Problem solving and initiative

- Proven ability to identify reputational risks and develop strategies to manage and mitigate them.
- Proven ability to make judgements on significant new problems where precedent may not apply.

Communicating and influencing

- Evidence of highly developed interpersonal and influencing skills with a demonstrable ability to achieve personal impact in working relationships, ideally with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including individual journalists, media outlets and senior stakeholders within the HE sector, government and beyond.
- Proven ability to influence, persuade and change the motivations, attitudes and behaviours of multiple audiences, both internal and external to the organisation.
- Ability to establish credibility quickly to work effectively and collaboratively with cross-functional teams.
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills.

Other skills and behaviours

- Able to demonstrate alignment with the University's core values in all areas of work, and champion those behaviours in the Department.
- Intellectual capacity, stamina and agility to deal with a broad span of duties and to gain the respect of a wide range of people, balancing internal and external demands.
- Personal presence and able to project and inspire confidence at all levels.
- High level of emotional intelligence with excellent judgement.

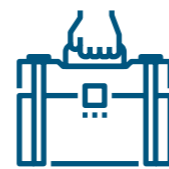
Expected behaviours

- Apply and actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion principles to the responsibilities of the role.
- As a Line Manager and senior leader, role model the [Southampton Behaviours](#) and work with the management team to embed them as a way of working within the directorate.



The University is continuously reviewing and improving its estate to provide the best experience and value for money for its students. One of our future major estates projects is the expansion of our halls of residence to cater for more students across all years of study. This will help students financially in an environment where real estate prices and renting costs are escalating.

Southampton
is ranked
81st
in the world¹



Received
£114.7m
in research grant and
contracts income
in 2021/22²



92%
of our research has been
classified as world leading or
internationally excellent³



Engaged in
research with over
700
overseas partners



We attract high-
quality students
from over 130
countries



A founding member of
the Russell Group of 24
major research-intensive
universities in the UK



Founding member
of the Worldwide
Universities Network

We have over
24,500
students, including
more than
9,000
international students



£4.14bn
of economic
impact across
the UK in
2020/21⁶



**Ranked
17th**
in the UK⁴

Our 280,000 alumni
community spans
over

185
countries

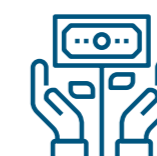


We employ over 6,500 staff



Our income
exceeded
£673m in
the 2021/22
financial year⁵

Very strong
performance in the first
KEF exercise⁵



The University creates and
underpins employment
in other organisations,
amounting to over
16,000
jobs across the UK⁶



At any one time we are
working with over
1,000
external organisations
around the globe

¹ QS World University Rankings, 2024

² University of Southampton Financial Report, 2021/22

³ Research Excellence Framework, 2021

⁴ The Complete University Guide, 2024

⁵ Performing at or above the cluster average across every perspective

⁶ The economic and social impact of the University of Southampton, London Economics, 2022

OUR CAMPUSES

We have six campuses in Southampton, one in Winchester and one in Malaysia. Each has its own personality, world-leading facilities and specialisms.

Highfield Campus

Our main campus, Highfield, is the largest of our campuses, and the heart of the University. It is home to many of our state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities, and combines a lively and exciting atmosphere with calm, green surroundings.

With cafes, shops, concert halls, gyms and even a student cinema alongside academic facilities, Highfield is a hub of activity.

This is also where we are planning significant improvements to our student sports facilities, including a major expansion of the popular Jubilee Sports Centre.

University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS)

UHS is the main site for the study of medicine and healthcare. It hosts a purpose-built research hub, and is also home to the University's dedicated Centre for Cancer Immunology – the first of its kind in the UK. This site will soon see the development of a new medical health research building.

Boldrewood Innovation Campus

Boldrewood is the base for engineering studies and research. Facilities include laboratories for studying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), fluid dynamics and high-performance sports, a driving simulator, flight simulators, design studios, a 138m towing tank and our £48m National Infrastructure Laboratory (NIL). The NIL houses five new engineering laboratories, including a 30m x 15m large structures testing laboratory and a cutting-edge geotechnical centrifuge.

National Oceanography Centre Southampton (NOCS)

Our unique waterfront campus, based at NOCS, is one of the world's leading research centres for the study of ocean and Earth science, with facilities including the Coral Reef Laboratory, a multi-use research aquarium, our 19.75m purpose-built catamaran and the National Oceanographic Library.

With zoom of access to the waterfront, the campus is also the operational base for the Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC) UK fleet of deep-sea research vessels, giving us unique access to research cruises all over the world.

Avenue Campus

Just a few minutes' walk from Highfield, and on the edge of Southampton Common, Avenue Campus is the base for our humanities subjects. Avenue has its own lecture theatres and catering facilities, plus a purpose-built £3m archaeology building and a new interactive digital humanities hub.

Southampton city centre

In the heart of the Cultural Quarter in the city centre, our Sir James Matthews Building offers updated teaching and learning spaces alongside facilities for meeting local and regional civic partners. The Building also includes a student enterprise zone and an artisan cafe.

A short walk across Guildhall Square from the Sir James Matthews Building is the University's John Hansard Gallery, one of the UK's leading contemporary art galleries, which plays a dynamic role in the cultural life of Southampton and the region.

Winchester School of Art (WSA)

Based in the historic city of Winchester, our specialist arts campus is home to a vibrant community of over 1,300 art and design students. With creative ambition at its core, WSA offers cutting-edge resources and facilities including specialist computer suites, photography studios, laser cutting, 3D printing and more.

The University is planning to expand its presence in Winchester, with an exciting opportunity from Winchester City Council.

University of Southampton Malaysia

In 2021, we relocated our campus in Malaysia to a brand new estate with state-of-the-art laboratories, upgraded facilities, and improved learning and recreational spaces.



Avenue Campus



University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS)



Highfield Campus



Boldrewood Innovation Campus



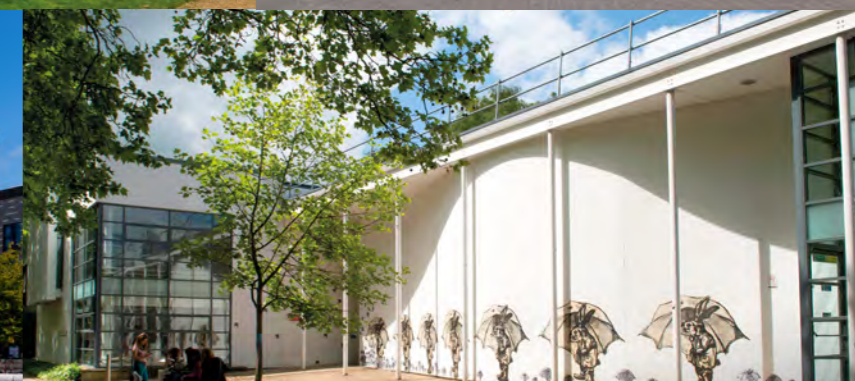
National Oceanography Centre Southampton (NOCS)



University of Southampton Malaysia

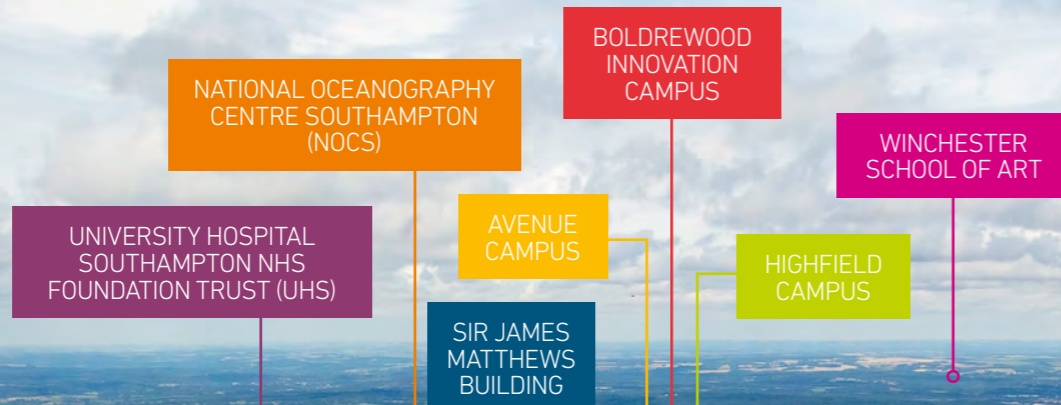


Sir James Matthew Building



Winchester School of Art (WSA)

THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS REGION



The University's core purpose and vision is to inspire excellence to achieve the remarkable and build an inclusive world, and our partners in the city play a vital role in helping us in this.

Our foundations and heritage make the University a gateway to the world and our Strategy emphasises our commitment to 'place' and being a civic university. We are deeply committed to Southampton as a city of culture and across the region will further develop our civic role of making a positive impact.

Being a civic university allows us to rethink how we contribute to our region, so that civic engagement can become hardwired into institutional culture.

Articulation of the benefit the University brings to the region through the productive relationships we have with local and regional government, will help mobilise a community of supporters to benefit all communities. Over 50 per cent of our UK-based alumni (over 80,000 people) live within 50 miles of the University alongside 'friends' who support us philanthropically and through collaboration.

Underpinned by the four pillars of the Civic Charter – Place, People, Partnerships and Impact – we will work together with our friends and civic partnerships to improve the lives and environment of people across diverse communities in a just and responsible way. The University will become a truly integrated part of its local communities.

Southampton

Southampton is a fantastic place in which to live, work and socialise. Regardless of what life stage you are at, you will find a dynamic and vibrant city that caters for all. With an enviable location on the coast, yet just over an hour from London, the region combines incredible natural beauty with a thriving social scene – making it a desirable place to live! As an ethnically rich city that is growing rapidly, Southampton is benefitting from considerable investments in the region.

The city centre is currently thriving thanks to over £600m of regeneration plans and projects, including the historic Bargate Quarter, with new hotels, homes and transport links. This is a city of growth and transformation, and it is an exciting time to be here.

There is something for everyone in Southampton and the surrounding areas. For outdoor enthusiasts, water sports, sailing and ocean racing are easily available, while the beautiful New Forest National Park is just 30 minutes away. With many excellent local schools and nurseries, families will find a fantastic quality of life, while there's a thriving LGBTQ+ social scene. Multiple faiths are celebrated in the city, and the rich cultural heritage of Winchester is just on our doorstep.

Winchester

On the edge of the South Downs National Park, England's ancient capital, Winchester, is steeped in history and is complemented by a lively atmosphere and a wide variety of pubs and restaurants, museums, theatres and galleries. With direct rail links to London, our Winchester School of Art campus is one of the UK's leading art and design institutions.



3rd
best place
to live and work
in the UK*

*Good Growth for Cities Index, January 2021, DEMOS-PwC

[View our virtual tours](#)

[Watch our video](#)



Find out more

Contact Mark Holleran
southampton@talentedu.co.uk
020 3290 2907