



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Chief Academic Officer
Reporting to	Executive Principal
Grade	Strategic Leadership
Unit	Strategic Leadership
Location	Head Office (Oxford)

About Oxford Business College

Since 1985, Oxford Business College (OBC) has spearheaded transformative education, carving a unique path for overlooked individuals, especially mature students facing barriers in traditional education. Operating seven days a week for our students, OBC's pioneering approach adapts to the diverse lifestyles & commitments of non-traditional learners. Across campuses in West London, Oxford, & Nottingham, OBC's ultra-flexible scheduling ensures inclusivity, reinforced by a robust digital infrastructure. Actively fostering a sense of belonging for students from all backgrounds, we provide comprehensive support services. Emphasising practical skills for employability through industry placements, OBC stands as a dynamic catalyst for change, reshaping higher education with an unwavering commitment to accessibility, flexibility, & inclusivity. With over 7500 students & 300 colleagues, join OBC in shaping the future of education & unlocking opportunities for a diverse range of students.

The role

The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) at OBC holds a pivotal position, reporting directly to the Executive Principal. Stationed at the Oxford Head Office, the CAO plays a critical role in realising the college's strategic vision & ensuring a commitment to educational excellence. The CAO implements the shared vision & strategic plan, emphasising responsiveness to the served communities. Key responsibilities include developing & executing strategic plans for achieving campus targets, rooted in sound financial planning & effective collaboration with other campus leaders. Line-managing deans of campus, programme leaders, & the head of student services is integral, as is prioritising the educational, personal, & interpersonal development of students. The CAO champions inclusive, sustainable, & innovative lifelong educational practices. Collaboration with stakeholders to generate enthusiasm, commitment, & empowerment is central. The CAO promotes excellence in teaching & learning, ensuring a consistent college-wide focus on learners' holistic development & a high-quality educational experience for all students. Identifying & acting on areas of improvement through monitoring & evaluation is essential. Creating a welcoming environment for all learners, establishing creative, responsive, & effective learning, & ensuring the successful implementation of extra & cross-curricular activities are vital components of the role. Nurturing a culture of challenge, support, & high expectations, the CAO implements college policies associated with student learning, achievement, & experience. Ensuring sustained effectiveness in teaching & learning, including setting improvement targets, is a key responsibility. The CAO also deputises for the Executive Principal, oversees all higher education programs, & plans for inspections, serving as the point of contact & quality nominee. Playing a key role in staff development through coaching & other means is another crucial aspect of the position. Instrumental in developing & reviewing academic policies & procedures, updating the academic calendar, & ensuring a consistent teaching & learning approach, the CAO leads the annual monitoring review cycle & compiles course quality reviews. Beyond academic affairs, the CAO leads the development & implementation of institutional policies & regulatory frameworks, facilitating regulatory data returns, & attending & chairing relevant committees.

Strategic Responsibilities

- Deputise for the Executive Principal if required for provisions delivered in collaboration with university or college partners.
- Implement the shared vision & strategic plan for the college under the leadership of the executive principal, responsive to the served communities.
- Work with the executive principal to develop & implement a strategic plan for achieving campus targets, emphasising sound financial planning & collaboration with other campus leaders.
- Line-manage deans of campus, programme leaders, & head of student services.
- Prioritise the educational, personal, & interpersonal development of students as the core of the college's mission. Guest lecturing/ tutoring as & when required to achieve strategic goals.
- Ensure inclusive, sustainable, & innovative lifelong educational practices, achieving raising aspirations, achievements, & attainment.
- Collaborate with all stakeholders to generate enthusiasm, commitment, & empowerment.
- Promote excellence in teaching & learning, ensuring a consistent college-wide focus on learners' holistic development.
- Ensure a high-quality educational experience for all students, quantified by NSS.
- Identify & act on areas of improvement through monitoring & evaluation.
- Develop an inclusive & supportive approach to create a welcoming environment for all learners.
- Establish creative, responsive, & effective learning in all curriculum areas.
- Ensure the successful creation, implementation, & development of extra & cross-curricular activities. Create a culture of challenge, support, & high expectations.
- Effectively implement college policies associated with student learning, achievement, & experience.
- Secure & sustain effective teaching & learning throughout the campuses.
- Monitor & evaluate the quality of teaching & standards of pupils' achievement, setting targets for improvement.
- Ensure a high standard of professional learning, including joint practice development. Work with all staff to build creative & effective teams. Sustain personal motivation & sense of purpose & that of other staff.
- Develop & maintain respect across all stakeholders, inspiring positive contributions to shared ideas & plans for the college.
- Provide oversight of all higher education programmes across all campuses.
- Plan & prepare for all inspections, serving as the point of contact & quality nominee for accreditation & awarding bodies.
- Develop the capacity of staff through coaching & other appropriate means. Develop & review academic policies & procedures, ensuring their implementation by academic staff.
- Plan, review, & update the academic calendar in line with key organisational objectives.
- Develop a consistent approach to teaching & learning based on pedagogical principles, ensuring adherence by all academic staff with support, guidance, & monitoring.
- Lead & develop the annual monitoring review cycle.
- Compile course quality reviews & academic monitoring reviews.
- Lead the development & implementation of institutional policies & regulatory frameworks.
- Lead/ facilitate regulatory data returns, including to key regulatory/ official bodies.
- Attend & chair relevant committee(s) & report regularly to the relevant board.
- Undertake any other duties reasonably required by the executive principal &/ or managing director.

The ideal candidate should be available during busy periods & weekends as needed, particularly during intake times. Please note that annual leave is generally not permitted during these periods. Some restrictions on annual leave also exist during other peak times, e.g., January/February, April/May, & September/October.

PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

TRAINING & EDUCATIONS

Essential

- PhD or Doctorate in education, business administration, or a related discipline.
- Holding fellowship of Advance HE (formerly known as HEA).

Desirable

- Demonstrated membership & engagement with a relevant professional body (e.g. CMI, CABS etc).
- Holding Senior (SFHEA) or Principal (PFHEA) fellowship of Advance HE (formerly known as HEA).

EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Extensive experience in higher education administration & leadership, with a proven track record of managing & overseeing academic programmes, departments, & personnel.
- Demonstrated track record in achieving high B3 statistics & NSS results for an HEI.
- Experience in leading & delivering strategic & operational change.
- Strong understanding of the Higher Education landscape in the UK, including comprehensive knowledge of relevant policies, regulations & compliance standards.

Desirable

- Hands-on experience of emerging technical & digital innovation (e.g. AI).
- Experience of working in a similar role for another private higher education establishment.

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

Essential

- Strong leadership skills & experience in motivating, empowering, & inspiring teams to achieve common goals.
- Ability to develop & implement strategic plans that align with the college's overall mission, vision, & values.
- Strong problem-solving & analytical skills to identify & resolve complex issues related to academic programs, teaching & learning, & student development.
- Strong verbal & written communication skills, including the ability to present complex information clearly & effectively.
- Comprehensive understanding of external regulatory bodies such as the Office for Students (OfS), OIA, HESA (Jisc), etc.

BEHAVOURAL SKILLS

Essential

- Commitment to a student-centred approach to education, emphasizing holistic student development & personalised learning support.
- Strong leadership qualities to effectively manage a team of professionals, including the ability to inspire & motivate.
- Capacity to adapt to changing circumstances & priorities in a fast-paced academic environment.
- High ethical standards & a commitment to maintaining the integrity of academic records & processes.
- Resilience & adaptability to manage the demands of a busy & challenging role.
- A leader role model for college's core values, which underpin our vision, mission & strategy.