



Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Candidate Pack

UCAS

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Finance and Corporate Services at UCAS.

Like many people, you may have been a customer of UCAS (or its predecessor UCCA) in the past, or perhaps you have family members who have applied to university through us, or are expecting to do so in the coming years. Either way, you'll be aware that UCAS is *the* route to studying at UK universities.

You might be less aware that UCAS is an independent charity, with a diverse business model that is based on income from its customers and users; not a penny of our funds comes from taxpayers. And you might not realise that UCAS is a technology services company, relying almost entirely on cloud-based, digital applications to deliver to its customers. So please look away now if you're looking for a nice steady public sector role.

I'm looking for someone who can contribute to our diverse Executive team and help us drive delivery of our ambitious Corporate Strategy. We want to secure our place as the single destination for progression in education, not just for school leavers, but also for 16 year olds making crucial decisions after their GCSEs, for postgraduate study, for training as a teacher and for entering the world of work after graduating. To be successful in our mission, we need an outstanding and highly strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services. We don't mind if you haven't worked in education or higher education but we will be impressed if you are as passionate about the value of education as I am as well as being willing to develop an understanding of the policy environment. You need to be able to show how you will help me, my Executive team, and the Trustees, to understand and optimise UCAS' financial performance, deliver a valued shared service for education providers and a leading-edge digital experience for students, and all the while making sure that we reach out to those who are disadvantaged in education. We take our responsibilities to be able to demonstrate public benefit very seriously.

You will also be energised by the opportunity to be involved in leading a fully digital and contemporary national shared service, with a reputation for reliability, value for money and efficiency. To do this we need not only to run a highly efficient operation but also to supplement our funds through our successful commercial subsidiary, UCAS Media. So, as well as strategic insight and dynamism, you will be commercially innovative, and will have first class financial leadership skills that can be deployed in digital operations, technology, social media marketing, and in optimising our fast-growing digital media business.

In return this role offers the kudos that comes with working for a company with a nationally and internationally recognised brand, the satisfaction of working for public benefit, the challenge of a 21st century technology company, and an attractive remuneration package.

In the rest of this pack, you will find information about our work, values and structure as well our strategic plans for the future. You'll also find specific details of our requirements and information about how to apply for this demanding role. You can also contact us or our consultants, Saxton Bampfylde, for a confidential discussion about the opportunity.

I look forward to receiving your application.



Andrew Hargreaves
Interim Chief Executive



About us

UCAS is an independent charity with a commercial subsidiary, UCAS Media. We are based in one of the most beautiful towns in the Cotswolds, Cheltenham, which is within easy reach of commuter routes, home to a range of excellent schools and grammar schools, and with a growing reputation as a technology hub.

Housed in a superb headquarters building close to the racecourse, UCAS currently has an annual turnover of around £45million and employs about 450 people.

Vision: UCAS is at the heart of connecting people to higher education.

Mission: To inspire and facilitate progression in education through information and admissions services.

UCAS services

UCAS Undergraduate: Each year, over 700,000 students apply through UCAS for undergraduate courses in the UK. They can make up to five applications each and we expect to place over 500,000 students each year. This enterprise supports a £13 billion economic value exchange in the higher education sector – www.ucas.com.

UCAS Postgraduate: UCAS lists all postgraduate courses on its course search service and provides a number of universities with an applications service. Around 10,000 students access our postgraduate services each year – www.ucas.com/ucas/postgraduate.

UCAS Conservatoires: UCAS hosts a specialist service for music, drama and dance courses at eight conservatoires – www.ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires.

UCAS Teacher Training: Around 30,000 teachers are placed through our UCAS Teacher Training service each year, whether they undertake their PGCE study at a university or train through one of our 1,000+ school-based teacher training providers – www.ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training.

UCAS Progress: UCAS Progress lists all post-16 provision of academic, vocational and work-based learning courses in England and Wales. A digital admissions service is available for schools and colleges who wish to use it – www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses.

UCAS.com: UCAS' website is one of the most visited education websites attracting close to 23 million unique users in the last 12 months. As well as hosting course search services for all our schemes, [ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) provides a wealth of information and advice for anyone thinking about applying for university or taking the next steps on their learning journey. We support students in making decisions about their education, provide information about different pathways through education, and ensure that it is easy to find out about accommodation, fees and finance, and other sources of information and advice. We also go out of our way to ensure that parents and those who advise students in schools and colleges have a range of information resources at hand. However, education is not just for young people so we provide information for mature learners as well as ensuring that those with special requirements can get all the information they need – www.ucas.com.

UCAS data services: Each year, UCAS provides an analytical commentary about university admissions. In addition, we publish a wealth of data and analysis about a wide range of aspects of higher education in the UK and provide bespoke data services for those who want them – www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis.

UCAS Media: UCAS Media provides a wide range of advertising, marketing and data services to support education providers in recruiting students. A limited range of commercial clients who have services of interest to students are also supported – www.ucasmedia.com.

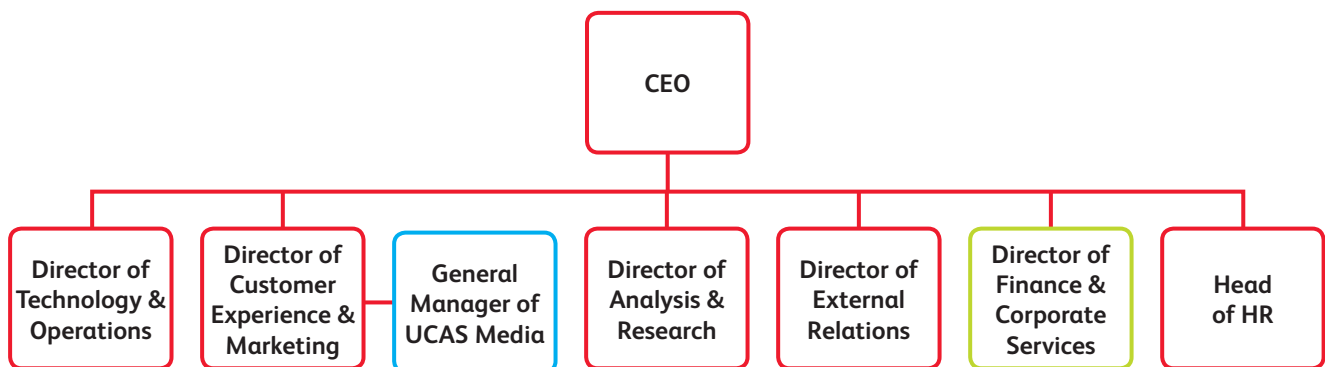
Our governance

UCAS is governed by a Board of Trustees, sub-committees for finance, audit, remuneration and nominations, and a representative Council which provides advice to the Trustees –

www.ucas.com/corporate/about-us/corporate-governance.

There is a separate Board for UCAS Media. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services attends all Trustee meetings and most sub-committee meetings. He/she is also expected to become a Director of the UCAS Media Board.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is part of the Executive Team which collectively takes responsibility for delivery of our services and achievement of our corporate objectives.



Our strategy

UCAS strategy for 2015 – 2020 is available here: www.corporatestrategy.ucasdigital.com.

Our values

The UCAS values are:

- **Customer logic:** We always look first through the customer lens. The logic of the customer is the logic of UCAS.
- **Commitment:** When we commit, we deliver: on time, on quality and on budget. Or we negotiate changed commitments for good reason. We never leave commitments uncovered.
- **Team:** We work collaboratively. When we commit, we commit as an individual and as a team. We strive for and support team success as well as individual success.
- **Outcomes:** We plan and do things to achieve outcomes. We define them, aspire to them and deliver them.
- **Agility:** We know we need to be agile and flexible when we look through the customer lens, when we make commitments, when we work in teams and strive for the right outcomes.
- **Extraordinary:** We are ambitious for our customers, for UCAS and for our teams. We want more than ordinary outcomes: we strive to achieve extraordinary outcomes, extraordinary customer focus, and an extraordinary culture of high performance and quality of service.

Our finances

Our most recent Report and Accounts are published here:
www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas_consolidated-signed_accounts.pdf.

UCAS has three main sources of income:

- Fees paid by students when they apply for courses
- Fees paid by universities and colleges when they enrol a student
- Income generated by UCAS Media

Our near-term challenges

As part of its Corporate Strategy, UCAS is currently in a phase of ‘digital acceleration’ designed to speed up our migration away from inefficient legacy IT systems and complete our transition to a digital business. Increasingly, we are developing digital, cloud-hosted solutions which replace older services reliant on our own data centre. We have a large software development team using Agile methodology and user-centred design techniques to deploy new working software to customers on a regular basis. Our integrated scrum teams ensure that product managers and owners are working alongside software engineers to keep product development close to customer needs. Customer experience teams inform and underpin the whole process.

As we redevelop our services, we see them working seamlessly in a digital ecosystem that balances the needs of learners and education providers, and where new and third party services can interact to add value to the learner journey.

Our customer and technology relationship managers work with education providers to ensure that new and existing services work effortlessly to support their own student management systems and recruitment approaches.

Potential students can still telephone our customer experience teams to get a highly personal service to help them with their applications.

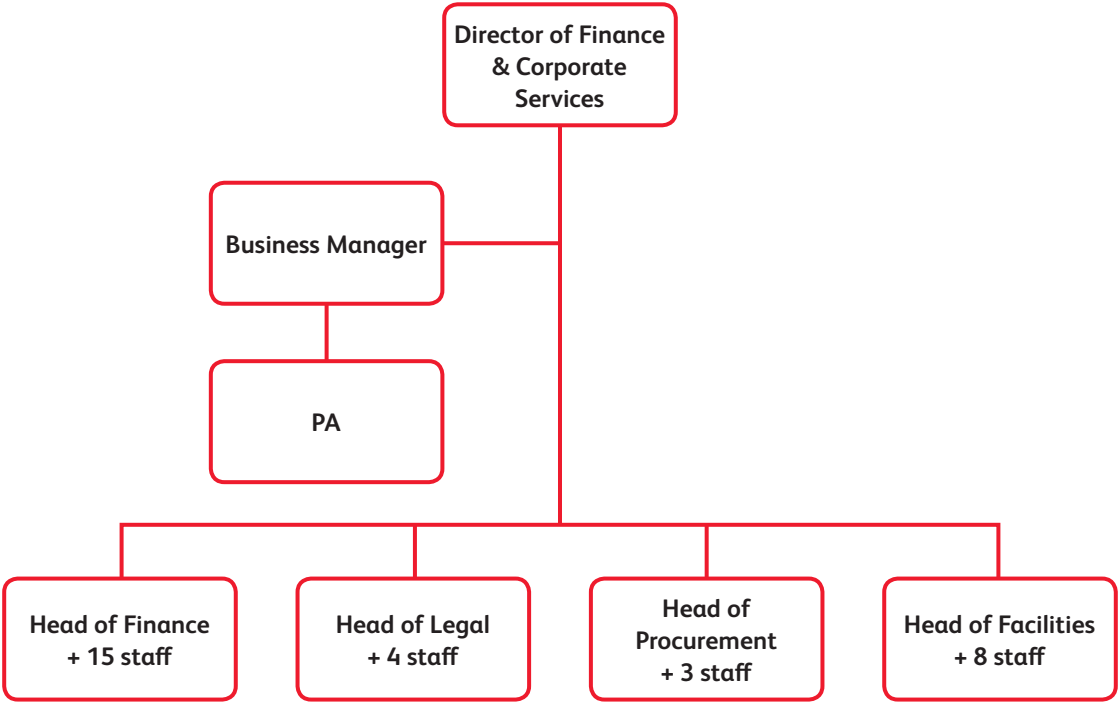
In the next two years, UCAS will have completed the redevelopment of all its core services.

Meanwhile, the education landscape is undergoing significant changes following new approaches to funding, tuition fees, qualification reforms, and divergent policies across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

UCAS Media continues to be a critical source of funding during our digital acceleration phase. The business currently has sales of c. £16million and has enjoyed a 93% growth over the past five years. Nevertheless, digital marketing services are a competitive and rapidly evolving sector and UCAS Media needs to take bold market positions and innovate to maintain its share of marketing advertising spend. Our value pricing model needs to evolve, as does our strategic approach to developing new offers that supplement our core shared services.

The Finance and Corporate Services Business Unit (FCS)

FCS is currently organised into four teams as follows:





Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Location: Cheltenham with some UK travel

Salary: A competitive six-figure salary with performance-related bonus and flexible benefits package, including 30 days' leave and membership of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Pension. A relocation package is available to candidates who want to move to the Cheltenham area.

Terms: Full-time, permanent

Reports to: The Chief Executive

Overall purpose of the role

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is accountable for the strategic financial management and leadership of UCAS and UCAS Media. The role also carries responsibility for the stewardship of all the company's physical assets, and a range of internal corporate services.

As a key member of the Executive Team, the Director of FCS reports to the Chief Executive and takes a strategic role in the overall leadership and management of UCAS and UCAS Media.

Specifically, the Director of FCS is accountable for ensuring that UCAS services are self-funding, for driving efficiency, reducing costs, and maximising the funds that are available to invest in the realisation of our mission.

Key responsibilities

- Assist in formulating the company's future direction and financial strategy to optimise the value created for customers and stakeholders and secure a sustainable future for UCAS
- Take overall control of the company's accounting functions
- Work with Executive colleagues to develop the annual budget for approval by the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees
- Monitor and report on performance against budget and steer the company in managing variations in income and expenditure
- Provide strategic management of the company's cash, investments portfolio, fixed assets and reserves policy
- Contribute to the growth in UCAS' revenues, ensuring that full value is derived from ongoing technology investments
- Contribute fully to the development of the company's strategy across all areas of business, challenging assumptions and decision-making as appropriate, and providing financial analysis and insight on all activities, plans, targets and value drivers
- Provide strategic insight and recommendations to enhance financial performance and new business opportunities
- Lead a focus on continuous review of costs, driving efficiencies, and delivering value from our development activities
- Provide specific financial leadership and insight to support the success and growth of UCAS Media
- Ensure compliance with GAAP / Charities' SORP and applicable regulatory legislation for financial and tax reporting
- Oversee an effective internal control framework; and work closely with the Audit Committee to ensure that the framework of risk management, controls, and assurance support the company's success
- Build productive relationships with Executive colleagues and Trustees
- Capture and communicate key messages to ensure that internal and external stakeholders understand the financial status of the organisation

Procurement

UCAS manages a significant portfolio of over 800 suppliers including major outsource contracts for IT and contact centre services. The Director of FCS has overall responsibility to ensure value for money procurement and effective contract and supplier management as well as driving cost savings through procurement.

Facilities

UCAS' Facilities Unit has responsibility for the overall planning and maintenance of the headquarters building and grounds, fixed assets, vehicles, equipment, catering, cleaning and maintenance and the delivery of soft services, such as managing the Facilities help desk and mail services. The Director of FCS is responsible for the provision of facilities that enable the organisation to carry out its business in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Legal

The Director of FCS is responsible for the legal function. UCAS uses an in-house legal team supplemented by specialist external advice as appropriate to oversee employment law, contracts, Freedom of Information, compliance with legal requirements and dispute resolution.

Change initiatives

The Director of FCS is responsible for leading the 'Digital Back Office' project which aims to modernise internal financial systems and internal transactions. In addition the company is engaged in a rolling programme to upgrade and refresh the interior of its headquarters building, including developing an in-house nursery facility to be managed by a third party.

Person specification

- Substantial leadership experience and track record of success in a finance role at Board level
- Degree level or equivalent with appropriate accountancy qualifications
- Experience of working in a technology-rich environment with high levels of digital literacy
- Ability to use analysis and data to manage risk, reveal insights, and drive continuous improvement
- Track record of success in a commercial / sales environment, ideally with experience of working in or with a social enterprise or charity
- Demonstrable experience and success in delivering excellence in corporate services (and possibly in human resource management)
- You will be commercially astute, technically strong, with the ability to be effective at both strategic and operational levels and will thrive within an organisation of this size
- Exceptional interpersonal and influencing skills with the ability to communicate effectively with people at all levels

Personal qualities

- A high degree of personal initiative with the drive and ability to meet challenging goals
- A strategic and entrepreneurial approach with the ability to bring creativity, innovation and insight into your work and the development of UCAS and UCAS Media
- Ability to thrive in an environment that is characterised by significant diversity and constant change
- Ability to prioritise and multi-task, working efficiently, often to tight timelines
- Resourceful, with strong negotiating skills
- Leadership qualities that motivate and inspire colleagues and team members while gaining their respect and confidence
- A management style that recognises UCAS' desire to support individual success as well as corporate success
- Naturally collaborative and solution focused
- Ability to motivate and develop staff and build a strong team ethos
- Well organised and able to manage a complex workload

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to UCAS on this appointment. Applications should be sent by email to VOOF@saxbam.com or apply through our website at www.saxbam.com/jobs

Alternatively, they may be sent by post to:

Virginia Eastman
Saxton Bampfylde (ref: VOOF)
PO Box 198
Guildford
Surrey GU1 4FH

Please enclose with your application:

- the completed detachable candidate summary form and equal opportunities monitoring sheet, which are attached. Applications from all groups are warmly welcomed.
- a full CV.
- a covering note of not more than 2 pages (total) summarising your proven ability related to the person and job specifications.