

CANDIDATE BRIEF



Director of
Student & Library Services

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Thank you for your interest in working at ARU.

ARU is a global university transforming lives through innovative, inclusive and entrepreneurial education and research. We hold a Gold award for the quality of our education, awarded through the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), and are the Times Higher Education University of the Year 2023.

ARU's research institutes and four faculties bridge scientific, technical and creative fields. We deliver impactful research which tackles pressing issues and makes a real difference to our communities. Our academic excellence has been recognised by the UK's Higher Education funding bodies, with 16 of our research areas assessed as including world-leading research in REF2021.

We are the largest provider of Nursing, Midwifery, Health and Social Care students in the East of England, and we are also among the UK's leading universities for degree apprenticeship provision, working with hundreds of employers across the UK.

Our student population is vibrant and diverse, putting us in an excellent position to respond to the various challenges facing the sector. At the same time, as a civic institution with campuses across the East of England we are committed to working with others to enhance the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of our region.

This is an exciting time to join ARU and an outstanding opportunity to drive innovation across ARU and our educational offer. As students remain at the heart of everything we do, this role plays a significant part in ensuring their success. It will be central to delivering our education strategy.

"I look forward to welcoming the successful candidate to our University"



**Professor
Roderick Watkins**

Vice Chancellor

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

ARU's story starts in 1858, with the opening of Cambridge School of Art. Over the years a number of colleges and higher education institutions have come together to form what is now Anglia Ruskin University. Our most recent milestones include the creation of ARU Peterborough in 2022 and ARU Writtle in 2024.

Our focus has always been on transforming lives through innovative, inclusive, and entrepreneurial education and research – and this still underpins our vision and values today. Our over-arching vision is supported by our ten-year strategy, [Designing our Future 2017-26](#).



As a university, we're managed by a Board of Governors and a Senate. Our Vice Chancellor, Professor Roderick Watkins, is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of ARU. The Vice Chancellor is supported by the Vice Chancellor's Group (VCG) which consists of two Deputy Vice Chancellors (Education and Research & Innovation), plus the Chief Operating Officer, Director of Finance and the Secretary and Clerk to the Governors.



We have four faculties at ARU, each providing students, industry and the academic community with professionally focused and world-leading courses and research.

The four Pro Vice Chancellors/Deans of Faculties all report directly to the Vice Chancellor and are members of the University Executive Team (UET), the University's executive decision-making body. The Heads of Schools report into the Pro Vice Chancellors/Deans.

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

Our mission at ARU - transforming lives through innovative, inclusive and entrepreneurial education and research – guides everything we do. And our values – ambition, innovation, courage, community, integrity and responsibility – set out how we act, seeking to promote public good and serve our students and the communities in which we are based.



We seek colleagues who are committed to our values and who will play a leading role in ensuring we deliver on our mission.

Our values

- **Ambition:** We are determined to achieve our goals and continually strive to enhance our university for the benefit of all.
- **Innovation:** We will apply our collective and individual creativity to conceive and develop new ideas, implementing them for the benefit of the communities we serve.
- **Courage:** We are bold in taking the decisions we feel are right, even when it is difficult to do so.
- **Community:** We greatly value working collaboratively, supporting each other and helping everyone to achieve their potential.
- **Integrity:** We do what we say we will do and are fair and transparent in our decision-making and actions.
- **Responsibility:** We take decisions and act in a way which respects environmental, societal, and economic considerations, and which best supports those who study and work with us.

OUR STRATEGY

In 2017, we published our institutional strategy, [Designing our Future 2017–2026](#). On the 25th anniversary of our achieving university status, it set out our vision, priorities and ambitions for the next ten years, built around three themes:

1. Creating a leading learning and innovation ecosystem
2. Building and nurturing vibrant university communities
3. Strengthening the underpinning operations of the University



The delivery of our overarching strategy is supported through the implementation of three underpinning strategies for Education, Research & Innovation and Operating. The diagram below illustrates how the three strategies intersect to deliver the institutional strategy.

EDUCATION STRATEGY

2022 - 2027

ARU's outstanding and transformative education will support students at all levels to achieve their full potential and create a positive impact on their lives and work.

Our students have diverse backgrounds, interests and styles of learning. This diversity informs the way we will deliver our education and support our graduates and alumni to achieve their full potential, excel in their chosen careers, and tackle environmental and societal challenges. We will develop life-long partnerships with our students, pooling our knowledge and experience to address the challenges we face today, together.



To achieve this we will:

Deliver an inclusive and transformative education

ARU courses create space for students to work in partnership with businesses and organisations to tackle societal challenges and enhance their employability.

- Our flexible courses reflect the variety of needs and ambitions of our diverse student cohorts.
- We are a leader in innovative degree apprenticeships where education and employment are closely integrated.
- Our students engage in active, interdisciplinary curricula, tackling societal and environmental challenges with our local, regional and global communities.
- Our graduates have the skills, capabilities, and mindsets to contribute positively to their environment and communities.

Foster a research-rich educational environment

Our students receive – and contribute to – an education underpinned by sector-leading research.

- Engaging in and advancing research is an integral part of all our students' education, enhancing their employability and enabling them to contribute positively to a sustainable future.
- We deliver sector-leading pedagogic research and practice with our students to enhance their education.
- Our graduates are creative problem-solvers, prepared for wide-ranging careers.

Create vibrant living and learning communities

All our students connect to one another and our wider communities in ways that enhance their belonging and recognise their contributions.

- We focus on providing an excellent student experience within and around our courses.
- We recognise that no two members of the ARU community are the same and each student and staff member's contribution is valued.
- ARU students receive unique opportunities to engage in knowledge exchange outside of their course.
- Students engage with global communities through ARU's international connections and partnerships.



Offer innovative and flexible learning for life

- We create opportunities for prospective students and our alumni to grow and learn together throughout their lives.
- We create pathways to higher education for the diverse communities across our regions.
- We continue to learn from and educate our alumni throughout their lives, including a 'Learning for Life' offer for our alumni and local communities.

RESEARCH AT ARU



The overarching aim of our Research and Innovation Strategy is 'to deliver transformative benefits locally and globally'.

We are passionate about research at ARU: its potential to innovate, and its power to enhance social, cultural and economic well-being at national and global levels.

Discover more about our world-leading and impactful research, including case studies from our ARU-wide [Research, Innovation and Impact Themes](#): Sustainable Futures, Safe and Inclusive Communities and Health, Performance and Wellbeing. You can read more about our multi-disciplinary institutional research environment [here](#).

In summer 2022 we published our new Research and Innovation Strategy and are currently working on its implementation. Our research excellence has been recognised by the UK's Higher Education funding bodies, with all 16 of our research areas assessed as having world leading areas in REF2021



ABOUT

Student & Library Services

Student and Library Services focuses on providing excellent quality services which enable students to succeed. We enhance students' teaching, learning, research, wellbeing, and graduate outcomes through numerous support mechanisms which are vital in the student journey.

A number of individual teams make up Student and Library Services. These teams are responsible for providing:

- support and advice for disabled students and students with specific learning supports
- study skills workshops and resources to help students develop academic skills, develop confidence and boost grades
- advice on all aspects of student finance, funding, benefits and money management
- help to explore career options, prepare job/placement applications and develop employability skills
- a counselling and wellbeing service to promote mental health and wellbeing
- a student advice service, supporting students with academic issues and promoting student retention
- a helpdesk providing frontline support to students both on campus and remotely, triaging their enquiries and referring on to appropriate teams
- a library service, providing print and online resources, help with information skills, research support, and a variety of study spaces
- a range of platforms and communications tools such as our student intranet and App, and delivering campaigns to promote a wide range of services and activities
- a great student experience through activities such as our welcome buddy scheme and support for student communities such as care leavers
- support for diversity and cultural change by working in collaborative partnership with other teams across the university to develop and implement diversity, inclusion and cultural change initiatives that aim to tackle structural disadvantage and improve the student experience.



REWARDS & BENEFITS

We are committed to our staff and have an agile working culture to support individuals to work flexibly and balance the demands of their role with their personal circumstances. As well as a competitive salary and a generous relocation package, you'll have access to an attractive pension scheme, generous annual leave, learning and development support to ensure you thrive at ARU, and to a comprehensive suite of wellbeing resources designed to support your physical, mental, and emotional health.

HOW WE RECRUIT

Click [here](#) to find out more about our rewards and benefits offer.

We are excited that you're considering joining ARU! We are committed to attracting the best talent and ensuring that every candidate has a positive experience. We understand that the application process can be both exciting and challenging, and we aim to support you every step of the way.

We value transparency and want to make sure you know what to expect as you navigate our recruitment process, from submitting your application to going through interviews and eventually onboarding; we also provide resources and tips on effective interview techniques to help you prepare and present your best authentic self.

Click [here](#) if you wish to find out more.



Discover excellence like you've never known it before. At ARU, you'll be part of a community that celebrates who you are, champions new ideas, and inspires greatness. Combining individuality with collaboration, you'll be given the tools and support to achieve your aspirations, all whilst making a collective impact on the world around you.

STUDENT & LIBRARY SERVICES

Job Description

Job Title:	Director of Student and Library Services
Grade:	Senior Management (SMG)
Job Family:	Senior Management (SMG)
Work Base:	Chelmsford or Cambridge. Travel to other sites and overseas as required and necessary
Hours of Work:	Full time (37 hours per week)
Managed by:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Line Manages:	Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, Executive Assistant and Office Manager, all staff within Student and Library Services
Relationships and Contacts:	Pro Vice-Chancellor and Deans of Faculties, Directors of Professional Services, Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG) Students and Students' Union, Internal management and staff External bodies and stakeholders
Job Purpose:	Provide strategic and operational leadership for Student and Library Services, delivering an outstanding, inclusive student experience that supports academic success and future employability. Lead the development and delivery of strategies (including Action & Participation Plan), policies and procedures in partnership with students, the Students' Union, academic staff and professional services.

What You'll Be Doing

Lead and manage Student and Library Services in the delivery of our University Strategy, achievement of our objectives, and realisation of our mission and values.

Lead on the development and delivery of innovative cross-University strategies and initiatives to transform and enhance student experience, student satisfaction and student success, with a particular focus on continuation, graduate employability, student equity and wellbeing.

Develop and implement the delivery of effective services including digital resources and infrastructure. Work closely with VCG, the Director of Marketing and Chief Information Officer to implement the University's digital strategy, enhancing the student journey, promoting enterprise service management and self-service wherever possible, and ensuring effective communication with students, staff and stakeholders.

Lead on the delivery of high quality, innovative library services across campuses, ensuring excellent customer services physically and digitally, support for research, REF and OA initiatives and that learning resources offer value for money.

Provide strong leadership and manage effectively the human, financial and physical resources of Student and Library Services in line with the University's policies and procedures, ensuring an excellent level of customer service to students, staff and external stakeholders

Across Student and Library Services, lead on change, innovation and service development, empowerment and motivation of staff to deliver the highest standards of service.

Ensure the overall look and feel of our library and learning spaces to support learning, teaching and research strategies within the University.

Foster and develop an effective culture of partnership working between Student and Library Services, the Students' Union, academic leaders and professional leaders, and students and staff in faculties and professional services to improve student experience. Work with key stakeholders to ensure the viability, currency, recognition and reputation of our Student and Library Services.

Lead on the delivery of cross-University surveys and returns, including NSS, PTES, PRES, UKES and GOS.

Lead work on our Access and Participation Plan, and act as the Corporate Link with OfS for the A&PP.

Contribute fully to wider University management and strategy development and act as a champion of the student voice.

Play a leading role in the development and delivery of strategies and policies to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the University, with respect to the student body.

Act as Chair or Deputy Chair of relevant University Committees, as required. Represent Student and Library Services and the University in the wider academic and professional community, contributing to external conferences and workshops and promoting the reputation of the University.

Take a proactive role in ensuring that all HR policies are followed and that appropriate developmental activities are agreed for and with Student and Library Services staff, considering the outcomes of the professional contribution d& development review.

Comply with Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR requirements in all working practices maintaining confidentiality, integrity, availability, accuracy, currency and security of information as appropriate. Take personal responsibility for all personal data within own working environment.

Comply with Equity Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Sustainability responsibilities as detailed in our policies and procedures.

Such other duties temporarily or on a continuing basis, as may reasonably be required, commensurate with your grade.

This is a description of the job as it is presently constituted. It is normal practice to review periodically job descriptions to ensure that they are relevant to the job currently being performed, and to incorporate any changes which have occurred or are being proposed. The review process is carried out jointly by manager and employee and you are therefore expected to participate fully in such discussions. In all cases, it is our aim to reach agreement to reasonable changes, but where it is not possible to reach agreement, we reserve the right to make reasonable changes to your job description which are commensurate with your grade after consultation with you.

January 2026

STUDENT & LIBRARY SERVICES

Director of Student and Library Services

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Academic/ Professional Qualifications	<p>First degree</p> <p>Higher degree and/or post graduate qualification</p> <p>Evidence of continuous professional development</p>	<p>PhD or Professional Doctorate</p>
Experience	<p>Substantial senior management experience in a Higher Education (HE) context that demonstrates successful strategic planning and implementation, as well as effective personnel leadership and resource management</p> <p>Successful track record of designing and leading initiatives to enhance widening participation and student experience in an HE environment</p> <p>Successful experience of change management, leading staff and large teams through change, innovation and service development</p> <p>Experience of managing resources, including large budgets, business plans and major change processes and the delivery of complex projects to tight timescales</p> <p>Substantial experience in delivering services to support HE students</p> <p>Experience of implementing robust quality assurance processes</p>	<p>Track record of professional engagement in regional/national policy developments in the area of student support</p> <p>Experience of HE teaching or pastoral care</p> <p>Experience of working closely with Students' Unions</p> <p>Experience of process engineering</p> <p>Experience of producing Access Agreements</p>

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge/ Skills	<p>An excellent understanding of the current issues affecting UK Higher Education, student support in particular</p> <p>Understanding of knowledge management and digital technologies related to teaching, learning and research and of digital developments and the impact that new and emerging technologies might have on HE student and library services</p> <p>Strong leadership, management and decision-making skills</p> <p>Genuine empathy with students and a strong understanding of the issues and challenges they face</p> <p>Proven ability to think analytically, strategically and creatively</p> <p>Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, the capacity to enthuse and inspire, and to influence colleagues at all levels</p> <p>Thinks analytically and strategically, and responds creatively to challenges</p> <p>Combines entrepreneurial skills with the ability to develop a commercially sound strategic / business plan for the service</p> <p>Ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines</p>	<p>Excellent IT skills</p> <p>Project management skills</p>
Personal Attributes	<p>A collaborative and facilitative leader, able to influence and work with others at all levels of the organisation, building trust and purposeful direction for the future</p> <p>Clear evidence of high and demanding expectations of self and others, and a commitment to providing excellent service to others</p>	

	Essential	Desirable
	<p>Pro-active and flexible approach</p> <p>Skilled negotiator, tactful, persuasive and assertive when appropriate</p> <p>Confident in challenging colleagues and peers</p> <p>Customer focused approach</p> <p>High levels of credibility with students, academics and professional service staff</p>	
Other	<p>Committed to personal and professional development</p> <p>Committed to our University's values</p> <p>Compliance to our equity diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety, and sustainability policies and procedures</p> <p>Compliance to Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles/ requirements</p>	

HOW TO APPLY

Dixon Walter has been retained by Anglia Ruskin University to provide executive search and advisory services for the role of Director of Student and Library Services.

For further information please visit:

<https://www.dixonwalter.co.uk/opportunities/aru-directorofssandlib/>

Or to discuss this opportunity, please contact [Simon Critchley](#) or [Alan Walter](#)

Your application should include, on separate documents:

- a letter of application setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the requirements in the Person Specification (no more than two pages of A4.)
- a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae
- a completed Personal Details Form
- details of three referees and your notice period (referees will not be contacted without your permission.)

Applications should be emailed to simon@dixonwalter.co.uk at Dixon Walter by midnight on Sunday 22nd February 2026.

Longlist interviews with Dixon Walter will likely take place weeks commencing 2nd March and 9th March 2026.

Formal interviews will take place w/c 30th March 2026, on a date TBC.