



University of  
**CUMBRIA**

# **DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)**

**RECRUITMENT PACK**







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# WE ARE THE UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA



**“We are the University of Cumbria, for and from Cumbria and our localities, rooted in and serving our communities and reflecting the unique environment of the Lake District. We are a university for our region with people, place and partnership at our heart. We are also a young university that is growing and evolving.”**

**Thank you for your interest in joining the University of Cumbria. We are a young, yet progressive and ambitious, university with a clear vision and strategic focus working with a range of anchor organisations and partners to deliver our strategic priorities in Cumbria and beyond. Our new DVC (Academic) will play a pivotal role in ensuring we drive forward our academic strategy, progressively securing our education and research ambitions.**

Providing diverse routes into higher education, into and through employment, and across and into the region has been a fundamental part of our offer for future generations from Cumbria and beyond. We specialise in portfolio and programmes aligned to a range of learner needs and types – on and off campus – delivered with and through a range of strategic employer, educational and stakeholder partnerships. Our partners include BAE, BBC, Rolls Royce, Sellafield, NHS as well as small medium enterprises across Cumbria and the UK. With an emphasis on work based and flexible learning options, we expect to deliver an excellent learning experience, environment, and outcomes for all our students, underpinned by our applied research and professional practice.

As we approached the mid-point in our strategy, Towards 2030, we have considered how best to refine our focus and ensure that we drive forward our ambitions for our students, our communities and for Cumbria. We aim to be an exemplar of higher education, realising individual and economic transformation through an inclusive place-based mission and delivery via vibrant partnership. We embrace the diversity of our student community and their education journeys and are committed to enhancing and delivering excellent student experience and graduate outcomes.

This is an exciting period for Cumbria. The launch of Going for Growth, the Cumbria Economic Strategy, as well as the Borderlands Growth Partnership, the Barrow ten-year plan, Lancashire Growth Strategy, NHS Fit for the Future ten-year plan and the development of a combined mayoral authority for Cumbria, present opportunities to accelerate and amplify positive progress and a need to develop and deliver new educational and research opportunities. That will require focused and innovative leadership from our DVC (Academic). Strong alignment with national policy agendas, including industrial and defence strategies, provides further impetus, while the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement offers a platform to further support flexible provision for individuals changing or progressing in their careers.

We have also seen significant and impactful achievements since the launch of Towards 2030. Our growth in a range of apprenticeships and workforce development contracts, supporting critical public services, has been unprecedented with now over 2300 apprentices making us one of the largest apprenticeship providers in the UK. Our new Barrow campus which opened in September 2025 plays a significant part in the government's plans, as we work with the defence sector to provide huge increases in workforce needs for engineering, computing, project management and supply chain and logistics, contributing to the vision for Barrow and its 10-year plan. In August 2025 we opened the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine (PCSM) in Carlisle, a unique and strategic partnership with Imperial College London. PCSM offers a 4-year graduate entry route to medicine with a specific curriculum



focused on population health, rural health and designed with practitioners from across the region to meet the regions specific needs. Alongside this we also launched the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine Research Hub as part of a strategic approach to building research capacity and capability across Cumbria and building and strengthening partnerships across higher education, the NHS and our local authorities. Our unique partnership with Imperial College brings together our experience in training nurses, midwives, and other professionals allied to medicine, for a dispersed and rural geography, alongside Imperial's world class and world leading expertise in medical education to produce doctors who are ready to contribute to vital services across the region.

We are investing and being invested in. The £79m Citadels project, a new campus in the heart of Carlisle will transform our university presence, visibility and impact in the city centre, supported by capital funding from the Borderlands Growth Deal Initiative and Carlisle Town Deal. The new campus facilitates a modern environment for us to address skills and productivity needs across the region within a range of sectors and disciplines and will make a demonstrable impact to place, vibrancy and to local economies and communities. It will also home our new Carlisle Business Exchange as we work with industry and SMEs in education, research and knowledge exchange.

We acknowledge that 2030 is a milestone and not the end of our journey. We are actively looking Beyond 2030. We remain rooted in the needs of Cumbria and its communities and will anticipate, respond, and adapt to the evolving nature of the region, its businesses and communities. We also recognise that being For and Of Cumbria brings the expertise and imperative to impact Beyond the boundaries of our region. This is an exciting time for a new DVC (Academic) to provide executive leadership to our academic endeavours in a time of excitement, innovation and change.

# WHAT DRIVES US

## Our vision and strategic intent

**We are the University of Cumbria, a place where people are at the heart of all we do, where enriching the lives of our students, staff and the communities we serve means we make a difference that matters.**

Now is a very exciting time to be joining us. We are well placed to make a significant contribution to the success of our students and region, having reflected and refreshed our strategy Towards 2030, setting out our ambitions for the years ahead. We will be making the most of our three most valuable assets; people, place, and partnerships, to further our role as a catalyst for economic well-being for our region, nationally and internationally.

The institutions that came together in 2007 to create the University of Cumbria had a proud history of empowering students with the tools, attributes, and opportunities to maximise their potential to be more than they thought they could be. This continues to be at the heart of all that we do and we recognise the legacy of those organisations.

Our professional and practice-based focus is one of our great strengths. We are passionate about sharing knowledge and have confidence in what we do: our students learn from some of the best in their field. We care and are committed to engaging and inspiring future generations. We embrace inspiring teaching, lifelong learning, and creative innovation, enabled and enriched by research of international standing.

All this takes place across our dispersed campuses, in workplaces and with partners, with approximately 15,000 students, 1,045 colleagues and a turnover of over £75m. The diversity of our locations, landscape, and heritage provides inspiration, challenges, and potential in equal measure.

Following the refresh of Towards 2030, we will also refresh our Academic Strategy and the wider strategic framework. We look forward to the future with confidence.

Towards 2030 strategy and the refresh documents can be viewed here:  
[cumbria.ac.uk/t2030](https://cumbria.ac.uk/t2030)

### Our Vision

In delivering our Refresh of Towards 2030, our vision remains one of:

Transforming lives and livelihoods through learning, research, place and partnership – for now and for our future generations





# STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC PROVISION

**The university currently has around 15,000 students, either based at one of our campuses, in workplace settings or at one of our partner colleges in the UK and overseas.**

**The university employs over 1000 people, part of the communities and localities we are here to support.**

In the 2024/2025 academic year, more than 3,500 students were studying full-time at one of our campus locations and a further 4,300 were engaged in part-time study, which was largely workplace-based, in areas such as healthcare, education, and project management. Our apprenticeship delivery has continued to significantly expand, with significant contracts in place with a range of employers, with over 2,300 students enrolled on this type of provision. Over 5,500 students studied for a university award at one of our partner institutions.

The university has diversified its academic portfolio and activities significantly over the last five years, moving from the traditional higher education model of delivery to campus-based students to one where there is a significant variety of modes, locations and types of provision. This does not diminish the importance of vibrant campuses but recognises the diversity of student journey and employer need. The Pears Cumbria School of Medicine curriculum, designed specifically to reflect the challenges and circumstances of Cumbria's dispersed communities, exemplifies our approach to supporting our region.

With a growing profile and reputation in the region and beyond, we are now one of the largest providers of teacher education in the UK, a major provider of healthcare education and are working with employers developing and delivering higher-level apprenticeships.

The full-time undergraduate student body is predominantly female (65%), higher than the sector average and we have a wider range of student age groups with 61%, 21 years or older on admission. Fourteen percent of full-time students identify themselves with Black, Asian, or minority ethnic backgrounds; 16% had a declared disability on entry, and 17% are from low participating neighbourhoods. The profile of our student community varies significantly between campuses.

Around half our students are now based away from one of our campuses, with delivery via distance learning arrangements and at employers and partner colleges.

Our apprenticeship portfolio continues to grow and evolve. We continue to contribute to the national effort to train and develop frontline professionals including police officers, nurses, and paramedics. Responding to both Cumbria's needs and expertise, the portfolio now also encompassing apprenticeships in forestry, project management and controls and Digital UX.





**“It is a pleasure to work in partnership with University of Cumbria. They are a shining light in Cumberland, providing a high-quality teaching and learning environment for students, whilst taking its place leadership role incredibly seriously and successfully.”**

**Andrew Seekings, Chief Executive Officer, Cumberland Council**

We also deliver a Paramedic Science (Apprenticeship) Degree. During this academic year, the university will be delivering to around 500 new recruits across seven of England’s ambulance trusts – including over 260 in London. We are proud to have been recognised as a silver-rated university by the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 (TEF) for the quality of our teaching and student outcomes. We are in the Top 10 Universities in the UK for graduate employment and the top university in the Northwest, with 97% of our students getting a job or going on to further study within 15 months of graduating (HESA 2024). We are also ranked as the top university in the UK for producing CEOs and Managing Directors by Novuna Business Cash Flow (2025).

We received a “Good” ITE Ofsted rating in which it states we ensure that addressing disadvantage is a ‘golden thread’ running through our provision. Trainees benefit from well structured curriculums, based on pertinent research, that are expertly delivered. We work collaboratively with our partners, locally nationally and globally to bring value by developing key future skills.

Our impact in the region and beyond, is also driven through our support for innovation and our research. Our Ambleside campus, uniquely located in a national park, provides a focus for excellence in sustainable land management and the natural environment. In West Cumbria, we are working with partners, to deliver on priorities in the Industrial Strategy and the National Defence Endeavour.

For more details on our extensive partnership working visit:  
[news.cumbria.ac.uk/testimonials](https://news.cumbria.ac.uk/testimonials)



# OUR LOCATIONS

Headquartered in the historical, cultural, and vibrant city of Carlisle we have another city-based campus in Lancaster, supporting the south of our county and a gateway to it. Our new campus in Barrow-in-Furness, represents an essential step in the transition to Barrow as a University town.

Our Ambleside campus sits in the heart of the Lake District National Park which holds UNESCO World Heritage Status. We also have a site in London close to Canary Wharf, delivering teacher education and business skills predominantly for the communities of Tower Hamlets part of our legacy from St Martins College of Education.

Our north-west campuses are accessible by rail, car or air – within easy reach of major cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Edinburgh.

We are committed to maintaining our practice of dispersed delivery, so that the university continues to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of the different localities.

Place is, and will be, increasingly important to support us in the delivery of our plans, expectations of our communities and ambitions with our partners.



# THE ROLE

## Job Purpose:

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide visible and demonstrable leadership to our academic community, ensuring delivery across all aspects of the Academic Strategy and supporting the wider Towards 2030 strategic framework.

As a senior leader, you will play a full role with the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the senior team in matters relating to strategy, leadership, and management of the University and consideration of policy issues and new initiatives. You will be a full member of our executive decision-making committee and chair our Academic Strategy and Portfolio Committee as well as being Deputy Chair of our Academic Board. You will be the University's executive lead for the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine.

## Main Duties and Responsibilities:

### Academic Leadership

- To provide academic direction supporting our evolution as an innovative, accessible and inspirational University, in line with our Towards 2030 strategic intent.
- To provide academic leadership across the university, including Faculties approach to learning & teaching, research & development, academic staff development, capacity-building and expectation-setting.
- To work closely with leaders across the University to ensure the university's academic portfolio, development opportunities and operating effectiveness are aligned, and leadership of the institution is clear, purposeful and accountable.
- To ensure that internationalisation and inclusivity is embedded in our teaching, learning, research & knowledge exchange: providing insight and relevance from the unique cultural and landscape heritage of our region and building on our experience of online and dispersed delivery.

### Ensuring Academic Excellence

- To work closely with the Pro Vice Chancellor Growth & Development and Deans in developing and delivering academic portfolio, programmes and activities that meet the needs of students and employer/sectors, ensuring that the specific conditions and unique assets of Cumbria are reflected in programme design.
- To take overall responsibility, supported by the Academic Registrar, for the quality of the university's academic portfolio and our collaborative provision, ensuring it remains relevant and accessible, is delivered in line with student expectations, is underpinned by relevant pedagogic research and practice and meets the standards set by the Office for Students and other regulatory and professional bodies. This will encompass responsibility for the approval and review of our provision and, with the University Secretary, the institutional response to external regulation and review.

- To ensure sustainable and significant improvements in student outcomes, delivering against our Key Performance Indicators, the Office for Students conditions of registration, the Teaching Excellence Framework and OFSTED apprenticeship assessments.
- To work with the PVC Learning & Teaching, ensuring a clear focus and data driven approach to students' academic experience and outcomes, including the incorporation of AI and digital innovation in teaching, student engagement and co-creation of learning, student success (achievement, graduate destinations and employability skills), value for money, learning gain, retention and progression.
- To lead the university's approach to Teaching Excellence Framework and any associated submissions, ensuring close linkage to the focus and outcomes of the learning and teaching plan and reflection of our mission and diversity of learners. Also provide leadership for the emerging Office for Students outcomes for the Future Approach to Quality Regulation and, with the PVC Research & Knowledge Exchange, for our institutional approach for the next Research Excellence Framework and the growth of our post graduate student community and our strengthening research culture.

### Developing our Academic Community

- To support, mentor and collaborate with PVCs and Executive Deans in the delivery of our academic mission and the development of our academic community.
- To ensure academic staff are appropriately supported and equipped, including the development and effective operation of the academic workload model, to help define the workforce and roles needed for the future.

### Executive Leadership

- To contribute to meetings of the University's Governing Board and its Academic Governance Committee as required, chairing the executive Academic Strategy & Portfolio Committee (ASPC). To provide leadership through membership of the Academic Board and the senior executive committee of the University.
- To work collaboratively with, and influence as appropriate, local and central government, business, professional bodies, the higher education sector and the public sector, as appropriate to the university's strategic aims, including working with the Pro Vice Chancellors and Deans to develop our portfolio in response to employer and regional skills needs.





## Other Requirements

You will be required to demonstrate professionalism, technical competence, good interpersonal and networking skills and the ability to work independently. You will lead and role model the University's values and leadership behaviours and be an integral part of delivering the University's equality, diversity, and inclusivity priorities.

You will operate, at all times, within established University regulations and procedures and demonstrate an understanding of the needs of a complex, multi-campus university. On occasion, and in line with operational needs, you will be required to travel to other campuses and sites, nationally or internationally.

As a senior leader, you will be expected to work flexibly in discharging your duties.

The normal working week is defined in the contract of employment. However, given the senior nature of the post, you will be expected, and supported, to work flexibly to ensure that the responsibilities of the post are delivered. It is the University's intention that this job description is seen as a guide to the major areas and duties for which the post holder is accountable. However, the priorities will evolve and as a consequence your obligations will vary and develop. This job description should be seen as a guide and not as a permanent, definitive, and exhaustive statement.



# THE PERSON

## Qualifications, knowledge, and experience

- PhD or relevant professional accreditation/qualification with a comprehensive profile of personal academic and professional achievement.
- Postgraduate (or higher) qualification or equivalent professional qualification.
- Teaching Qualification or Advanced HE (Senior or Principal Fellow) accreditation.
- An outstanding record of successful leadership and management in higher education and of developing high-quality academic performance.
- Significant experience in strategic planning, leading policy development and overseeing implementation and positive outcomes.
- A record of active memberships and affiliations with relevant external associations, networks and institutions.
- Good knowledge and understanding of the higher education environment, nationally and internationally, and the major influences on institutional success.
- An understanding of the expectations and motivations of students and staff within a university environment.

## Key competencies

- Excellent communication, influencing and interpersonal skills with an ability to engage effectively and positively across a range of stakeholders.
- Actively encourages a positive working environment which celebrates success.
- Develops positive and innovative approaches to challenges and emerging issues.
- Through a dynamic and energetic approach to leadership, managing, organising and inspiring senior colleagues to maximise their performance and achieve their full potential.
- Ability to work collaboratively with peers to ensure institutional success.
- Ability to represent the university externally and act as senior ambassador.

## Health & Safety Statement

All employees at the University of Cumbria are required to ensure that all duties and responsibilities are discharged in accordance with the Universities Health and Safety at work policy. They should take reasonable care for their own Health and Safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do. Staff should correctly use work items provided by the University, including personal protective equipment in accordance with training or instructions.

## Our Values

At the University of Cumbria, our values shape the way we work, our culture and environment.

### We are PERSONAL

Individuals are at the heart of what we do, and our culture of belonging recognises and supports every person. As an institution, we have mutual respect for those we work with and for and we care about understanding each other's challenges and helping one another to thrive.

### We are PROGRESSIVE

As a university, we have a determination to deliver our mission, which keeps us open to opportunities in front of us. We encourage thoughtful and inspirational ideas, and we tackle problems proactively, with optimism, creativity, and courage.

### We are ENGAGED

As stewards of knowledge and place, it is our privilege to champion the region and advocate for the value of education. The University of Cumbria is welcoming to different perspectives, expertise, and experiences and we are committed to building and nurturing strong links with our communities.

## Equality Diversity and Inclusion Statement

All post holders at the University of Cumbria are required to uphold and work to the Universities Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity statement and associated policies:

The University of Cumbria is committed to providing an inclusive environment, where staff, students and visitors are encouraged to be their true self, in order to enhance the individual and collective experience. As a university community, we share the social responsibility of enabling this inclusive environment by valuing, respecting and celebrating differences, to ensure that we generate a sense of understanding and belonging.

The university recognises that our differences are our strength, seeking and valuing different perspectives and ideas, in an environment that is without prejudice and bias.

We are committed to embracing our responsibility as a facilitator of change and continue to develop our equality agenda in line with and, where appropriate, beyond the Equality Act 2010. We do not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

# THE SENIOR TEAM

## University of Cumbria Senior Leadership

The recruitment of a Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) is a strategic investment, as we focus on delivering the strategic priorities of our refreshed Towards 2030 strategy. Our senior team is strong and reflective of our need to deliver, challenging and collaborating, and recognising the need for succession planning to ensure continued success.

Our Deputy to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Brian Webster-Henderson, plans as part of a phased retirement process to dedicate his stakeholder and strategic skill sets on a portfolio of strategic priorities for the University. These include the transformation of Barrow as University town and the development of our Ambleside campus as an internationally recognised centre of expertise.

Our new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) will play a crucial part in a diverse and impactful senior leadership team, with executive oversight of educational and research portfolios, providing academic leadership, with executive oversight of educational and research portfolios, providing assurance and ensure we respond effectively to the evolving needs of our students and communities.



### Vice Chancellor

Professor Julie Mennell DL is a Physics and Mathematics graduate of the University of Leeds and has held positions as Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development) and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for the University of

Sunderland, leading on portfolio and partnership development, academic and research provision, student experience and outcomes.

Julie was appointed as Vice Chancellor in 2016 and since then has been firmly establishing the role and impact of the University in, for and beyond Cumbria, with a particular emphasis on fulfilling the 'why' of the University's formation. In doing so, she places significant emphasis on partnership working to deliver against Cumbria's current and long term place, employer, labour and skills needs, working strategically with entities such as Cumbria's Economic Growth Board, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, Local Authorities, education partners, employers and sector representative bodies.

Externally, Julie is a Deputy Lieutenant of Cumbria and is involved in a range of regional and sector groups with a particular focus on people and place. These include: Sponsor of Barrow Education, Employment and Skills group, Barrow Delivery Board; Vice Chair of Cumbria Economic Growth Board; Chair of the Carlisle Youth Zone; Patron of Brathay Trust; member representative for the Energy Coast University Technical College; and a member of the Brilliant Barrow Board. Nationally she is a member of Universities UK and the MillionPlus university group.



### Deputy Vice Chancellor

Professor Brian Webster-Henderson OBE is the Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Cumbria. Prior to joining the University of Cumbria in 2018, Brian held several senior academic leadership positions in the

UK including Edinburgh Napier University, Robert Gordon University Aberdeen and University of Southampton and has been a Professor of Nursing since 2009.

Brian is both a mental health nurse and an adult nurse and has been a registered nurse for 40 years. Brian has been leading on the creation of the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine, a joint venture partnership with Imperial College London, providing a graduate entry medicine programme with a focus on public, community and rural health from our Fusehill campus in Carlisle. He also leads on our new Barrow Campus and its provision as part of our strategic plans for being a university that is relevant to its place.

Brian is a Trustee of Cumbria Education Trust and a strategic advisor to the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust. Brian was recognised as a Fellow of the Queens Nursing Institute in December 2022 and awarded an OBE in the King's Birthday Honours list of June 2024 for services to the NHS and education.



**Chief Transformation Officer**

Tracey Slaven is the Chief Transformation Officer at the University of Cumbria. Her role is focused on enabling the University community to make the transformational changes needed to achieve our strategic ambitions, for

the University, the region, and our students.

As CTO, Tracey draws on her initial training as an economist and over 20 years of experience in addressing governance and operational challenges and leading change across higher education, charity, public and private organisations. This work has included major governance transformations, post-merger integration and the statutory and operational creation of a new public body. Most recently the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer at the University of Aberdeen, Tracey has also led the Higher Education policy team in Scotland and been an accountable officer as the Chief Executive of the Student Awards Agency for Scotland.

**Finance Director**

Andrew Heron, as Finance Director, is responsible for the University's financial strategy. This involves leadership of our financial planning, reporting, analysis and operations and the provision of advice and

decision support. Andrew has responsibility for the provision of student and other data for decision making and its analysis, and he is the chair of our Business Assurance Board.

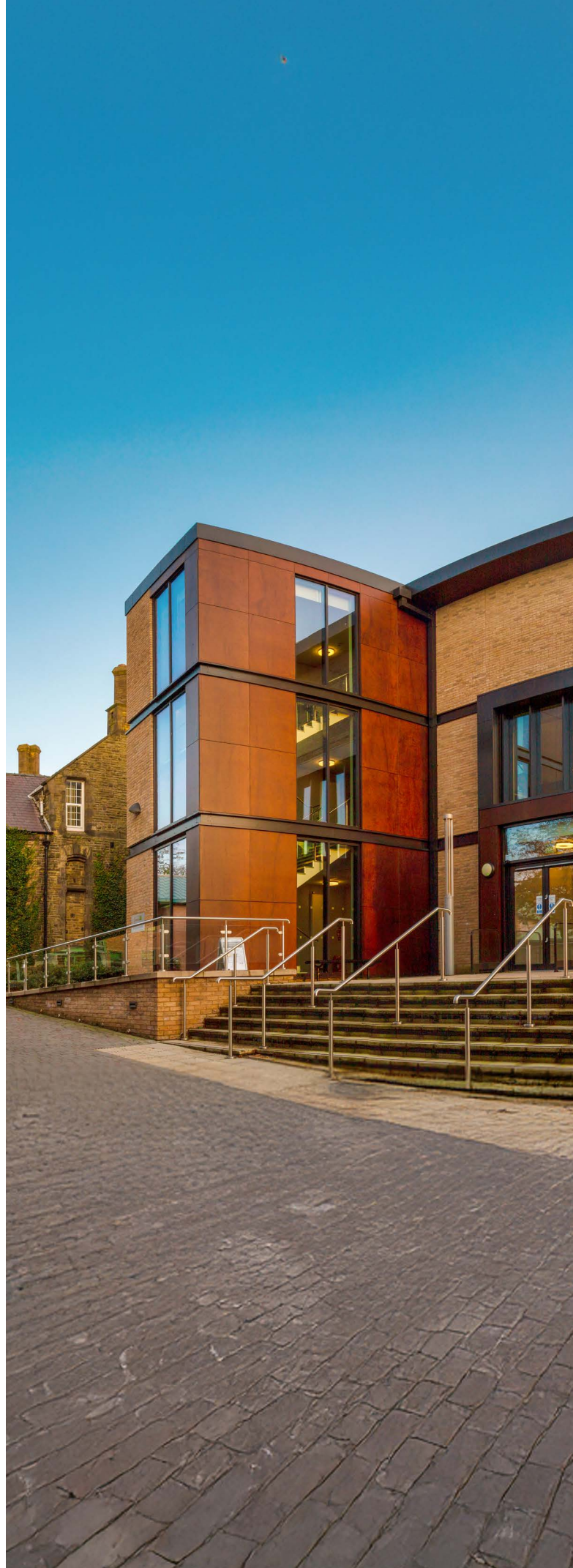
A chartered accountant, Andrew joined the University in 2010, bringing with him experience of the higher education and other sectors from his time with KPMG in audit and advisory.

**University Secretary**

Dr Jean Brown has significant experience working in governance, strategy and planning roles within the HE sector. She has worked in a senior role at UNIAC (internal audit provider). Prior to that, she

held was the Head of the Strategic Development Service and then Head of Audit and Risk Management at UCLan.

With accountability to both the Chair of the Board and the Vice Chancellor, Jean is the Secretary to the University Board and its committees; Company Secretary; and is responsible for provision of the committee servicing function. Jean is also responsible for managing the ongoing registration of the University with the Office for Students; ensuring compliance with the GDPR and FOIA; and the main institutional contact for a range of compliance matters.



# HOW TO APPLY

**For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Emma Wilkins at Dixon Walter Search and Selection at:**

**emma@dixonwalter.co.uk  
07741 875289**

## **To apply please submit:**

- An up-to-date CV with details of your current or last remuneration.
- A covering letter of no more than 2,000 words that addresses the requirements in the person specification on page 10.
- Details of three referees (one of whom should be your current employer), including name, nature of your relationship, position and contact details. References will not be taken up without prior consent.
- A completed equal opportunities and diversity form (also available to download from the campaign site).

## **These documents should be emailed to:**

**emma@dixonwalter.co.uk**

Further details are available at

[www.dixonwalter.co.uk/opportunities/cumbria-dvc-academic](http://www.dixonwalter.co.uk/opportunities/cumbria-dvc-academic)

## **Key dates for your diary**

- The closing date for applications is Monday 2nd March.