

Office for Students



APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF PROVIDER GOVERNANCE

APPOINTMENT BRIEF MAY 2020



BACKGROUND TO THE OfS

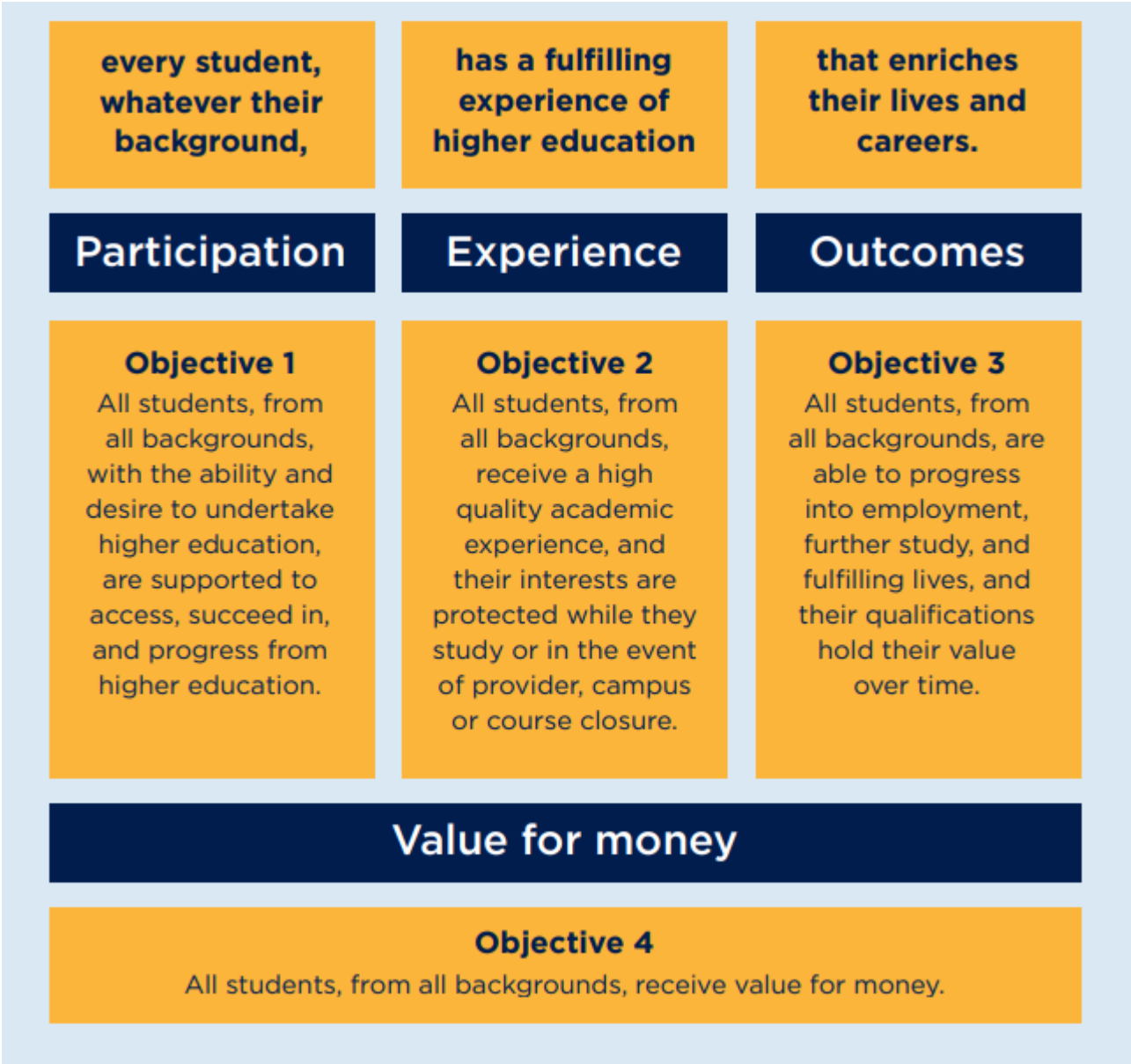
The OfS is the independent regulator of higher education in England. It regulates providers in the interests of students. Its aim is to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. The OfS does this by regulating the higher education providers on its register to make sure they are delivering positive outcomes for their students. Where they are not, it takes action. At sector level, it regulates to create the conditions for informed choice, competition and continuous improvement in the interests of students. It ensures value for money in higher education for students and taxpayers.

An independent public body, reporting to Parliament through the Department for Education (DfE), the OfS became fully operational on 1 April 2018 when it replaced the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).

Its work covers all students whether undergraduate or postgraduate, home or international, young or mature, full-time or part-time, studying on a campus or by distance learning. Chaired by Sir Michael Barber, and led by Nicola Dandridge CBE as Chief Executive, it is also advised by a panel of current and prospective students, and recent graduates.

Its regulatory objectives describe the outcomes it is seeking to achieve for students, past, present and future. They also bring essential benefits to employers, the economy and society.

It aims to ensure that:



The last two years have been a transitional period during which the OfS has put in place systems and processes in line with its duties under HERA. In addition, in 2018-19 it exercised powers under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and the Higher Education Act 2004. Where consistent with its role as an independent regulator, it worked closely with the DfE on areas where the latter exercise responsibility during the transitional period or on an enduring basis. The OfS's values (overleaf) guide the way it works with each other internally, and with its partner organisations and stakeholders.



Registration in the student interest

The OfS's regulatory framework is designed to protect the interests of students before, during and after their higher education by requiring providers to demonstrate that they are offering high quality higher education to their students. In order to be registered with the OfS they must meet, and maintain, a common threshold of quality, financial sustainability and transparency. They must also show that they are working to eliminate gaps in access and success between the most and least represented groups of students.

The OfS Register and the regulatory process

The OfS Register comprises a single, authoritative list of all the English higher education providers registered by the OfS. It gives assurance to students and taxpayers that a provider meets baseline requirements across a series of aspects which, taken together, mean that they are providing high quality teaching, learning and support for their students. Registration brings significant benefits for providers. Their students can apply for government-backed tuition fee and maintenance loans, and they can access public grant funding. They can apply to the Home Office for a licence to recruit international students, and to the OfS for the right to award degrees and call themselves a university.

In order to register with the OfS a higher education provider must meet a set of initial conditions relating to access and participation, quality and standards, student protection, financial viability and sustainability, and management and governance. These conditions will vary depending on the registration category for which the provider has applied. Once registered, a provider must meet a set of general ongoing conditions. The OfS assesses the likelihood that a provider will breach one or more of these conditions. Where it identifies a risk, it may decide to impose specific ongoing conditions – particular requirements a provider must meet in order to remain registered. It may also decide to monitor a provider more closely. Where the OfS finds a breach of a specific or general ongoing condition it will consider using one or more of a range of sanctions, including, potentially, de-registration.



THE ROLE - HEAD OF PROVIDER GOVERNANCE

The OfS's regulatory framework places key responsibilities on the governing bodies and accountable officers of registered higher education providers. The Head of Provider Governance will play a key role in delivering and implementing the OfS's regulatory framework. They will lead on the OfS's approach to regulating management and governance across a diverse range of higher education providers. Engaging with key stakeholders internally and externally, the postholder will be a strategic and creative influence within the directorate, managing a high-quality and motivated matrixed team.

PURPOSE OF POST

The Competition and Registration directorate has strategic and operational responsibility for developing and implementing the OfS's regulatory framework. We design and deliver high quality services for providers for market entry, Degree Awarding Powers and University Title, and for monitoring providers. We do this on the basis of the provisions of HERA, or the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA), and the regulatory framework.

The purpose of the Head of Provider Governance role is to lead on and deliver the OfS's approach to the regulation of management and governance arrangements in higher education providers on the basis set out in HERA and in the OfS's regulatory framework.

Key responsibilities include:

- leading on the OfS's approach to the regulation of management and governance;
- leading the team in designing and continually improving the system that delivers services to providers;
- ensuring the OfS's duty as principal regulator for exempt charities is effectively discharged.

The role requires engagement with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that there is a consistent understanding of the OfS's approach to regulation.

For more information on the postholder's key responsibilities and enablers, please see Appendix 1.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will bring an understanding of management and governance arrangements in complex structures, with experience in identifying risks. They will be able to approach challenges proactively and think innovatively about OfS's approach to regulating providers. Candidates will be strong leaders with the ability to manage teams, and their workload, within a matrix structure. Comfortable with ambiguity, strategically minded, and personally resilient, candidates will be adept at communicating effectively and building strong relationships inside and outside the organisation.

Key Skills

Candidates must bring the demonstrable ability to:

- Understand, interpret and identify risks in management and governance arrangements in complex corporate and legal structures and in diverse types of organisations
- Understand and interpret HERA, or the CTSA, and to use this to develop, implement and communicate the OfS's regulatory framework
- Reach and convey reliable and challenge-proof judgements on the basis of complex and imperfect information, and in novel circumstances
- Think strategically and take a broad view of issues, events and activities and understand their likely impact or wider implications
- Work comfortably with high levels of complexity and ambiguity
- Think innovatively about the theory and practice of regulation

Candidates will bring some demonstrable ability to:

- Adopt and implement a systems approach to service design and delivery
- Lead and manage the team in a complex environment through a matrix structure

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Location: Bristol

Pay band: 11 (£68,668 - £72,101)

Directorate: Competition and Registration

Reports to: Head of Competition and Market Entry or Head of Monitoring and Intervention

VALUING DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBLE WORKING

The OfS values diversity in all its forms: just as it seeks to promote access, success and progress for underrepresented groups of students (you can read about its work [here](#)), so it seeks to reflect this in its own workforce. As such, it is keen to hear from people from all backgrounds and walks of life with the right skills and expertise to help support its ambitious vision.

The OfS also actively encourages employees to achieve their individual work/life balance by offering flexible working where business requirements allow.

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the **Office for Students** on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at **www.saxbam.com/appointments**, using code QAHAUC1.

Click on the **'apply'** button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter.

Candidates should state where they saw the advertisement (i.e. Saxton Bampfylde website) at the top of the covering letter.

The closing date for applications is **noon on Thursday 2nd July 2020**. **The next stages of the process will take place in line with current government guidance, supported by video technology when required. Candidates will be supported in the use of this technology throughout the process. We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that, if needed, candidates have access to communication support at all stages of the process. Interviews will be held through August and September.**

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data,

APPENDIX 1

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leading the directorate's staff and teams to deliver.

- There is effective leadership within the directorate, across the organisation, and in support of other directorates. Staff are led by example, with leaders modelling: the OfS's behaviours and values; flexible, agile and collaborative working, including with staff and teams in other directorates
- In the areas for which the postholder is responsible, the outcomes and objectives in the OfS's business plan are delivered efficiently and effectively
- Risk to delivery is identified and actively managed with robust mitigation implemented where necessary
- Resources are aligned with priorities, and workload pressures are accommodated and managed, by working with other leaders in the directorate
- The allocation and management of activities for the directorate's staff and teams is clear and supports delivery of the OfS's functions and strategy
- Line management arrangements for the directorate's staff result in clear individual objectives, feedback on performance, and support for development. As a result, staff perform to high standards
- The director is advised and supported, with the postholder deputising as required
- Understanding and capability are built across the organisation in the OfS's approach to regulation, particularly in the areas for which the postholder is responsible

Ensuring that the OfS is able to discharge those of its statutory functions that fall within the remit of the team.

- In relation to the regulation of management and governance arrangements in higher education providers, the following are delivered:
 - The OfS's approach to the regulation of management and governance is coherent, effective and understood by providers
 - The OfS effectively discharges its responsibilities as principal regulator for those registered providers that are exempt charities
- In relation to risk assessment, monitoring and intervention, the following are delivered:
 - There are adequate and effective arrangements for the regulation of registered providers, designed and implemented on the basis of the provisions of HERA and the OfS's regulatory framework
 - The OfS's approach to the risk assessment, monitoring and intervention is developed and implemented, specifically for conditions E1, E2 and E3
 - The OfS delivers consistent and reliable judgements about initial and ongoing conditions E1, E2 and E3
- The OfS's general duties inform the way that the it performs its functions
- There is ongoing development and implementation of OfS's regulatory framework as required by section 75 of HERA

Continuous improvement of the service provided by the team.

- The team designs and delivers a high-quality service for providers
- The team understands the purpose of the system from the provider's perspective and is able to design against customer demand
- The team collects and uses capability measures to understand how the system is performing from the provider's perspective and takes action to improve the system
- The team takes action to remove blockages to system improvement, with the postholder taking action on issues that fall beyond the team's reach, either because they are outside the OfS, or are complex cross-organisational issues within the OfS
- The team measures the impact of regulatory arrangements and interventions

Internal and external communication.

- There is authoritative and credible communication about regulatory and operational matters at a senior level in providers and with other stakeholders
- The work of the OfS, the directorate, and the team is effectively communicated in a range of public contexts
- Engagement with government, sector and student bodies on the OfS's approach to regulation results in: understanding of the requirements placed on providers; the benefits of this for students; consistent communication of the OfS's approach to regulation
- By working with other regulatory bodies, there is a coherent approach to areas of shared interest and a public articulation of this that is consistent with the OfS's regulatory approach

ENABLERS

Knowledge and Learning

- Maintains a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the legal and political context for the OfS's work, helping others to understand the implications of this context
- Maintains the sophisticated professional knowledge necessary to lead the OfS's approach to the regulation of management and governance arrangements in complex corporate and legal structures and in diverse types of organisations
- Leads the team to undertake double loop learning, understanding and addressing root causes as well as surface issues

Planning

- Plans, organises and marshals activities and resources effectively and collaboratively in a flexible matrix structure
- Identifies and mitigates risk to plans and delivery
- Manages own workload and leads team, resolving competing demands, and coping with changing priorities in a flexible and proactive way
- Demonstrates a readiness to make decisions, take the initiative and originate action, including in circumstances without complete or perfect information

Communication

- Provides actionable technical and professional feedback to the team and individual members on management and governance matters
- Writes in a clear and concise manner, using appropriate grammar, style and language, which is tailored for the reader. Writing will be strong, persuasive, and effective. Writing will be challenge-proof and legally compliant
- Communicates authoritatively, clearly, fluently and in a compelling manner to individuals and large audiences, using appropriate style and language. Chairs meetings, events, leads and facilitates discussions effectively and with outstanding presentation skills
- Influences, convinces or impresses others in a way that results in acceptance, agreement or behaviour change, using evidenced arguments and clear rationale

Relationships

- Demonstrates a confident, assertive and co-operative style and deals effectively with people at all levels to build positive working relationships
- Maintains credibility with members of the OfS Board and senior government officials
- Maintains effective work behaviour in the face of setbacks or pressure and remains calm and professional in such circumstances
- Actively contributes to the leadership of the directorate through a complex 'start up' phase and into well-established 'business as usual' practices and relationships