



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE



Appointment of

Governors

November 2025

Saxton Bampfylde



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Contents

- 3. Welcome from the Chair**
- 4. About Northumbria University**
- 5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
- 6. Our Governance Structure**
- 8. Committee Structure**
- 9. Opportunity to join our Board**
- 12. To Apply**



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Welcome from the Chair

I am really delighted that you are considering the position of independent governor on the Board at Northumbria University.

In recent years Northumbria has transformed hugely in outlook, standing and scale as a research intensive, modern university with a global reputation for academic excellence and driving social mobility. We are a new kind of excellent University, and our success is founded on an ambitious Mission and Vision and robust five-year University Strategy.

Along with the rest of our Board of Governors, I am proud to be part of one of the largest and most ambitious universities in the UK. We continue to encourage, and invest in our talented academic and professional staff, attracting a diverse mix of students and staff from across the globe, and have a strong, demonstrable commitment to be inclusive and accessible to all. We are dedicated to delivering the best possible learning experience which allows our students, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, to achieve impressive outcomes and reach their full potential.

We are looking for inspiring individuals to join the Board as independent governors. The Board of Governors is the University's ultimate strategic decision-making body. It supports the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, and the University Executive, to lead and deliver the University Strategy. As an independent governor, you will be welcomed onto the Board and supported through a comprehensive induction programme so that you feel confident to contribute on appointment to our work.

This is an exceptional opportunity to be involved in the governance of this great institution, and I hope you will consider making an application.

Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods,
Chair of the Board of Governors





**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

About Northumbria University

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally, and internationally. Our vision is that through our world-leading research and transformative education, we enable people from all backgrounds to succeed and support businesses and communities in the North-East, London and beyond to thrive.

Tracing its origins back to Rutherford College in late 19th Century Newcastle, now, more than 140 years on, Northumbria is one of the largest universities in the UK, with over 35,000 students from more than 140 countries and over 3,500 staff. Based in two of the best student cities, Newcastle and London, Northumbria has an international presence, with 17 global academic partners in 10 countries including Hong Kong, Singapore, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Caribbean and regional offices in Nigeria, China, Malaysia, and India.

Northumbria has had an impressive and sustained run of national recognition in recent years. In 2022, Northumbria was crowned Times Higher Education's University of the Year, the most prestigious accolade in the UK higher

education sector, in recognition of its transformation over more than a decade into a research-intensive university with a clear social mobility mission to unlock potential and change lives.

Earlier that year, Northumbria had recorded the biggest rise in research power of any UK university for the second time in a row in the Research Excellence Framework, ranking 23rd in the UK. In 2023 the Daily Mail awarded Northumbria the titles of both Research University of the Year and Modern University of the Year in its first ever university guide, in recognition of the 'University's research performance and its deep-seated all-round excellence'.

This year The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025 awarded Northumbria the title of Modern University of the Year, saying Northumbria is a leading light among the UK's modern Universities. More recently Northumbria has been ranked 47th in both The Times and Guardian University Guides 2026 and 37th in The Complete University Guide 2026.

**TOP 10
IN THE UK FOR
GRADUATE
BUSINESS START-UPS**

HEBCIS 2022-23
(ESTIMATED ANNUAL
AGGREGATED TURNOVER OF
GRADUATE START-UP BUSINESSES)

**TOP 30
IN THE UK FOR
GRADUATES
IN HIGHLY SKILLED
EMPLOYMENT**

UK FULL TIME UNDERGRADS
GRADUATE OUTCOMES SURVEY
2021/22

**GOLD
FOR STUDENT
OUTCOMES
AND SILVER OVERALL**

TEACHING EXCELLENCE
FRAMEWORK
(TEF) 2023

**TOP 25 FOR
RESEARCH
POWER
IN THE UK**

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
FRAMEWORK (REF) 2021

**RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR**

DAILY MAIL UNIVERSITY
GUIDE 2024

**MODERN
UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR**

THE TIMES AND
THE SUNDAY TIMES
GOOD UNIVERSITY
GUIDE 2025

**TOP NORTH EAST
UNIVERSITY FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
AND RATED
FIRST CLASS**

PEOPLE AND PLANET
UNIVERSITY LEAGUE
2023/24





**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Northumbria University is proud to be a multicultural community. We value diversity and are determined to ensure that opportunities we provide are open to all. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strongly underpin the University's Strategy 2030. We are committed to providing an environment in which diversity is valued and encouraged, where there is equal access to opportunities and services and in which all prospective and existing staff and students are treated fairly, with equity, dignity and mutual respect.

At Northumbria, we firmly believe that our people play the most crucial role in enabling us to achieve our ambitions. A diverse, inclusive workforce is essential in promoting a culture where every individual feels safe and empowered to generate ideas and achieve their full potential.

As an organisation, we are empowered by the diversity of our workforce. EDI is essential in fostering innovation, collaboration, and a sense of belonging.

Our University ED&I Committee is supported by sub-committees and local roles along with our vibrant and active staff networks, including LGBTQ* Network, Northumbria Women's Network, BAME Network and Staff Disability Network.

Informed by both our own university data and sector-wide insights, Northumbria is currently prioritising action in four key areas of equality: Disability, Gender, Race, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. Alongside these focus areas, we continue to advance work across all protected characteristics and are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion for all under-represented groups within our University community.

For further information on our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, please visit our [EDI webpages](#) or review our progress in our [Annual EDI Report](#).





Our Governance Structure

The Board of Governors (currently comprising 19 members) is the non-executive body that, with the University Executive, sets Northumbria's Vision and Strategy and determines the academic and organisational character of the University. It approves the University's budget which supports the Strategy and our financial sustainability and provides governance across all activities of the University.

The Board and the University Executive work in tandem to deliver the University's priorities and achieve its sustainability and success. The Board is responsible for the stewardship and safeguarding of the University's resources, assets and reputation, and assures itself of compliance with legal and regulatory obligations. It appoints the University's internal and external auditors.

The Board appoints the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive ("the Vice-Chancellor"), who is the Accountable Officer of the University. The Vice-Chancellor, who is also a Governor, chairs the University Executive and works closely with the Chair of the Board.

The Board delegates some of its responsibilities through:

- ensuring that the Vice-Chancellor effectively leads the academic and executive management of the University: The University Executive is the University's senior leadership team, comprising individuals with academic and professional support portfolios. The role of the University Executive is to advise the Vice-Chancellor who is responsible for strategic and operational management.

- its committees: The Board has committees with responsibility for Employment and Finance, Strategic Performance, Audit, Nominations and Remuneration. The Academic Board, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, makes reports to the Board of Governors.

The Board is the Trustee Board of Northumbria University, which is an exempt charity. 13 of our 19 Governors/Trustees ("Governors") are independent and external to the University. They come from a wide range of higher education and other professional backgrounds. The Board provides effective governance in line with the University's regulatory obligations and in accordance with the Committee of University Chairs' Higher Education Code of Governance. It also adds value by offering independent, expert input and constructive challenge into the decisions of the University Executive.

There are five meetings of the full Board each year. The role of each Committee of the Board of Governors, and the Academic Board, is summarised below. We are particularly looking for Governors who could sit on Audit Committee and Finance and Resources Committee. Further details are provided on the University's

[Leadership and Governance webpages](#)



The Board of Governors

Governors/Trustees (“Governors”) make up the Board of Governors of the University, which is also the University’s Trustee Board as an exempt charitable body. The Board is collectively accountable for all institutional activities.

Governors should make considered, diligent, informed and constructive contributions to deliberations and decision-making, applying their knowledge and expertise to the business of the Board and its Committees.

Governors should act in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government of the University, seeking advice from the Secretary to the Board as required.

The University is an exempt charity, and the ‘Trustee’ status of Governors denotes a responsibility to exercise a ‘duty of care’ and ‘duty of prudence’. This includes advancing the educational and other charitable purposes of the University for the public benefit.

Governors and University Business

Governors have collective responsibility for determining and approving the University’s Vision and Strategy, reviewing overall institutional performance and associated risks and ensuring financial sustainability and academic excellence.

Governors are collectively and individually charged with ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory obligations, including those concerning charitable status. Governors should avoid direct involvement in management or operational matters.

Governors should act as a “critical friend”, establishing and maintaining effective and robust working relationships that support and challenge the University Executive.

Governors will normally be expected to serve on at least one Board Committee and to attend other panels and ceremonial/social events.





Committee Structure

Finance and Resources Committee

Approves and monitors finance strategy, estates, IT and other capital projects to support the University Strategy 2024-30

Strategic Performance Committee

Advisory role to the University Executive and the Board of Governors in relation to performance against the University Strategy 2024-30, and the related strategic plans

Remuneration Committee

Oversight of the remuneration policy and remuneration of senior staff, and determines base pay decisions

Audit Committee

Provides assurance to the Board of Governors on the adequacy of the University's framework for financial compliance and integrity, via the annual report and financial statements

Oversight of internal and external audit arrangements

Oversight of the wider control and compliance environment including risk management, value for money, data quality and assurance arrangements, health, safety and wellbeing measures and whistleblowing.

People Committee

Approves and monitors employment strategy and policy. Approves frameworks for pay and conditions of service, pension strategy, and organisational development policies on behalf of the Board of Governors, ensuring effective management of equality, diversity and inclusion matters, and staff wellbeing initiatives.

Nominations Committee

Makes recommendations to the Board on its membership and those of its committees including oversight of Governor recruitment and development.





Opportunity to join our Board

As an Independent Governor you will contribute to setting and approving the University's Vision and Strategy, oversee its delivery, and ensure effective performance management, governance and compliance. You will develop a detailed understanding of the University and its operating context but also bring knowledge and experience from elsewhere.

We are particularly interested in hearing from members of ethnic minority and traditionally under-represented groups who are passionate about the transformative power of education and research, who share Northumbria's Vision and have the motivation, commitment, ambition and capacity to help shape Northumbria's future.

We're looking for individuals who can demonstrate many, if not all, of the following attributes:

- A passion for the power of education and research to transform lives, societies and cultures
- A strong alignment with Northumbria's Vision and University Strategy 2030, and a commitment to its values within

the context of the evolving UK higher education landscape

- A strategic and forward-thinking approach, a modern and dynamic outlook, with a national and global perspective, an appreciation for the swiftly evolving needs of a new generation and a grasp of evolving policy as it affects higher education
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage, inspire, and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders
- Ability to act as a visible ambassador and advocate for Northumbria, engaging effectively with major partners, benefactors and supporters
- Experience of contemporary governance, with a good understanding of applicable codes and standards
- Proven success in senior leadership roles, demonstrating financial literacy and commercial acumen



Finance

- Senior-level experience in financial management, planning, or strategy.
- Expertise in interpreting and analysing complex financial statements and reports.
- Understanding of financial governance, risk management, and regulatory compliance.
- Experience in overseeing large budgets or financial operations, ideally within complex organisations.
- Ability to provide strategic financial oversight and challenge assumptions to ensure long-term sustainability.

Audit

- Professional experience in internal or external audit, risk assurance, or compliance.
- Strong understanding of audit frameworks, controls, and governance processes.
- Ability to assess organisational risk and contribute to the development of robust mitigation strategies.
- Experience of being a member of audit committees or similar governance

bodies.

- Knowledge of sector-specific audit challenges (e.g. education, public sector, or large-scale enterprises).

IT & Cyber Security

- Senior leadership experience in IT strategy, digital transformation, or cyber security.
- Deep understanding of current and emerging technologies and their implications for large organisations.
- Expertise in cyber risk management, data protection, and regulatory compliance.
- Experience in implementing or overseeing enterprise-level IT infrastructure or security frameworks.
- Ability to advise on digital innovation, resilience, and strategic technology investments.





Standards, Conduct and Personal Attributes

- Governors are bound to abide by expected governance standards, including:
 - the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
 - Office for Students (OfS) standards and conduct expected of 'fit and proper' persons in governance, and of charity trustees by the Charities Commission;
 - the Committee of University Chairs' Higher Education Code of Governance
- Governors must adhere to the University's Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest policy, making full and timely disclosure of personal and pecuniary interests.
- Governors should avoid being bound, or influenced, by mandates given to them by interest groups, internal or external to the University. Governors are not representatives of any group and are obliged to operate in the best interests of the University.
- Governors should exercise independent judgment, acting fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, maintaining confidentiality on all matters.
- Governors should participate in the annual (and ad hoc) appraisal/review of their performance on the Board and contribute to Board and Committee effectiveness reviews.

Other requirements, including time and wider commitments

- The time commitment amounts to at least one day per month, including:
 - the time associated with reading and reviewing Board and Committee papers;
 - attending all meetings of the Board of Governors and its Committees, including an annual away day;
 - being available for fellow Governors, including the Vice-Chancellor, for University Executive members outside formal meetings and for the Secretary to the Board;
- annual appraisals/review of their contribution as a Governor; attending events
- Induction and ongoing development opportunities will be made available for all Governors.
- Governors play an important ambassadorial role. They are encouraged to attend University-led events and on occasion will be invited to attend external engagements to represent the University.
- With the exception of the Chair of the Board and the Chairs of its key Board Committees, Governors are not remunerated but may reclaim all reasonable travelling and related expenses incurred in the course of University business.
- The role of Independent Governor is not remunerated. However, should successful candidates progress to become Chair of one of our Board Committees, annual payment of £7.5k per annum will be offered.



To Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Northumbria University on this appointment.

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

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 19th December.

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

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, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.
- If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Georgina Bailes, Secretary to the Board and Director of Governance Georgina.bailes@northumbria.ac.uk

