Welcome Letter from Professor Simone Buitendijk
Vice-Chancellor

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Digital Transformation at the University of Leeds. This exciting new post will be a crucial member of the academic leadership team at the University, consolidating and continuing to grow our international reputation, and leading on our commitment to translating research into cutting-edge education, societal outcomes and wider economic benefits.

The University of Leeds is one of the UK’s largest higher education institutions, and we are renowned globally for the quality of our teaching and research. Work is now underway on our new strategy, which will set out the strategic direction of the University for the next 10 years around our goals of community, culture and impact – decreasing inequalities both locally and globally. It will ensure the University’s continued success in the face of changing circumstances, and that our teaching and research community are able to capitalise on opportunities and solve future challenges. You would join us at the start of that strategic journey and would play a key role in realising and shaping its course over the next decade.

One of our strategic priorities will be to establish the University of Leeds as an innovative leader in the use of digital technology, data and digital approaches, working in effective partnerships with other universities, businesses and organisations to solve global challenges, building on our existing strengths in digital and online education.

Transforming the University into a world-leading digital university will require academic leadership of the highest order. We are looking for someone who can work closely and collaboratively with me and a strong team of Deputy Vice-Chancellors to ensure that digital innovation:

Delivers an excellent education for our students.

Underpins the development of our research and innovation activities.

Supports the University’s international strategy.

Increases and enriches the global learning community, including by working in partnership with education providers globally.

Creates new knowledge and impact.

Among other things, the successful candidate will provide expert academic leadership for all staff and services engaged in digital transformation, and chair a digital transformation strategy board, ensuring that its priorities are delivered in a timely way.

As a member of the University Executive Group, the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Digital Transformation will play a pivotal role in contributing to the leadership of the University as well as leading the digital transformation portfolio. We are seeking individuals with significant experience of strategic academic leadership and a strong track record of delivering major programmes of work to completion, coupled with an inclusive and determined approach that inspires colleagues.

I have also recorded a video message for candidates, which I hope gives you more personal insight into my vision for the University – and what a move to Leeds could mean for you.

Thank you once again for your interest in the role, and I look forward to receiving your application.

Professor Simone Buitendijk
Vice-Chancellor
Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a fundamental strategic priority for the University of Leeds. Our ambition is to become a global leader in the use of digital technologies, data and digital approaches to support student education, global lifelong learning, research and innovation and ways of working, and as a centre for the digital transformation of education and research. Our aim is to become an innovative leader in the use of digital technology, data and digital approaches, working in effective partnerships with other universities, businesses and organisations, to solve global challenges. We already have a great track record in digital transformation, but there are many more opportunities for us to embrace and an exciting journey ahead.

By digital transformation, we do not just mean technology or data, but critically encompassing culture, people, processes and impact. For our University, digital transformation will be cross-cutting across our core business of education and research, and our ways of working.

In education, it is about understanding and harnessing the potential affordances of digital technologies to enhance and enrich the education and experience we offer to students studying on campus, in hybrid modes and online, and offering learning opportunities to individuals globally, to support lifelong learning and professional learning.

“...students take charge of their experiences with academic and co-curricular opportunities that enhance their learning while preparing them for the world beyond the University”

HEFCE TEF Statement
In research, it is about ensuring we have best of breed technologies and platforms to support cutting-edge activities, provide an environment where we can innovate, co-create and embed new and emerging technologies to solve global challenges, build strong bridges between research and education, and create a research-informed evidence-base of the positive and negative impacts of digital technologies. Underpinning this is transformation of our ways of working to ensure that effective use of digital technologies, data and approaches improves our administrative processes, freeing up as much time as possible for our core business. And beneath all of that is transformation of our culture to embrace digital technologies, and ongoing, deep and impactful professional development to support all staff and students to be able to harness the power and potential of digital technology and manage the challenges they present.

It is increasingly evident, both from the research literature and evidence-based practice, that digital technologies and online education offer many opportunities for learners to access educational opportunities more flexibly and inclusively, enable rich and diverse learning communities, and support learners to achieve their learning goals. Embracing digital technologies to enrich face-to-face, hybrid and online education improves learners’ motivation and engagement, and use of active learning pedagogies enables learners to work creatively and innovatively with their peers and teachers to co-create knowledge and gain new skills. We need to continually scan the horizon and invest in new and emerging technologies that we think can support us to improve our students’ learning opportunities, and enhance their experience, and we can develop and evaluate these solutions ourselves, through partnership with our students, researchers and technology partners.

As we evolve our student education strategy, we will incorporate the best practice from our hybrid delivery model and embed student-centred active learning approaches into all aspects of student education. We will continue to redesign our curricula to deliver effective blended learning for on-campus learners and be prepared to adapt our approach and pivot seamlessly to hybrid and online learning in the face of external forces. We will also redesign our assessments, and our processes for managing assessments, to continue to realise the benefits of digital delivery and marking of assessments, whilst maintaining quality, rigour and standards. This is a great opportunity to re-imagine assessment to be more inclusive, flexible and authentic.

Online education increases access to learning opportunities for people all around the world and is a powerful force to enhance lifelong learning for all. Growing our online education portfolio will help to support global lifelong learning, and to support realisation of the UN’s Education Sustainable Development Goals. Through working in partnership with education providers globally, we can increase and enrich the global learning community, and collaboration will create new knowledge and impact. Through these partnerships with other universities around the world, and with online education platforms, we can provide accessible, stackable, credentialed online learning opportunities to support people solving global challenges. The educational provision created through these activities will be re-used and re-purposed to support people solving global challenges. The educational provision created through these activities will be re-used and re-purposed to support people solving global challenges. The educational provision created through these activities will be re-used and re-purposed to support people solving global challenges.

Transforming the University into a world-leading digital university will require academic leadership of the highest order, and we are therefore creating the new Executive post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Digital Transformation to lead on the delivery of this ambition.
About the University

The University, established in 1904, is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK. We are renowned globally for the quality of our education and research.

The strength of our academic expertise combined with the breadth of disciplines we cover, provides a wealth of opportunities and has a real cultural, economic, societal and environmental impact.

It is an exciting time to join the University as Professor Simone Buitendijk became the new Vice-Chancellor from September 2020, following Sir Alan Langlands’ successful tenure, and a new institutional strategy will be launched in the new year.

The University strives to achieve academic excellence within an ethical framework informed by our values of integrity, equality and inclusion, community and professionalism.

Leeds is truly a community, with more than 38,000 students from 170 different countries, over 9,000 staff of 100 different nationalities and we are in touch with more than 281,000 alumni in 190 different countries. A member of the Russell Group of universities, we are one of the UK’s top ten research institutions and one of the UK’s most prestigious and diverse universities.

UNIVERSITY CORE VALUES

The University’s core values are as follows:

- Academic excellence: knowledge, academic freedom, critical independence, creativity, innovation and world-class performance.
- Community: public service and citizenship; collegiality, teamwork and mutual respect.
- Integrity: openness, transparency and honesty.
- Inclusiveness: diversity, equal opportunity and access.
- Professionalism: provision of effective and efficient customer focused services in all aspects of our work (internally and externally).
Student Education

At Leeds we put our students front and centre, with an unrelenting focus on meeting their needs and aspirations. The combination of academic excellence, breadth of opportunities for students from all backgrounds and a city-based campus are the defining features of life for students at Leeds. The success of this approach was reflected in the HEFCE statement accompanying our TEF gold award which noted that ‘students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes’ and that learning is supported by ‘outstanding physical and digital resources’.

The Leeds Curriculum provides a research-based education that emphasises the development of independent, critical thinking. The curriculum ensures that our students are exposed to global and cultural insights, a framework of ethics and responsibility, and employability skills, with the TEF statement recognising that this approach is ‘led from the most senior levels’.

The curriculum broadens through a range of elective ‘Discovery Themes’ and is enhanced by our LeedsForLife programme, which focuses on co-curricular activities, including studying abroad, work placements, volunteering, enterprise and much more. This provides our students with skills and experiences that will be of value throughout their lives.

The University is committed to widening participation, spotting talent early, and boosting the aspirations, attainment and achievement of young people from challenging backgrounds. Nearly 1,000 have progressed to undergraduate study via our Access to Leeds programme in the session 2019/20.

At the heart of our approach is our sector-leading partnership with the Leeds University Union and the wider student body, which, in the words of the HEFCE TEF statement ‘ensures that students take charge of their experiences with academic and co-curricular opportunities that enhance their learning while preparing them for the world beyond the University’.

Looking to the future, our ambition to provide an outstanding research-based education for high-quality students from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to make a difference in the world, will be focussed on four strategic themes:

- Providing a student-centred, inclusive research-based education.
- Providing an education that is underpinned and enhanced by digital technology.
- Growing an engaged and lifelong community of staff, students and alumni.
- A sustainable approach to education.

As we evolve our student education strategy, our ambition is to be sector leading in innovative, evidence-based pedagogy and scholarship of research-led education and research-based learning, and as a centre for the development and dissemination of exciting and innovative teaching practice.

Digital technology and new ways of working will underpin our curriculum, and we will incorporate the best practice from our hybrid delivery model and embed student-centred active learning approaches into all aspects of student education.

We will continue to redesign our curricula to deliver effective blended learning for on-campus learners and be prepared to adapt our approach and pivot seamlessly to hybrid and online learning in the face of external forces.

Our aim is to deliver a world-class education and an exceptional student experience, focussing on key themes including, culture, community, inclusion and diversity, sustainability and impact. Working in collaboration with Universities regionally, nationally and internationally, our aim is to become sector leading in our approach to tackling global problems through our education and research. Given the scale and priority of student education, and the number of large, complex, initiatives in the student education area, we are creating further leadership roles to help take forward major new initiatives including curriculum refresh and enhancements to the student experience. We are therefore in the process of appointing three Deans: Student Education with accountability and responsibility for key aspects of the education offer. These three new roles are Dean: Student Education (Experience), Dean: Student Education (Portfolio & Curriculum) and Dean: Student Education (Quality & Standards). The post-holders will report directly to the DVC: Student Education and will work closely with the Pro-Deans for Student Education in each Faculty and Professional Service leads for Student Education.

HIGHLIGHTS

- We have an enduring commitment to widening access and participation right across the student life cycle, from primary school to graduation, and our contextual admissions programme - Access to Leeds - is the largest in the sector, admitting nearly 1,000 students in the 2019/20 session.
- The 2019 High Fliers Survey ranked Leeds in the top 10 most targeted universities by graduate recruiters.
- Leeds University Union was not only the first students’ union in the UK to be awarded ‘excellent’ status under the National Union of Students’ Quality Accreditation Scheme, but is now the first to retain this hard-won accolade.
- Many of our courses have a study abroad option, and we have more than 300 partnerships with universities worldwide. More than 700 students study abroad each year.
Research

Research is at the heart of university life. We aim to be an outstanding research university, securely placed in the UK’s top ten and achieving significant increases in research quality, income and impact, building on existing research strengths and our commitment to interdisciplinary working.

Excellent research takes place in every part of our campus; the breadth of subjects studied, the possibilities for interdisciplinary working and the quality and impact of our research are all contributing to the needs of the wider economy and society. Our active involvement in the main national institutes, an outstanding track record of success in the global challenge research fund, the industrial strategy and nationally funded doctoral training centres, all result from our own investment in technology and talent and a strong University-wide commitment to interdisciplinarity. Our growth of capacity and capability has led to the development of the Leeds Institute of Data Analytics enabling us to lead on urban analytics for ‘The Alan Turing Institute, and our investment in the Bragg Centre for Materials Research has consolidated our strong position in ‘The Henry Royce Institute on the themes of Atoms to Devices. Beyond this, we have supported and developed particular strengths in other high profile areas including our Priestley International Centre for Climate, which brings together world-leading expertise in all the key strands of climate research; the Astbury Centre for Structural Molecular Biology, which brings together researchers from across disciplines to understand the molecular basis of life; and our Cultural Institute, which supports pioneering research collaborations with creative sector partners, widens cultural engagement and participation and helps build the skills of our students.

Our efforts have led to notable successes in the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund, with more than £455 million of awards in the period 2014 to 2019, supporting 170 projects in 40 countries, we ranked third in the UK for the value of awards (and joint second for the number of awards). We are well positioned well for a future in which research funding opportunities are increasingly focused through these funds; the main national research institutes; the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund; and Doctoral Funding and Fellowships. However, we recognise that we need to build on our considerable progress in recent years to improve our research standing still further if we are to enhance the overall competitiveness of the University in the medium and long term.

HIGHLIGHTS

Our research highlights include:
- A total of £196 million in new research awards in 2018/19, an increase of 48% since 2013/14.
- We are joint third among universities in the UK for the value of awards from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. We have received more than £45 million from more than 70 awards in over 40 countries.
- Taking the lead for the Alan Turing, Rosalind Franklin and Henry Royce Institutes on urban analytics, next generation chemistry, and atoms and devices, respectively.
- A range of flagship partnerships, including with the Met Office on atmospheric science and climate impacts and National Institute.
- We have been ranked (2017/18) in the top 10 of UK universities receiving research council funding, with a leading position with the National Environment Research Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.
- The University was rated 3rd in the UK and 11th in the world for addressing the UN sustainable development goals (2019) by the THE University Impact Awards.
- Two more of our professors were elected as Fellows of the Royal Society this year.
Enterprise and Innovation

Leeds has an integrated approach to enterprise which promotes creativity, innovation and impact in the University and across the City Region.

Central to this is our new Nexus innovation centre which, in addition to providing businesses with a route into our world leading research expertise, also provides incubation facilities and professional support for students, graduates and staff. This £40 million development opened in May 2019, and has led to many new research and education collaborations with businesses and over £11 million joint funding bids with Nexus tenants.

The University provides dedicated modules, industry-facing programmes, specialist support and mentoring opportunities to enable student innovation to flourish. Nexus houses SPARK, that provides start-up support for current students and recent graduates to start their own business. Our academics work with external organisations to harness our research, nurture new ideas and deliver social and economic impact.

- We have a track record in transforming our academic research into commercial impact, and since 1995 we have created more than 100 spin-out companies.
- Currently, our spin-outs employ more than 1,000 people, with six listed on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

International

Leeds is a truly global university. We contribute most effectively to sharing knowledge, innovation and education worldwide by building productive, mutually-beneficial relationships with researchers, universities and other organisations in key countries. Doing so continues to help us create opportunities to widen horizons and bring new perspectives to education, and to generate opportunities for academic staff and students at all levels to collaborate on new frontiers of research.

We have made significant progress in recent years towards achieving our ambitious international objectives, evidenced by the fact the University has risen rapidly to be one of the top 40 most international universities in the world in the 2019 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. We have a Joint School of Engineering with Southwest Jiao Tong University in Chengdu, with 1,200 high attaining students.
Investments in People and Facilities

World-leading education and research requires world-leading people and facilities. In recent years we have invested substantially in both.

We have made very significant investments in our people, including £43 million so far to recruit 183 world-class academics and leaders of the future; and a £9 million investment in top performing researchers; an £18 million investment in PhDs since 2015/16, with a further £12 million in the pipeline, bringing the total number to 3,400 by 2023/24.

We also host a significant number of doctoral training centres, a dedicated Doctoral College which creates a sense of community and shared endeavour amongst our sizeable postgraduate community. Alongside this we have invested in our systems and people to underpin and support the highly valued and essential work of our professional services and support colleagues. Our £40 million Nexus Innovation Centre which connects business with research expertise is now fully open.

The University has undertaken an ambitious £520 million capital investment programme to further strengthen our position as a leading UK university which included £24m for the new Laidlaw Library and £25m investment in the Edward Boyle Library, which together have increased the number of study spaces to c.4,500 seats. Developments also include a £98 million integrated site for engineering and physical sciences that will house our cutting-edge Bragg Centre for Materials Research; the development of a new technology park to accommodate an Institute of High-Speed Rail and Systems Integration and Centre for Innovation and Materials; and a major investment to provide state-of-the-art Business School teaching facilities. We are also committing significant investment in the digital transformation of the University. We have created the new post of DVC: Digital Transformation to drive this agenda, along with several academic leads to support ongoing digital education projects and initiatives, and emerging priorities in digital transformation, across education and research. We are also investing in new and emerging technologies, to enhance our digital capabilities and to support us to improve our students’ learning opportunities.

Further details are available here: https://estates.leeds.ac.uk/campus-developments/

Our Upcoming Strategy

Further information on the University, including the Annual Review 2017-2018 and the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, can be found here: www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/info/125139/policies_and_key_documents/1853/policies_and_key_documents.

Please note, the University of Leeds will shortly be publishing its strategy for the next 10 years. It will set out how the University will orientate its expertise in education and research for true impact, both locally and globally; recognising the potential for universities to work together across national boundaries to deliver solutions to global challenges and reduce inequalities.

The strategy will identify three core areas of focus in order to achieve this:

- **Culture** – recognising that collaboration rather than competition is fundamental to yielding excellence in research, education and societal impact.

- **Community** – recognising the importance of diversity, partnership and innovation in forging strong communities internally and externally.

- **Impact** – recognising the need to develop the next generation of global citizens and to focus our research efforts on areas in which we can be truly globally leading, while harnessing the potential of digital innovation to enhance both.
The Role

The newly created post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Digital Transformation, will provide clear academic leadership which ensures the digital transformation of the university and establishes Leeds as a globally leading digitally enabled university.

As a member of the University Executive Group (UEG), reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor, they will work with the other Deputy Vice-Chancellors and members of UEG, staff, students and external organisations, to help ensure that digital innovation secures an excellent education for our students, underpins the development of our research and innovation activities, and supports the achievement of the University’s international strategy.

They will be responsible for establishing Leeds as a global leader in the use of digital technologies, data and digital approaches to support student education, research and innovation and ways of working, and as a centre for the transformation of education and research using digital technologies and approaches.

The postholder will make outstanding use of digital technology and approaches to enhance student education and support global lifelong learning; to establish Leeds as a global leader in effective partnerships with other universities, businesses and organisations to transform use of digital technologies, data and digital approaches to enhance the university’s mission; and to establish Leeds as an innovative leader in use of digital technology, data and digital approaches to solve global challenges through research and innovation.

Key tasks and responsibilities include:

- To support the DVC: Research and Innovation to ensure that research activities at the University can make most effective use of digital technologies, data and digital approaches to solve global challenges.
- To support the DVC to ensure that the University develops global partnerships with other universities, organisations and businesses to support the University’s international strategy, enhance transnational education, and improve the University’s global standing.
- To provide expert academic leadership for all staff engaged in education sector, taking into account changes in wider sectors and internationally.
- To establish a network of academic leadership within Partnerships agreement between the University, Leeds University Union and the wider student body, ensuring that it meets the needs and aspirations of successive cohorts of students.
- To advise the UEG and the Council on all matters relating to education and research, nationally and internationally.
- To act as an ambassador for the University, ensuring that it continues to be highly regarded in all matters relating to use of digital technologies, data and digital approaches to enhance student education, global lifelong learning and research and innovation.
- To build and manage relationships with Government policy makers and regulators to influence and shape the development of national policy relating to digital transformation, online education and digital education in order that the University is well-positioned to respond effectively.
- To line manage the Director of the Digital Education Service, to ensure that the Digital Education Service meets the needs of the University in relation digital education, blended, hybrid and online education.
- To line manage the Director of the IT Service, through effective use of digital technologies and digital approaches which enhance the student experience and ways of working, ensure effective and efficient use of time and resources, digitising and automating administrative processes where possible.
- To provide academic leadership to the IT Service, through the Chief Operating Officer, to ensure that the technology, information and data services provided to staff and students are outstanding, responsive and effective and in line with the University’s digital transformation strategy.
- To ensure that the University invests effectively in digital technologies and digital approaches which enhance the staff and student experience and ways of working, ensure effective and efficient use of time and resources, digitising and automating administrative processes where possible.
- To develop a culture of trust with all staff and students engaged in digital transformation, ensuring a focus on academic excellence and the principles of equality and inclusion.
- To support the DVC to ensure that the University develops an innovative leader in use of digital technology, data and digital approaches to solve global challenges through research and innovation.
- To engage fully in the University’s annual planning and funding round to ensure that all digital transformation related activities are properly considered in line with the agreed strategy and that a set of measurable targets are in place to track progress.
- To undertake any other duties agreed with the Vice-Chancellor.
The Person

Candidates will be required to demonstrate the following experience, achievements and personal characteristics:

- Experience of, and a passion for, digital transformation of higher education, in student education, global lifelong learning and research and innovation.
- Demonstrable success in a senior leadership role, and experience of leading and managing in a large and complex organisation.
- A successful background in enhancing student education and the student experience, and an appreciation of the value of research-based learning.
- Proven academic leadership of transformation of higher education using digital technologies, data and digital approaches.
- A strong personal academic track record and experience of teaching, and leading transformative change using digital technologies in a university setting.
- Proven experience of delivering digital transformation projects relevant to the remit of this brief.
- Possessing the requisite academic profile and research record, to influence credibly across a world class academic environment.
- A detailed understanding of the current trends in digital education, and experience of liaising with government and higher education bodies.
- Experience of developing and delivering leading edge educational initiatives and technologies.

- A deep understanding of the provision of higher education, online education and lifelong learning both nationally and internationally.
- Evidence of successful partnership working with a broad range of stakeholders, including an enthusiasm for engaging successfully with staff, researchers, students and external partners.
- The ability to think strategically and provide visionary leadership, contributing to the wider leadership of the University and the delivery of its Strategic Plan.
- Demonstrable intellect, creativity and judgement, and evidence of developing original ideas, creative approaches and showing sound judgement.
- Experience of managing change effectively.
- A collegial and inclusive approach to leadership, encouraging ideas, initiative and innovation from others, and promoting the development of a high performing culture.
- Political, environmental and cultural awareness, and the ability to network, influence, and operate effectively in different ‘political’ environments and against different cultural norms.
- Commercial acumen and financial literacy.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Energy and resilience.
How to Apply

The University of Leeds has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson to whom applications should be sent by the closing date of Friday 29th January 2021.

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive curriculum vitae along with a covering letter setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the required criteria. Please include in a separate document your current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at www.odgers.com/81497

If you are unable to apply online please email your application to 81497@odgersberndtson.com

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist the University in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation.

Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone’s information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Recruitment Timetable

Closing date for applications: Friday 29th January 2021

Final panel interviews: TBC

Please diarise these dates accordingly.

Queries

For confidential enquiries:
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