



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

## CANDIDATE BRIEF

Director of Cultural Collections and Curatorial Practice, University of Leeds Libraries



**Salary: Grade 10 (£69,757 – £83,079 p.a.)**

**Reporting To: University Librarian & Keeper of the Brotherton Collection**

## University of Leeds

Established in 1904, the University of Leeds is one of the largest universities in the UK. It is part of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities and is renowned globally for the quality of its research and teaching. It is home to nearly 40,000 students who study across the Institution's seven Faculties.

### Strategies and values

**The University of Leeds' strategies are rooted in its desire to make a difference in the world.**

The [University of Leeds Strategy 2020 to 2030](#) 'Universal Values, Global Change', sets a blueprint for a values-driven university that channels expertise in research and education to help shape a better future for humanity, working through collaboration to tackle inequalities, benefit society and drive change.

### Mission

Through collaboration, the University harnesses expertise in research and education to advance knowledge, transform lives and shape a better future for communities, the region and the world.

### Vision

Working with others, the University uses its collective talents, expertise and shared endeavour in research and education to address local and global challenges, achieve social justice, reduce inequalities, and help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We will enable our students to thrive through a sense of belonging. They will be partners in shaping their own dynamic and innovative educational experience, characterised by active learning, digital technologies and collaboration. Students will feel valued for their unique contribution, and they will graduate equipped to make a difference as true global citizens.

### Values

- **Collaboration:** Working together to achieve goals and ambitions.
- **Compassion:** Caring and considerate in words and actions.
- **Inclusivity:** A community where everyone is welcome and belongs.
- **Integrity:** Open and honest in words and actions.





Through its focus on the over-arching elements of *Community, Culture, and Impact*, the University is aiming to achieve its ambitions in research, education, and societal impact by fostering a positive, collaborative, and supportive culture.

The University of Leeds' new Vice Chancellor and President took up her post in November 2024. Professor Shearer West CBE joined the University after seven years as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nottingham. It is a particularly exciting time to have joined the Institution as the University continues to be recognised as globally significant through several international University rankings.

University of Leeds takes pride in the quality of its research, education, professional services and civic mission. Its research strengths were demonstrated through the 2021's Research Excellence Framework (REF) which identified that 90% of the University's research was world leading, or internationally excellent. This followed submissions to 28 units of assessment including 120 impact case studies.

The wider University strategies, including Enabling, EDI, Access and Student Success, Sustainability, Climate action, Community engagement, and Supporting sanctuary seekers can be viewed here: <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/about/doc/strategies-values>

## University of Leeds Libraries

The University of Leeds Libraries is a vibrant and contemporary system of libraries and services led by University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection [Masud Khokhar](#). It comprises of four on-campus libraries, one off campus library, two public galleries, public art, and a tremendously diverse range of internationally and nationally significant collections.

The four on-campus libraries are Brotherton Library, Laidlaw Library, Edward Boyle Library, and Health Sciences Library. The off-campus library is at St. James's Hospital site and is a smaller library. Each library has a distinct feel and character to it, providing our students and communities with a range of spaces, services and facilities to benefit from. Last year, we had over 2.1M visits to our libraries, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> busiest across the Russel Group institutions.



In addition to the libraries, the system also incorporates two public access galleries and the wider public art on campus. The two galleries are Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery (TOTB) and the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery (SABG), focussing on our special collections and art collections respectively. There are significant exhibitions that both galleries host year-round, and the public art on campus has a strong focus on paintings, sculpture, drawings, and ceramics. The Marks and Spencer archives and reading room are also resident on campus. While we have a strong relationship with M&S archives, they operate independently of the system of libraries.

The Libraries has some of the most significant cultural collections in the UK and in the world. Five of our collections have the Arts Council England (ACE) designation status. These collections are *The English Literature Collection*, *The Leeds Russian Archive*, *The Liddle Collection (First World War)*, *The Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Collections*, and *The Cookery Collection*. We also have significant strengths in Furniture History and Textile Collections. These collections are a unique research, teaching and engagement asset and have resulted in significant research grants, high quality teaching, and public engagement activities. The Brotherton Library also hosts the Brotherton Research Centre (for special collections research) and the Digital Creativity and Cultures Hub (DCCH), a joint venture between the Libraries and Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute (LAHRI) to support and accelerate Digital Humanities research and scholarship.

The Library acts as a hybrid unit, incorporating both academic activities and professional services. Its academic services are focussed in the areas of Digital Creativity, Knowledge Futures, Open Education and Research, Special Collections, and Services for Teaching & Learning, and its professional services provide a focus on providing high quality spaces, services, information resources, and customer experience.

This is an exciting time for the libraries. We are in the midst of major projects to modernise and accelerate our vision for 2030, [Knowledge for All](#), and to ensure our cultural collections are an asset for the local and global communities to benefit from. One of these major projects is Digital Library Infrastructure Project (DLIP), a £4.4m investment to modernise our cultural collections infrastructure and workflows, and to enable new forms of collections based/led research and scholarship to proceed. Another major project is the refurbishment of physical spaces, including development of a modern reading room at the Health Sciences Library and our next Forward Plan for 2026-2030.



## Director of Cultural Collections and Curatorial Practice

### Overview of the Role

The Cultural Collections (Rare books, Manuscripts, Archives, Art, Objects) of the University of Leeds Libraries are of international quality and underpin a wide range of teaching, research, and engagement activities across many disciplines. We undertake a modern and wide-ranging approach towards curatorial practice, engaging new audiences in collection and exhibition-based curation, underpinned by our impactful physical and digital spaces. We are looking for an outstanding individual who will expand the horizons for how these collections can contribute even further to the intellectual life of the campus, and help deliver our ambitious vision for the future, *Knowledge for all*.

Recent major investments in our physical spaces for cultural collections and the current significant investment in our digital infrastructure will allow us to develop further as a globally significant library. We want Cultural Collections to play a key role in achieving this ambition, working in close collaboration with academic colleagues in Schools and Faculties across the University. In addition to the Brotherton Research Centre, the two on-campus galleries, *The Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery* and *The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery* provide significant opportunities for community engagement activities for the public good.

The Director of Cultural Collections and Curatorial Practice will be a key member of the Library's Executive Team, shaping the strategic direction of one of the UK's largest and highest performing academic libraries. This role will work closely with the University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection, the Director of Library Services, Associate Directors, and other members of the broader leadership team, and will provide leadership and strategic capacity for the libraries. In addition, the role-holder will contribute to the cultural shift, positioning our libraries as a beacon of innovation and inclusivity.

As Director of Cultural Collections and Curatorial Practice, your main duties will include:

- Developing and delivering relevant strategic priorities, objectives, and plans. In conjunction with the University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection and Director of Library Services, and to ensure the effective implementation and delivery of Knowledge for all: the Libraries vision for 2030 in direct support of the University strategy.





- Leading staff within your section, motivating and enabling them to achieve their full potential and deliver against the Libraries' vision and forward plans. Leading the implementation of strategic priorities within Knowledge for all.
- Supporting the cultural shift, ensuring that we establish a culture that embodies the University's values of Collaboration, Compassion, Integrity, and Inclusivity.
- Developing ambitious plans for Cultural Collections, Galleries, the Brotherton Research Centre, and supporting the development of the Digital Creativity and Cultures Hub, the upcoming Libraries Knowledge Futures Institute, and other major research, teaching and engagement initiatives.
- Securing external funding for projects and ongoing operations through private donors, grant-giving bodies, trusts and foundations, and other means, and by working closely with the University's Advancement team, Research Development team, and the Cultural Institute.
- Contributing to the leadership and development of the University Libraries more widely as a member of Library Executive Team and through other groups as appropriate. Playing a leadership role in the institution and across the sector, ensuring that the reputation of the libraries and galleries continue to grow nationally and internationally.
- Leading and contributing to major change programmes and projects within the Libraries and the Institution, ensuring effective engagement and consultation with key stakeholders.
- Raising the profile of Cultural Collections through the development and promotion of public engagement programmes including exhibitions and events.
- Providing leadership for relevant accreditations and benchmarks. Ensuring that policies relating to acquisitions, fundraising, digitisation, and other areas are kept up-to-date and reflect professional practice standards.
- Strategically developing our strengths and range of cultural collections, through philanthropic fundraising, acquisition and purchase, and by encouraging gifts, donations, and deposits.
- Responsibility for budgets, financial planning, and reporting in alignment with the University's financial and reporting regulations, with provision of regular information to key committees, including the Brotherton Collection Advisory Committee and other internal and external groups as appropriate.
- Ensuring standards of health, safety and wellbeing of the team and the Cultural Collections. Providing leadership for Business Continuity of the libraries in conjunction with Director of Library Services.
- Deputising for the University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection, acting as delegated authority on both internal and external matters as required.



These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

## **Qualifications, Experience and Skills**

### **Essential**

- Senior leadership experience in a relevant complex, large and diverse environment/organisation (such as Higher Education Institution, Library, Museum, Archives, Special Collections, Art, etc).
- Strong people leadership skills with significant experience of leading and motivating one or more teams of staff.
- Extensive experience or knowledge and understanding of Cultural Collections including rare books, archives, objects, and art, and the role of galleries or museums, particularly in building and sustaining community engagement.
- Ambition and proven ability to develop and enhance collections through acquisition (whether by purchase or gift), interpretation, teaching, research, partnerships, and engagement activities.
- Demonstrable ability to evidence and communicate the value and impact of cultural collections and curation activities strategically and for the public good.
- Proven experience of leading change programmes/projects and supporting teams through cultural change.
- Excellent organisational, communication, networking and influencing skills, with the ability to communicate a compelling view of the future to stakeholders.
- Recognised as being a leader in the sector with a proven ability to build relationships, develop alliances, and influence at a high level both within and beyond the organisation.
- Demonstrable commitment to the University's values and to promoting and advancing equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation.



## Desirable

- A good understanding of the role of the libraries, and especially Culture and Cultural Collections, along with current strategic issues, for a research-intensive University.
- Experience of research grant applications and their management.
- Experience of fundraising, encouraging benefaction, and/or income generation opportunities.
- Financial acumen and budget management experience linked to effective business planning.

## Working arrangements

The role of Director of Cultural Collections and Curatorial Practice will be based on the University campus (in the Brotherton Library) and there is some scope for it to be undertaken in a hybrid manner. Typically, the expectation is to be on-campus for three days a week. However, this can vary depending upon the needs of the role and therefore flexibility is required.

The event/hospitality/relationship management dimensions to the post mean that some weeks may require the post-holder to be on site full-time and/or working during the evenings.

## Additional information

Further information about the Library <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/>

and you can read about our ambitious vision for 2030 at:

<https://spotlight.leeds.ac.uk/libraries-vision/>

## Working at Leeds

Find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area on our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.





## **Our University**

At the University of Leeds, we are committed to providing a culture of inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity that attracts, supports, and retains the best students and staff from all backgrounds and from across the world. Whatever role we recruit for we are always striving to increase the diversity of our community, which each individual helps enrich and cultivate. We particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to Black, Asian, people who belong to a minority ethnic community; people who identify as LGBT+; and disabled people. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

## **Information for Disabled Candidates**

Information for disabled candidates, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our Accessibility information page or by getting in touch with us at [hr@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:hr@leeds.ac.uk)

## **Criminal record information**

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Any offer of appointment will be made in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations on our [Criminal Records](#) information page.



## How to Apply

**Closing date for applications:** Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 5:00pm GMT

The preferred method of application is online at [www.berwickpartners.co.uk/92645](http://www.berwickpartners.co.uk/92645)

If you are unable to apply online please email your application to [response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk](mailto:response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk)

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.

For **detailed information** on how we process your personal data, please review our privacy policy on our website <https://berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy/>

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 or philosophical 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 in your CV/application documentation 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.

If you have any queries or would like more information in regard to this document, please contact:

### **Elizabeth James**

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