

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Candidate Brief

Director of Employee Relations & Policy

December 2024





The University of Manchester is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly, regardless of sex, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or transgender status, age, or nationality.



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this role at The University of Manchester. The University has a rich heritage of discovery, social change and a pioneering spirit, which has been at the heart of what we do since 1824. We were founded to make a positive impact on the community we serve, and over the past 200 years, we have consistently delivered on the vision of our founders.

Today we are one of the UK's largest single-site higher education institutions, with more than 13,000 members of staff and 46,000 students. This is a truly diverse global community collectively recognised across the world for excellence in teaching, research and impact. This scale brings with it enormous potential, and also a responsibility to act to address some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. This responsibility is what motivates us to continue pushing boundaries across our mission.

This is a tremendously exciting time to join The University of Manchester, with a new President and Vice-Chancellor in place, and the University in the midst of celebrating its bicentenary. We are looking to the future with optimism, reflecting on our proud history but also looking ahead with ambition – thinking about how we can enhance our impact and reach in a rapidly changing world and commencing the process of reviewing our strategic plan. 2025 will also see the launch of our major University-wide fundraising and volunteering campaign.

As a member of Employee Relations Team, reporting to me and working closely with key senior managers across the People Directorate, the Director of Employee Relations and Policy is integral to The University of Manchester's continuing success as a world-leading institution. Through leading the team in the management of formal casework and informal processes, as well as playing a lead role in the collective trade union relations in formal negotiations and consultation.

We are looking for a professional who is values-led and who will have the expertise to support a culture where the University's treatment of employees is fair, respectful, and in accordance with our policies and values

I look forward to meeting you.

Best wishes,

Andrew Mullen, Deputy Executive Director of People



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About the University

The University of Manchester is recognised globally for its pioneering research, breadth of teaching and learning, and for our commitment to social responsibility. The world's big challenges demand urgent action – we're working across boundaries and disciplines to create healthier, more equal futures; helping to eradicate poverty; ensuring energy supply for future generations; and protecting our planet for the years to come.

In 2024, we've been celebrating our bicentenary: 200 years of education and innovation. This milestone event is an exciting time to reflect on the past, recognising our key discoveries, pioneering ideas and world firsts while looking forward to what our third century could bring.

Our history

The University of Manchester was the first and most eminent of England's civic universities. Our earliest roots can be traced back to 1824 with the formation of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, founded as part of a national movement for the education of working men, and with the creation of the Manchester Royal School of Medicine.

The University of Manchester, in its present form, was created in 2004 by the amalgamation of the Victoria University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST).

We have a rich history of attracting brilliant minds to the University, with 26 Nobel laureates among our current and former staff and students, including Ernest Rutherford, Arthur Lewis, and most recently, Andre Geim and Kostya Novoselov.

The present

Part of the prestigious Russell Group of UK universities, The University of Manchester is one of the UK's largest single-site higher education institutions with a broad disciplinary base across STEM and the arts and social sciences. We operate at scale with an annual turnover of £1.35 billion, a significant ongoing capital investment programme and more than 500,000 alumni.

The University is a truly global institution, with a reputation for education and innovation that resonates across the world. We are consistently ranked among the top universities in the world across all significant international rankings.

We are the most popular university in the UK for UCAS applications and have around 17,000 international students in our total student community. Our students come to live and study in Manchester and learn to be global citizens. They are attracted by our powerful sense of place, our academic ranking, the diversity of our courses, the impact of our social responsibility and by the city's rich cultural and sporting heritage.



The city of Manchester and the region

Manchester is the original modern city, responsible for pioneering events and movements that shaped the past and continue to influence the world as we know it today. The Industrial Revolution powered by canals and steam had its origins here – alongside it came fundamental societal developments such as trade unionism, the cooperative movement and the suffragettes.

The University is a proud Manchester institution – inspired by its revolutionary history, we act courageously and challenge assumptions to create the exceptional.

We are an anchor institution: critical to the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of the city and our region. The University is committed to its local community, and we recognise the importance of our civic role. In collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University, Royal Northern College of Music, University of Bolton and the University of Salford, we have developed a joint Civic University Agreement with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and its ten local authorities to drive social and economic change in the city-region.

We make a significant contribution to the city and region's cultural credentials, with our own Manchester Museum, John Rylands Research Institute and Library and the Whitworth among the city's cultural landmarks, and the iconic Lovell Telescope just a short drive away at our Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre.

Manchester has been ranked as the top UK city to live in (*The Economist's* Global Liveability Index 2022) and in 2021, the city was ranked in the top three of *Time Out's* World's Best Cities.

It's a cosmopolitan city, and its cultural life is internationally renowned. There are three outstanding professional theatre companies, the concert halls of the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic orchestras, HOME, and Europe's fastest-growing Chinatown.

Among developments enriching the area's cultural life are the Lowry Centre and MediaCityUK at Salford Quays, the Bridgewater Concert Hall, the refurbished City Art Gallery, and the Imperial War Museum North, designed by Daniel Libeskind, in Trafford.

Global rankings and reputation

The University is a truly global institution, with a reputation for education and innovation that resonates across the world. Today, we are ranked:

- 34th in the world (QS World University Rankings 2025).
- 93% of the University's research activity was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*) (Research Excellence Framework 2021).
- 1st in the UK and Europe and 2nd in the world for social and environmental impact (*Times Higher Education* Impact Ranking). We are the only university to consistently rank in the global top 10 since the ranking's inception.

International businesses, charities, governments, and universities turn to Manchester for its expertise – from leading the European renaissance in industrial biotechnology to broadening access to cancer services in India, helping more than 5,000 children with leukaemia receive treatment.

More than 170 student nationalities come together on campus, making Manchester one of the world's most international universities.

Learn more about our [rankings and reputation](#).



Vision and strategic plan

Our vision is to be recognised globally for the excellence of our people, research, learning and innovation, and for the benefits we bring to society and the environment.

In 2019 we launched *Our future* which affirmed our core purpose to advance education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society and set out ambitious targets for the next five years. As set out when we launched our strategic plan, as we enter our third century we will review and update the strategy which has guided us over the past five years.

Our future established three core goals which are encapsulated in our motto: knowledge, wisdom, and humanity:

- Research and discovery
- Teaching and learning
- Social responsibility

and four themes:

- Our people, our values
- Innovation
- Civic engagement
- Global influence

Our future set an ambitious agenda to build on the University's distinctive strengths, with a commitment to make a difference to society and the environment and protect our unique status as an open place of enquiry and challenge.

It looked to a future where we expand our world-leading research to address the most challenging global questions and exploit our capability for interdisciplinary research; transform the way our students learn to make them the most employable graduates and truly global citizens; and ensure that all our activities make a positive difference to society.

The strategic plan reinforces what already makes The University of Manchester distinctive: our excellence, openness and inclusivity, our longstanding commitment to social responsibility, our scale and breadth, our tradition of innovation, and our very close bonds with, and location at the heart of, Manchester.

Universities such as ours are ideally positioned to help address many of the world's major challenges, finding new means to deliver environmental sustainability, close the gap of societal inequalities, improve health, inform and empower citizens, and create the leaders of the future.

Find more about [*Our future*](#)

Manchester 2035

[*Manchester 2035*](#) is a bold new strategy that will shape our direction for the next decade. It's about all of us – students, staff, alumni and partners – coming together to shape our ambitions and take on the challenges of the future.

Through collaboration, we'll consider who we want to be and how we get there, creating a joint plan that reflects our aspirations and benefits the communities we serve.

We are currently in the first phase (listening and discussing) of the process to develop *Manchester 2035*. We will publish the final strategy later in 2025.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

From our beginnings nearly 200 years ago as England's first civic university, we've sought to break down barriers and improve lives. At The University of Manchester, we celebrate our diversity and the diversity of the communities we serve.

Our ambition is to be an inclusive place to work and study, one that is characterised by equity, diversity, and a sense of belonging for our community.

Our vision is to be recognised by staff, students, alumni, and our partners as an inclusive organisation. We will do this by creating an outstandingly inclusive place to work and study that is characterised by equality, seeing the value of diversity and where all have a sense of belonging.

We are committed to meeting and exceeding our obligations under current legislation and by doing more, we build on Manchester's existing reputation for its rich diversity and ensure we equip all our staff and students with the knowledge to sustain and enjoy a fully inclusive study and work environment. Recognising, embracing and valuing difference leads to improvements for all.

We recently appointed a new Executive Director of EDI to lead our work in this area. We are proud to employ a workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve.

Download our [Equality Information Report 2024](#).

Watch [We Belong](#), a short film about our commitment to international and local inclusivity and diversity, featuring our students and staff.



University Leadership

Leadership

President and Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Duncan Ivison

Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor
Luke Georghiou

Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer,
Patrick Hackett

Vice-President for Research, Professor Colette Fagan

Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students,
Professor April McMahon

Vice-President for Social Responsibility,
Professor Nalin Thakkar

Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Science and
Engineering, Professor Martin Schröder

Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities,
Professor Fiona Devine

Interim Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Biology,
Medicine and Health, Professor Allan Pacey

Professor Richard Jones, Vice-President, Regional
Innovation and Civic Engagement

Chief Financial Officer, Carol Prokopyszyn

Executive Director of People, Eleanor Morrissey

The senior officers are supported by a number of associate vice-presidents, who are responsible for leading on cross-cutting, thematic priorities.

Our Chancellor, Nazir Afzal OBE, is the ceremonial head of the University and presides over meetings of the General Assembly and over degree congregations.

Detailed biographies of the [University's senior officers](#).

Governance

The University of Manchester's governance structure and constitution have been developed so that they hold true to the ethos, principles and requirements of good governance in higher education.

Governance is the responsibility of the following authoritative bodies:

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is the University's governing body. Chaired by Philippa Hird, and with 23 (mostly Lay) members, it has ultimate responsibility for the University's overall strategic direction and for the management of its finances.

General Assembly

A two-way channel of communication through which the University presents its achievements to its broader constituencies and receives feedback and advice on matters relating to University business. It has around 100 members.

Senate

The University's principal academic authority. The Senate is responsible to the Board of Governors for the promotion of research and for monitoring standards in teaching.

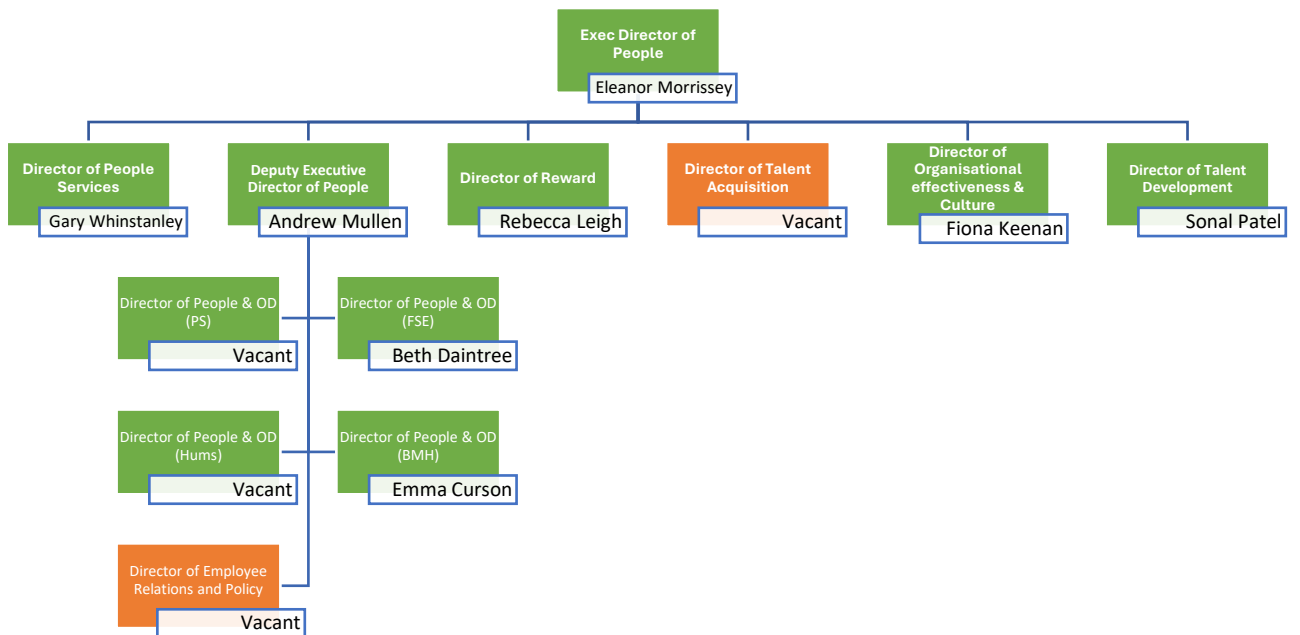
Directorate of People

The Directorate currently comprises 173 colleagues (166 FTE) working across the following areas:

- **People Operations** is the University's core people team delivering services across the employee lifecycle, as well as supporting the continuous improvement of people processes and procedures. The team comprises Employment Services; Systems; Payroll; Workforce Information; Strategic Projects and Global Mobility.
- **Talent Acquisition** works strategically to address recruitment challenges, from senior appointments to niche skillsets, planning large scale volume campaigns to specialist employability and positive action campaigns.
- The **Reward and Pensions** Teams role is to develop a sector leading reward, recognition and benefits package to attract, retain and motivate our staff and that aligns our offer to the University's strategic plan and values. The team also maintain the Universities job families, aligning skills and roles to create clear career pathways. **Pensions** is responsible for providing expert advice and guidance and the effective delivery of pensions administration across six schemes, acting as Scheme Administrator for the University of Manchester Superannuation Scheme (UMSS) and liaising with external providers for the others.
- **Talent Development** enhances the performance of the University by developing the capabilities of its workforce to achieve strategic goals. The team focuses on the professional development of employees. Such solutions include learning and development programmes, including core learning, blended learning offerings, self-directed learning support, apprenticeships, communities of practice and peer network support.
- **Organisational Effectiveness and Culture** is responsible for leading and shaping the Universities employee voice, employee well-being, culture, organisational design, performance and workforce planning, providing specialist expertise, advice and guidance across these areas.
- The **Employee Relations and Policy** Team's role is to ensure an efficient and effective handling of formal casework; provide mediation and other informal/alternative dispute resolution services; support wider collective employee relations matters; provide training and resources for managers.
- **People Partnering Team:** Four People Partnering teams aligned to and embedded in our three faculties and the central Professional Services and Cultural Institutions, providing strategic people support across the organisation.

The Directorate maintains close links and collaborates with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Directorate and the employment law specialists in our inhouse Legal Services Team.

Structure





The role

Overall purpose

- To develop and deliver the University's Employee Relations Strategy with a focus on building a positive employee relations climate underpinned by policies, practices and behaviors that are aligned to the University's strategic objectives and values.
- To lead in the development of an effective University strategic approach and operational delivery plan for the effective and efficient management of casework under the formal provisions of the Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work, Sickness Management and Capability Procedures.
- To lead wider, collective employee relations activity and service as part of the fora for communication, consultation and negotiation with the trade unions within a collective bargaining framework based on positive and productive relationships.
- To provide strategic leadership and direction for the development and prioritisation of People policy.

Key responsibilities:

1. To lead, consultations and communications with trade unions as necessary in accordance with our recognition agreements with the trade unions.
2. To lead a team of ER colleagues in the management of formal casework including the setting of service level standards and resource planning.
3. Lead, organise, motivate and direct the work of the team to ensure strategic and operational objectives are delivered through a high quality, cost effective and efficient service.
4. Be an active member of the Directorate's Senior Leadership Team to strategically direct, develop, and ensure the Directorate is well governed and delivering the requirements of the University.
5. Monitoring and evaluation of efficacy of processes and policy in conjunction with People colleagues.
6. Along with senior People colleagues to identify and develop necessary interventions arising from employee relations activity.
7. To maintain productive, informal communications fora and channels with trade unions.
8. To ensure the provision of appropriate and guidance training to managers and lay members of the Board in acting as investigating managers and/or formal panel members.
9. Ensure the provision of a variety of support mechanisms (e.g., training resources and guides, website resources) to maximise support available for those involved in processes.
10. To maintain protocols and criteria for the referral of formal cases from the Strategic People Partnering teams.

11. With Legal Services colleagues to ensure the management of Employment Tribunal cases, including communication with applicants' representatives and Tribunal Services.
12. Leading the development and provision of early intervention, mediation, and other informal/alternative dispute resolution services.
13. To ensure the recording, monitoring, follow up and reporting on lessons learned and actions identified from cases.
14. To analyse themes identified as potential concerns through these processes and provide this insight to influence policy development and revisions and broader People provision and practice.
15. In conjunction with senior People colleagues to identify and address leadership and management development requirements.
16. To monitor the composition of cases in terms of protected characteristics and, where groups are disproportionately represented, to seek to understand and help leaders and managers to address the reasons.
17. Ensure principles of equity of opportunity, respect and inclusion are integrated into all interventions and processes.
18. Oversee and be accountable for all budgets assigned to the functions for which responsible, ensuring effectiveness and value for money
19. Be accountable for compliance with, and promotion of, university policies, procedures and requirements at all times - in particular those relating to health and safety; equality, diversity and inclusion; and information governance. Lead on embedding these within day to day working practices and ensure they are managed effectively

Person Specification

Skills

- High order people skills including motivating, persuading, conflict management and negotiating skills.
- Excellent oral communication, confident presentation, and written skills
- High order analytical skills, pragmatic problem solving, able to analyse complex data and situations and present in a clear concise manner to different audiences.
- Brings a strategic approach to the development and provision of service.
- Effective planning, organising and time management skills.
- High order employee relations skills, particularly in collective negotiations, with the ability to work in partnership with trade unions to deliver pragmatic solutions.
- Able to work effectively and collaboratively across teams and in multi-disciplinary teams.

Experience

- Significant experience in the successful leadership and management of employee relations in a large, complex and unionised organisation, including leading on collective bargaining matters, case management and policy development.
- Extensive experience of productive dealing with trade unions, both on individual and collective matters.
- A successful track record as a senior leader of a People team engaged in employee relations activities.
- A successful record of conflict resolution both in case management and in collective disputes.
- Excellent knowledge of employment legislation.
- The ability to represent the University externally at the highest level.
- Able to demonstrate an understanding of, and interest in, the opportunities and challenges faced by the Higher Education sector.

Behaviours

- Displays integrity, emotional intelligence, resilience, and self-awareness.
- Tenacious approach to delivery and quality of output with a commitment to high performance and continuous improvement.
- A role model for our values.
- Committed to the University's vision, strategy and values, including those relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Education/Professional qualification, CPD

- Educated to degree level and/or Chartered Membership of the CIPD
- A significant track record of and commitment to CPD.

Appointment process and how to apply

The University of Manchester will be leading the search directly and will not be engaging the services of any third-party agencies as part of the recruitment process.

To apply for this vacancy please apply via the job advertisement on the University of Manchester website.

Applications will close at midnight on 9th January 2025.

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applicants from all sectors of the community regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. As Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates are currently under-represented at this level at the University, we would particularly welcome applications from individuals in minority ethnic groups. All appointments will be made on merit. The University is positive about hybrid and flexible working. Blended working arrangements may be considered.



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