



Position Specification

King's College London
VP People & Talent



A Message from the President & Principal

Dear Colleague,

King's is one of the UK's oldest universities widely regarded as world-leading for the quality of its scholarship, the success of its alumni and the reach of its impact in the service of society.

I have had the privilege of returning to King's last year, 2021, as President & Principal after having served here previously till 2016. I am pleased to find myself amidst a dynamic, resilient and ambitious organisation that has weathered the pandemic well and eager to embrace the change ahead. We have more students than ever before, more international students from more countries seek to come here, the recent research evaluation exercise REF2021 places us one of the leading universities, and we use our research and scholarship to assist society deal with everything from health challenges to the Ukraine war.

At the heart of this success are King's people – our students and our staff. It is their scholarship, their expertise and their dedication that makes King's what it is. The three years of Covid, the changing nature of university work and the new financial realities are challenges which bring with them new opportunities. That is why, in our Strategy for the next few years we have prioritized a Thriving Staff Community at the heart of our efforts. And in keeping with this priority, we have created a new role of Vice President (People & Talent) to spearhead this agenda in concert with the other leaders and our community.

As the first Vice President (People & Talent), you will have a unique opportunity to give this new role its founding definition. As a member of the Principal's Senior Team accountable directly to me, the VP will work closely with the Senior Vice President (Operations) and other senior leaders including Faculty Executive Deans to realise our ambition to create a Thriving Community of engaged staff. Over the coming years this will require a special attention to developing talent and supporting careers, ensuring that inclusion and diversity are at the core of our considerations, and finding ways in which we can use our data to serve our community better and learn from them as we do. Starting the role now provides an opportunity to shape and deliver that strategy over the coming few years.

In the next few pages you will learn about King's and its history, our Vision, our organisation and the expectations of this role. We hope you find it exciting and attractive and we look forward to your interest.

Professor Shitij Kapur, MBBS, PhD, FMedSci, FAAHMS, FKC

President & Principal
King's College London

About King's

King's is a world-class university delivering exceptional education and world-leading research, the fourth oldest university in England, it has influenced many of the advances that shape modern life. These include pivotal advancements such as the discovery of the structure of DNA; research that led to the development of radio, television, mobile phones and radar; critical innovations in medicine and healthcare, including antiseptic surgery and palliative care. King's is a research-led comprehensive university with a distinguished reputation in the humanities, law, the sciences, including health areas such as psychiatry, medicine, nursing and dentistry, and social sciences, including international affairs. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) King's was ranked 6th nationally in the 'power' ranking, and 9th for quality.

The university has over 35,000 students (including more than 12,800 postgraduates) from some 150 countries and over 10,000 employees. King's is proud to have a long history of illustrious alumni who have made significant contributions in their fields. Some of the influential and inspirational alumni who have worked or studied at King's and its affiliate institutions over the years include athlete Dina Asher-Smith (History 2017), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Theology 1965) and writer and feminist icon Virginia Woolf (King's College Ladies Department 1897–1902).

Vision 2029

Vision 2029, launched in 2016, set out bold ambitions for the future of King's as we look towards our 200th anniversary: to make the world a better place through our excellence in teaching, research and our service to society. There is a great deal for us to be proud of. We have delivered many of the transformations it called for, such as launching King's Business School, establishing and growing King's Online, growing our international reach and our deep local collaborations and impact. While Vision 2029 remains our compass, much has changed since its launch and over the last year we have undertaken a strategy refresh. Strategy 2026 seeks to consolidate and build on our academic strengths and successes, and to advance our distinctiveness, whilst reflecting the new context in which the university operates.

Strategy 2026

Our new strategy has 4 key goals supported by 3 key enablers and underpinned by Our Principles in Action:

Strategy 2026: Plan on a Page

Our Vision	To make the world a better place through our excellence in teaching and research, and through our service to society				
Four Key Goals	Enabling Student Success	A Thriving King's Staff Community	Sustainable Research and Innovation Excellence	Knowledge with Purpose: Service and Impact	
	We will enable success for an increasingly diverse student body through world-class education – designing this future with our students and staff	We will continue to build a thriving staff community at King's, particularly through supporting our staff to develop their potential within a positive and inclusive culture	We will build on our strong foundations to ensure sustainable excellence in research and innovation	We will use our assets and capabilities to make a positive difference in the world, including making a step change in our approach to sustainability and climate change	
Supported by					
Three Key Enablers	A Simple, Nimble, Effective King's		A Physical and Digital Estate which is Integrated and Accessible	Sustainable Finances	
	We will deliver operational excellence through processes, systems and services which are simple, nimble, effective, and responsive to the needs of our students and staff		We will evolve our physical and digital estate to meet the changing needs of our students, staff, and community and ensure it is accessible to all.	We will generate sufficient financial flexibility to allow us to invest in this strategy and the future success of King's, its staff, and its students	
Underpinned by					
Our Principles in Action	Inclusiveness	Challenge	Support	Connection	Sustainability

A THRIVING KING'S STAFF COMMUNITY

Vision 2029 promises to build a high-performance culture at King's by fostering individual and team success and to invest in success through leadership and staff development programmes. We have put in place many of the building blocks to realise this ambition, introducing our Principles in Action, creating Research leadership programmes, an Academic Education career pathway, staff networks and a university-wide commitment to inclusion, along with efforts and initiatives to improve and protect wellbeing. The VP People and Talent will oversee the coordinated delivery of this element of the overall strategy in partnership with the senior leadership team.

Our staff have told us that they are proud of working at King's and have a strong sense of purpose and mission, caring about their students, their work and their colleagues. At the same time, we know that many of our staff are concerned about workloads, pay and pensions, equality, diversity and inclusion and opportunities for career development. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had varied consequences for staff to which we must respond. We are committed to working with our staff and unions on these and other issues, to continue to support our people and to continue to develop a strong, inclusive culture.

Since we launched Vision 2029 we have made some significant strides in equality, diversity & inclusion. Our gender pay gap has fallen consistently and, following the in-sourcing of our cleaning and security staff in 2019, we are working to reduce our ethnicity pay gap. We have ambitious plans for gender equality through our Athena SWAN proposals and for race equality through our Race Equality Charter. Our commitment to workplace inclusion for LGBTQ+ staff has been recognised with a Workplace Equality Index Gold Award. We know that there is still a considerable way to go. Our gender pay gap is still too high, and our ethnicity pay gap has gone down only by a small percentage. We have much more work to do to address racial disparities and to develop our next steps for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

We will have a renewed focus on inclusion and support for disabled staff, those with long-term health conditions and mental ill-health, and the experiences of neurodiverse staff. We will work to ensure staff are able to access workplace adjustments when required, with clearer communication about new and existing resources and training for managers.

Our community thrives when staff are supported to perform at their best by policies and management practices that recognise their whole selves, for example their commitments as parents and carers. We will continue to support flexible working for all staff wherever we can, along with a commitment to flexibility and understanding in management, for example through embedding our policies on menstruation and menopause, and new guidance on pregnancy loss.

We will develop systematic ways of measuring, reporting and improving staff engagement and satisfaction at all levels. As we continue to embed new ways of working for many of our staff, with hybrid alongside fully on-campus working, and the possibility of remote working for defined periods, it is more important than ever to ensure that we find ways of fostering belonging, encouraging engagement and connectedness across our King's community.

We will implement the recommendations of the 2022 Staff Wellbeing Review. Amongst other actions, we will develop effective governance for staff wellbeing and the staff experience at the organisational level with the formation of the Staff & Culture Strategy Committee and will ensure staff have access to tools, resources and information to manage and protect their own health and wellbeing. We know that staff are struggling with increasing workloads and demands. We will undertake a programme of work across the university to understand the drivers of high workload in individual areas and work with teams to identify appropriate interventions.

Line management and senior leadership is critical, to support staff and to role-model positive, inclusive behaviours. We will build the capability of our managers and leaders, by continuing to invest in leadership programmes that ensure we create strong communities at every level. We will ensure that expectations for appropriate, inclusive behaviours are clear to all, with a recommitment to our Principles in Action: 'Include', 'Challenge', 'Support' and 'Connect'.

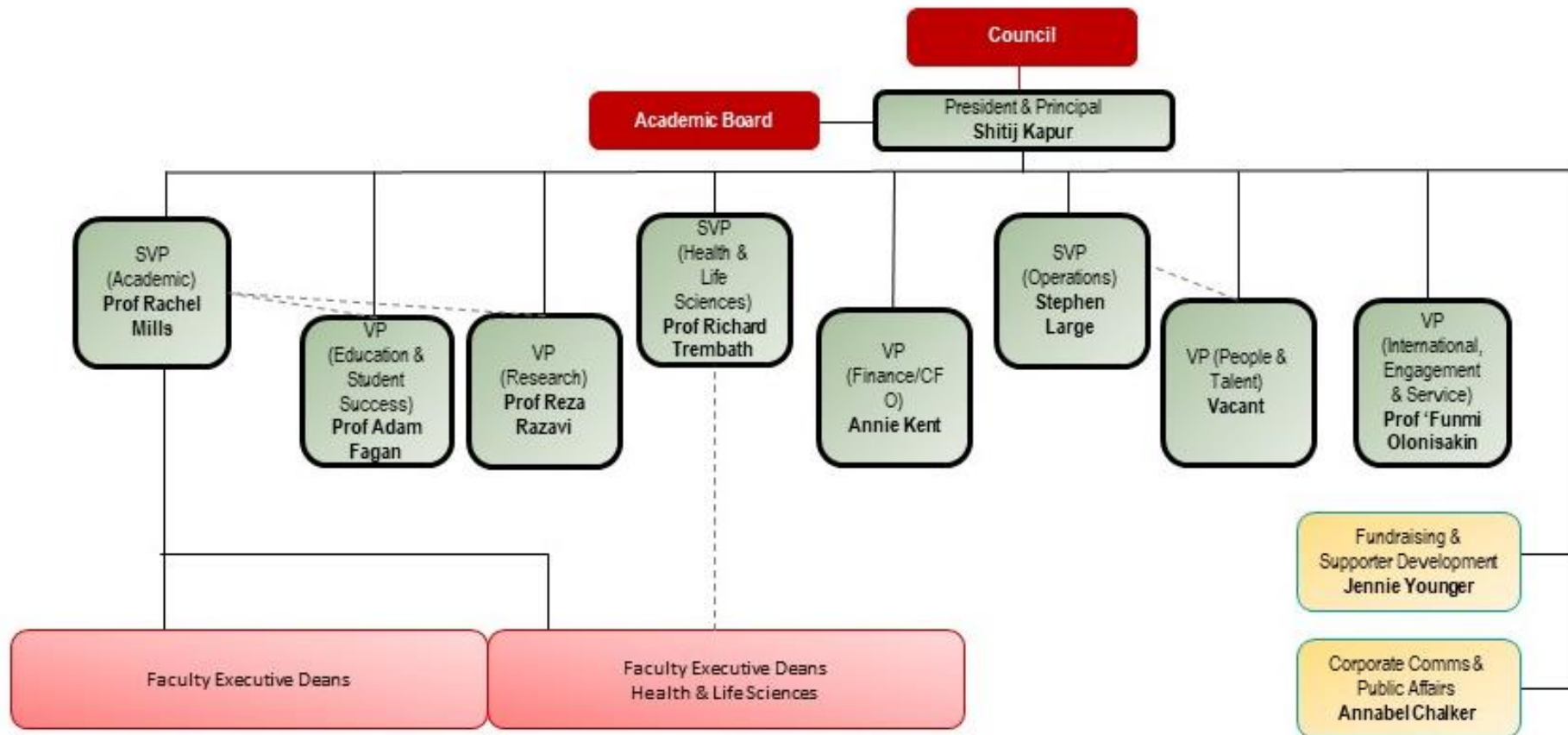
King's has strong career pathways for permanent academic staff, but we need to rethink our approach where the progression pathway is less clear, particularly for those research and teaching colleagues on short-term contracts and for Professional Services colleagues. This will require us to develop a series of career development and training streams that are suited to our diverse community of employees and role-types, including opportunities for greater internal mobility.

While there will be many approaches to developing our people and culture, ensuring all our staff thrive, feel they belong and that they have every opportunity to contribute to King's effectively, as well as develop their own personal careers, will be essential to our overall achievements in delivering on the promise of Vision 2029.

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Ref: VP People & Talent
King's College London

Senior Management Team

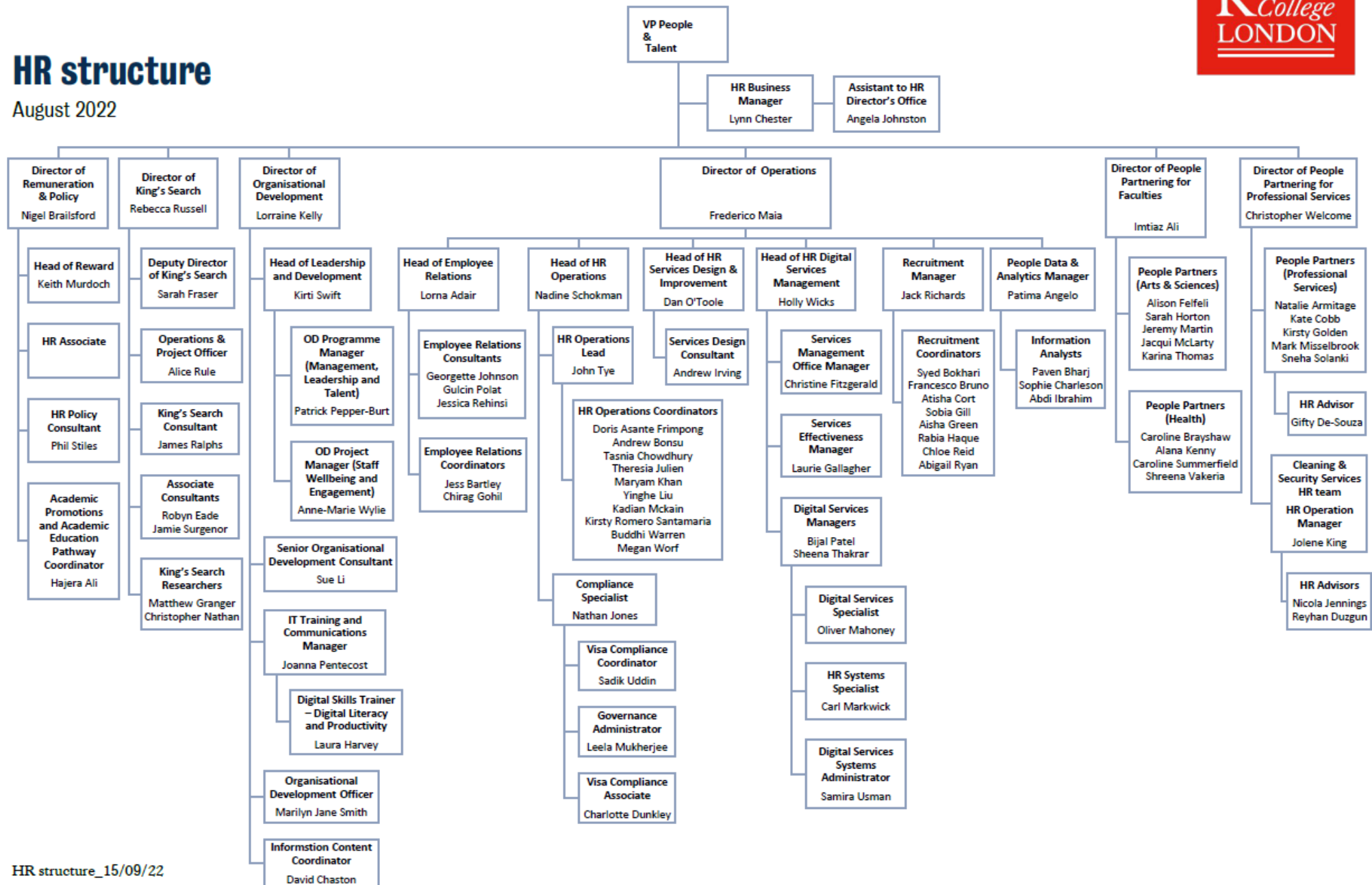


More information regarding the senior management team can be found on the [here](#).



HR structure

August 2022



The Role

The VP (People & Talent) at King's is a new role and an opportunity to lead on the Strategy 2026 goal to continue to build a thriving staff community at King's, particularly through supporting our staff to develop their potential within a positive and inclusive culture.

The role holder will work with the President & Principal and the rest of the senior team to develop and deliver a People strategy that will support our staff to realise academic, professional, and community goals.

Reporting directly to the President & Principal, the VP (People & Talent) has responsibility for all aspects of Human Resources across the university, developing and implementing HR strategies, policies, and procedures to drive performance across King's operational management as well as being equipped with the skills to work constructively with unions in high pressure situations. The successful candidate will have a "dotted" reporting line to the Senior Vice President (Operations) and will be a member of the Principal's Senior Team and University Executive.

The VP will be responsible for and develop King's approach towards the full gamut of people strategies and processes, namely: talent acquisition, retention and development, union and employee relations, workforce strategy, classification, reward and recognition, benefits, organisational development, employee wellness, work/life programs, diversity, equity & inclusion, HR operations, HR analytics and HR information systems.

The VP must embody King's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, lead university-wide initiatives and communicate in a variety of institutional settings the value and importance of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. The VP must lead the university's broad effort to cultivate a culture of integrity, trust, and honesty, as well as to recruit, mentor, and retain exceptional individuals of diverse backgrounds.

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as a strategic leader and adviser with vision to the President, University Council, relevant sub committees and senior leadership in the development and delivery of integrated human resources strategy, programs, and services across the university.
- Be responsible for planning, development, implementation, and administration of the university's people strategy and related staff-focused initiatives.
- Provide strategic and operational leadership in the planning, development, and implementation of best-in-class human resources services.
- Provide functional leadership for the Human Resources Directorate
- Lead and manage processes and plans regarding employee engagement and labour relations.
- Provide open communication and partnership across the university's faculties, departments and leadership teams to create a culture of accountability, service, inclusive excellence, and high performance.
- Work collaboratively across the university to help integrate diversity and equity imperatives.
- Work with King's CIO to augment the university's HR Information System to optimise HR business processes and programs.
- Create and implement succession plans to ensure long-term departmental and university-wide growth and stability.
- Direct employee benefits and ensure benefits remain competitive in the marketplace, in line with the University's financial obligations.
- Lead an equitable workplace strategy that supports talent attraction/retention and employee engagement.

Candidate Profile

We are looking for a highly accomplished HR strategic leader with a passion for supporting complex, diverse workforces, and a consistent record of leading a human resources function in an organisation with similar scale, scope and complexity.

The successful candidate will have executive-level presence and significant experience and demonstrable success in cultivating relationships with members of the university community regardless of status, and the sophistication to work at the most senior levels including leadership and board.

The successful candidate will have established, grown, and led HR processes and teams in a hands-on and collaborative environment. Ideal but not required, this individual will have a good understanding of the academic environment, or the public or private sector from a company or organisation with a large distributed and diverse workforce with a strong technically-orientated bent. Most certainly, the successful candidate must have a passion and drive for Kings' [mission](#) to drive positive and sustainable change in its communities, both in London and on the world stage and realising its vision of making the world a better place.

We are looking for a results-driven leader of HR teams with experience implementing best practices across peers and various industries that have developed leading and dynamic HR practices. They will need to develop an understanding of each of the university's faculties, schools, departments, directorates, etc, their operating models, their nuances, and their human capital needs. The university operates in a highly decentralised environment with a degree of autonomy for its academic units.

The VP will work closely with the senior leadership team to ensure success. It will be crucial for the VP (People & Talent) to build solid relationships and trust at every level of the institution to shape and develop the strategy, direction, policies, processes, and procedures that drive a strong human capital function.

The VP will have familiarity with union relations and community engagement. They will have excellent intuition and judgement, with a confidence and credibility vital to create and maintain productive executive-level relationships. We are looking for an empathetic and genuine people leader with a proven track record of leading a diverse workforce and building high performance teams in which each member is valued and respected.

It is important that the individual possess the ability to galvanise a culture around a compelling vision. The ideal candidate will excel at team development as well as at clarifying common goals among diverse stakeholders, gaining consensus on an overall approach, and building a collaborative environment in which results are achieved and celebrated. An excellent listener and communicator, this executive will be known for having an approachable style and for developing collaborative relationships within diverse groups internally and externally.

It is assumed the individual will have demonstrated ability with employee engagement, effective onboarding, talent acquisition, learning and development, and the HR operations and systems needed to support these functions. The VP must demonstrate ability with data-driven decision-making, understand the implications of the data and present data-based support for their recommendations.

Professional Experience / Qualifications

- Track record of successfully leading complex HR strategy and operations in an organisation of similar scope, scale and complexity to that of King's.
- A demonstrable track record of working constructively with trade unions in a conflictual environment.
- A leadership style that is collaborative and collegial.
- Demonstrated ability to attract, retain, develop, and effectively mobilise a diverse group of talent.
- Proven track record in creating, fostering, and supporting programs that address equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Strong interpersonal and negotiation skills, with understanding of organisational dynamics.
- Ability to have difficult personal conversations relating to performance.
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to inspire and empower HR and other colleagues with whom the individual will work from across the University.
- Innovation and growth oriented.
- Ideal but not required, prior experience in higher education including at a major research university.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

Setting Strategy

- The ability to create and articulate an inspiring vision for the organisation, not only for the areas they are directly responsible for, but the enterprise as a whole.
- The inclination to seek and analyse data from a variety of sources to support decisions and to align others with the organisation's overall strategy.
- An entrepreneurial and creative approach to developing new, innovative ideas that will stretch the organisation and push the boundaries within higher education.
- The ability to effectively balance the desire/need for broad change with an understanding of how much change the organisation is capable of handling, to create realistic goals and implementation plans that are achievable and successful.

Executing for Results

- The ability to set clear and ambitious goals, tenacious and accountable in driving results.
- Comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty; the ability to adapt nimbly and lead others through complex situations.
- A leader who is viewed by others as having a high degree of integrity and forethought in their approach to making decisions; the ability to act in a visible and consistent manner while always taking into account what is best for the organisation.

Leading Teams

- The ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate the team, delegate effectively, celebrate diversity within the team, and lead performance; widely viewed as a strong developer of others.
- The ability to persevere in the face of challenges, and exhibit a steadfast resolve and commitment to higher standards, which earns respect from followers.
- A leader who is self-reflective and aware of their own limitations; leads by example and drives the organisation's performance with a demeanour of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement.

Relationships and Influence

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.
- An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in their beliefs, and active drive.
- Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.
- Creates a sense of purpose/meaning for the team that generates followership beyond their own personality and engages others to the greater purpose for the organisation as a whole.
- Understands and incorporates viewpoints from all key partners to drive decision making and share the benefits.

Compensation & Benefits

- This position is offered on a five year fixed term contract. Competitive compensation and benefits will be offered.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- King's is an inclusive and welcoming university. We embrace diversity and want everyone to be able to bring their whole selves to work and succeed. We promote flexible working as a key enabler of inclusion.

How to Apply

To apply, please send your CV, and supporting statement to responses@russellreynolds.com by **Monday 10th October**. Your supporting statement should succinctly highlight your motivation, experience, and skills against the requirements of the role. Please include the role title in the subject of your email.

In addition to your application please include the following documentation: A completed Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire available [here](#). Applicants are invited to complete this brief questionnaire to support King's with monitoring its recruitment processes. Data will be reported anonymously, in an aggregate format and will not be seen by anyone assessing your application.

If you have a question about the position, or your application, please contact the Russell Reynolds Team (Simon Kingston, Thomson Ambooken and Sarah Wright) at either responses@russellreynolds.com or on PH: +44-20-8175-2745 or +44-20-7830-8022.