

Candidate Information

Position: Head of School of Law
School/Department: School of Law
Reference: 25/112502
Closing Date: Friday 16 May 2025
Salary: Commensurate with profile
Anticipated Interview Date: Thursday 19 June 2025
Duration: Permanent

ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Queen's Law School is one of the top law schools in the UK and Ireland – it is 5th in the UK for Law Graduate prospects (Complete University Guide 2025) and prides itself on a range of world-class undergraduate and postgraduate education. Law is ranked in the top 150 in the QS World University Rankings, and was 8th in REF, with all our impact case studies achieving the highest 4* grading. We enjoy unrivalled relationships with the senior judiciary and professions in Northern Ireland and highly value the opportunity to contribute to the development of the law and doctrine in our own jurisdiction; and our work also reaches much further afield, thanks to established strengths in human rights, transitional justice, and criminology; and more recently developed expertise, for example in intellectual property and world trade, which reflect the vibrant and dynamic opportunities presented by the study of law in Belfast.

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Our research activities have impacted nationally and internationally through a diverse range of projects ranging from slavery and trafficking, to the Hillsborough disaster, offender reintegration and desistance, and the role of judges in post-conflict settings. Staff have also made valuable contributions to vital public policy discussions in Northern Ireland in areas such as socio-economic rights, reform of criminal justice and policing, and amnesties and truth and prosecution models. Due to the devolved nature of government in Northern Ireland we offer unique opportunities for study and research.

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Our high standard of teaching, coupled with our modern facilities, supports a first-rate student experience. In 2024/25 almost 1100 students are enrolled in the School – 864 undergraduates, 185 taught postgraduates, and 36 PGR students. We have a particular strength and focus on foundations delivery, with primary law degrees at undergraduate (LLB), advanced entry (LLB Senior Status) and masters level (MLaw). These are complemented by a range of LLMs which draw on the research strengths of the School (including a new offering in Law & Tech), and the vibrant PhD cohort. The Law School building rests on the north side of the beautiful main quad at Queen's. The building has a popular café on the ground floor which acts as a meeting point for staff and students across the University, and from here students have a short stroll to the Library, Graduate School, and the social and support facilities of One Elmwood, our vibrant student centre which faces the main campus.

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The Law School has a diverse and talented staff comprising 73 academics and 20 professional support and clerical staff. Many of our staff are international, and we have a strong track record in supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion. In 2024, Queen's was the first law school on the island of Ireland to receive an Athena SWAN Silver Award, having held Bronze since 2018.

JOB PURPOSE:

The Head of School will lead all operational and strategic initiatives within the school and shape and lead the future direction of the school as it builds on its strong Education and Research reputation. The Head of School is accountable for the management of all aspects of school performance - academic, budgetary, people and risk.

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As a member of the Faculty Management Committee the Head of School reports to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts Humanities and Social Sciences). They will contribute to the development and implementation of Faculty plans and provide the linkage between the school and the Faculty structures.

The Head of School will also continue to pursue their own research and/or education agenda, and lead by example through their participation across a range of citizenship activities internally and externally. As an exceptional leader of people, a key focus of the role is embedding our institutional values in all aspects of the School, and inspiring and promoting an environment of excellence which enables Education and Research to flourish.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide visible leadership and management in the School and be the School's advocate within the Faculty and University; They provide academic and strategic leadership to the School, and establish and maintain an environment of excellence and collaboration that enables education, research, enterprise, internationalisation and scholarship to flourish. They will manage and monitor the progress of the School against agreed key performance indicators and will be responsible and accountable for all operations within the School, ensuring the effective management of all aspects devolved to Schools, to include academic, financial, personnel and health and safety aspects.

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2. As a full member of the Faculty Management Committee, the Head of School will take a pan-Faculty perspective, contributing to wider operational and strategic planning. In addition to leading on initiatives as delegated by the Pro-Vice Chancellor the Head of School will contribute to the development of Faculty and University strategies and act as a broker between School, Faculty and University in promoting collaboration in research, innovation and education.

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3. With their senior leadership team, the Head of School will build a vibrant, collegial School community and establish effective communication channels within the School and with Faculty and wider University as appropriate. They will encourage and support inter-disciplinary and collaborative working in education and research, and build and nurture effective relationships with external partners, whether with businesses, or other institutions interested in the ideas and innovations coming from the School.

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4. The Head of School will oversee the planning and delivery of the Schools education, research and outreach programmes and ensure that resources are available. They will lead the delivery of the strategic plan within the School, and manage and monitor the progress of the School against agreed key performance indicators, including being accountable for budgets allocated to the School through the budgetary framework. They will oversee the workload of academic staff to ensure that all staff can deliver and contribute fully to the School's research, education, internationalisation and other objectives.

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5. Develop and promote links and activities with external stakeholders, where appropriate. Working closely with the legal profession ensuring that the undergraduate (and postgraduate) programmes satisfy the requirements of the relevant professional accreditation bodies and current and future skills requirements, including working closely with the Institute of Professional Legal Studies in Northern Ireland.

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6. The Head of School will oversee a comprehensive people strategy which supports the development of high calibre academic and professional support staff to the School, with the proactive development of future leaders and succession planning as appropriate. They will advocate our Institutional Values and promote a positive organisational culture through effective communication and fair and equitably implementation of our people policies.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. A Professor of significant academic distinction in a discipline relevant to the School whose profile reflects evidence of:

- An international reputation for excellence in their discipline evidenced through a sustained record of internationally excellent research outputs in leading journals or publishing houses.
- A sustained record of successful PhD supervision and grant awards from competitive, peer-reviewed bodies and invitations to speak at major national and international conferences.
- Research activity leading to significant legal, political, society and technology impact with implications for policy or policy debate.
- Sustained leadership of learning and teaching or related initiatives, addressing key strategic priorities e.g. student retention, student experience, student employability, improving assessment, technological innovation etc.
- Effective people leader with a proven track record of developing colleagues and promoting a diverse and collaborative working culture.

2. A proven track record of the successful financial management, including forecasting, managing budgets and risk in a relevant academic unit, including large scale projects.

3. Demonstrable experience of successfully delivering initiatives while fostering alignment and engagement across teams.

4. Strong stakeholder management ability evidenced through effective networking and influencing with people and organisations at all levels.
5. A creative, innovative thinker with an eye to the future, including being a leader in digitisation in teaching.
6. Advanced interpersonal and communication skills to build and maintain excellent internal and external relationships and ability to negotiate and influence others.
7. An understanding of national policy frameworks such as the Quality Assurance Higher Education Review Process and Research Excellence Framework and how they impact University and School strategy and operation.