

Candidate Information

Position: Head of Residential and Hospitality Services
School/Department: Student and Campus Experience
Reference: 25/112716
Closing Date: Monday 28 July 2025
Salary: £76,842 - £97,342 per annum
Anticipated Interview Date: Thursday 7 August 2025
Duration: Permanent

JOB PURPOSE:

The Head of Residential and Hospitality Services will lead the strategic development and operational delivery of integrated hospitality services, supporting Strategy 2030 through cohesive and student-centred accommodation, food, drink, and retail provision.

This integrated role is pivotal in delivering a seamless, high-quality, student-focused experience that aligns with the University's strategic priorities and contributes directly to Strategy 2030. The postholder will lead the continued growth of the accommodation portfolio and champion a diverse, inclusive hospitality offering that enhances student satisfaction, drives commercial performance, and strengthens the University's reputation.

The postholder will provide strategic leadership to senior leaders across functions, ensuring alignment with the overarching hospitality strategy and institutional priorities. They will manage cross-functional teams, oversee large-scale operations and substantial commercial budgets, and deliver services that impact over 29,000 students, staff, visitors, and external partners. As a senior leader with significant influence, the postholder will shape the strategic direction of hospitality provision across the institution.

Success in this role requires a blend of strategic vision, operational acumen, and deep expertise in hospitality, accommodation, leadership, and compliance—along with the ability to navigate complex, cross-cutting challenges and a commitment to continuous improvement.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Strategic Leadership
 - Develop and deliver an integrated Residential and Hospitality strategy, bringing together Student & Staff Accommodation and Campus Food, Drink and Retail Services—in alignment with Strategy 2030.
 - Provide strategic oversight of the University's expanding accommodation portfolio, including new residences.
 - Ensure alignment of services with institutional goals related to student experience, sustainability, and financial growth.
 - Represent Residential and Hospitality Services at senior university committees, influencing policy and strategic direction and influencing key strategic decisions.
 - Drive financial strategy, including profitability, forecasting, procurement, and contract performance. Full accountability for a multimillion-pound budget, with emphasis on profitability, forecasting, contract management, and procurement strategy.
2. Operational Management
 - Ensure the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective food and beverage services across all outlets.
 - Lead all aspects of student accommodation operations including lettings, facilities, and pastoral partnerships.
 - Manage mobilisation and integration of new accommodation, ensuring operational readiness and excellence from launch.
 - Guarantee legal and regulatory compliance across Residential and Hospitality Services.

3. Student, Customer and Commercial Focus
 - Drive commercial growth and income generation across Residential and Hospitality Services.
 - Champion a culture of service excellence and inclusivity across all customer touchpoints.
 - Use data, market research, and customer feedback to inform service improvements and innovation.
 - Develop and implement strategies that foster a positive and inclusive residential environment, placing a strong emphasis on student attainment, wellbeing, and community integration. Provide leadership and oversight of pastoral and welfare support services, ensuring timely, sensitive, and effective resolution of issues, including those related to student discipline within accommodation settings.
 - Design, deliver, and continuously improve a diverse and engaging residential life programme that promotes cultural integration, social cohesion, and personal development. Ensure initiatives reflect the needs of a multicultural student population and contribute meaningfully to the overall student experience, satisfaction, and success.
4. Leadership and People Management
 - Provide direct line management and strategic oversight of Accommodation and Campus Food, Drink and Retail direct reports, supporting delivery of high-performing, customer-focused food, drink and retail operations across the University.
 - Lead, inspire, and develop a large multi-disciplinary team across catering and accommodation. (170+ staff).
 - Implement effective workforce planning, recruitment, and development strategies.
 - Foster a collaborative, high-performance culture aligned with University values.
5. Sustainability and Digital Innovation
 - Embed sustainability across services, including energy use, waste management, and ethical sourcing.
 - Drive digital transformation to enhance operational effectiveness and user experience.
6. Legal and Risk Oversight
 - Lead on all legal and regulatory responsibilities associated with University-owned and partnership accommodation, including the management of tenancy and licence agreements to ensure terms are robust, enforceable, and aligned with institutional standards.
 - Provide strategic oversight of health and safety compliance, risk management, and business continuity planning, ensuring all residential operations meet statutory obligations and University policies. Act as the responsible officer for landlord compliance, advising on legal matters and ensuring the University fulfils all its duties under relevant housing and tenancy legislation.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. University degree in Hospitality Management, Facilities Management or related field OR The University will also accept evidence of substantial relevant senior management experience within a Hospitality / Accommodation environment as outlined in point 2.
2. Demonstratable substantial relevant senior leadership experience in complex hospitality environments covering both food & beverage and accommodation.
3. Proven track record in managing large teams (80+ staff) and significant budgets.
4. Experience leading capital projects, including development and mobilisation of new accommodation.
5. Understanding of housing legislation and compliance in residential operations.
6. Experience writing and presenting reports at a senior or board level.
7. Experience developing services for student or young adult demographics.
8. Ability to demonstrate leadership, commercial awareness and project management skills.
9. Strong commercial and financial acumen with a track record of achieving income and service quality targets.
10. Ability to influence and build external stakeholder relationships.
11. Understanding of legal, safety, and regulatory frameworks in hospitality and accommodation and residential operations.
12. Strategic problem-solving and service design capabilities.
13. Commitment to diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and student experience.
14. Excellent oral/written communication and presentation skills.
15. Visionary and resilient leader, able to inspire and motivate diverse teams.
16. Effective at negotiating and building strategic partnerships.
17. Committed to enhancing the student experience and service quality.
18. Able to manage pressure, competing priorities, and organisational complexity.
19. Role is campus-based and customer-facing.
20. Willingness to work flexibly across sites and attend out-of-hours events if needed.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Postgraduate management qualification; Chartered Institute of Hospitality (CIH) membership.
2. Experience in higher education or comparable large-scale residential environments.
3. Participation in or leadership of benchmarking groups (e.g. CUBO, UUK).
4. Demonstrated commitment to sustainability and innovation, with experience integrating ethical practices and digital solutions into hospitality operations.
5. Active involvement in professional networks and sector-specific leadership forums.