



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Student Services
Reporting to	Chief Academic Officer
Grade	Tactical Leadership
Unit	Student Services
Location	Head Office (Oxford)/ West London

About Oxford Business College

Since 1985, Oxford Business College (OBC) has spearheaded transformative education, carving a unique path for overlooked individuals, especially mature students facing barriers in traditional education. Operating seven days a week for our students, OBC's pioneering approach adapts to the diverse lifestyles & commitments of non-traditional learners. Across campuses in West London, Oxford, & Nottingham, OBC's ultra-flexible scheduling ensures inclusivity, reinforced by a robust digital infrastructure. Actively fostering a sense of belonging for students from all backgrounds, we provide comprehensive support services. Emphasising practical skills for employability through industry placements, OBC stands as a dynamic catalyst for change, reshaping higher education with an unwavering commitment to accessibility, flexibility, & inclusivity. With over 7500 students & 300 colleagues, join OBC in shaping the future of education & unlocking opportunities for a diverse range of students.

The role

The Head of Student Services plays a pivotal role in orchestrating & overseeing the non-academic facets of Student Support & welfare within the institution. Reporting directly to the Chief Academic Officer, the role is pivotal in ensuring the holistic well-being & academic success of students within the college. Responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of the Student Support & Welfare Framework, the incumbent leads & develops a diverse team across campuses, ensuring they deliver outstanding support & welfare services. By implementing innovative technologies & leveraging data analytics, the Head of Student Services ensures evidence-based decision-making, keeping pace with evolving student needs. Collaborative partnerships with external organisations & stakeholders are fostered to enhance & expand support services.

The role involves coordinating comprehensive crisis management & emergency response plans, guaranteeing a swift & coordinated institutional reaction. Proactive welfare & pastoral support services aim to create a safe & supportive environment for students to complete their chosen courses. Feedback mechanisms & equal support levels across campuses contribute to continuous improvement & inclusivity. From regulatory compliance to sustainability initiatives & alumni engagement, the Head of Student Services is versatile, ensuring a comprehensive & evolving approach to student support. The role involves overseeing the line management of the college counselling team, student support managers, & officers, providing guidance, support, & professional development to ensure the delivery of effective support & welfare services. This role plays a crucial part in creating a nurturing & inclusive environment, adapting to technological advancements, legislative changes, & the diverse needs of the student community.

The ideal candidate should be available during busy periods & weekends as needed, particularly during intake times. Please note that annual leave is generally not permitted during these periods. Some restrictions on annual leave also exist during other peak times, e.g., January/February, April/May, & September/October.



Strategic Responsibilities

- Monitor & review the effectiveness of the College's Student Support & Welfare Framework to ensure the learning experience & wellbeing of all students is prioritised.
- Lead, motivate & develop a team of staff working in different campuses, who can provide an outstanding level of support & welfare services to students.
- Explore & integrate innovative technologies & digital solutions to enhance the delivery & accessibility of student support services, keeping pace with technological advancements.
- Ensure that student support & welfare services are available to every student.
- Utilise data analytics to inform decision-making processes related to student support & welfare, ensuring that strategies are evidence-based & aligned with the evolving needs of the student population.
- Ensure there are a range of appropriate interventions provided to students as required to help maximise their attendance & engagement. Ensure there are equal levels of support for students in each campus.
- Foster collaborative partnerships with internal stakeholders, external organisations, local communities, & relevant stakeholders to enhance & expand support services available to students.
- Ensure that students are referred to the correct support & welfare service internally &/or externally including authorised absence & administrative/documentary support, academic support & counselling services.
- Develop & implement comprehensive crisis management & emergency response plans to address unexpected situations affecting student well-being, ensuring a swift & coordinated institutional response.
- Ensure welfare & pastoral support services for students are proactive, coordinated & lead to students feeling safe, supported, & able to complete their chosen course of study.
- Establish & maintain effective mechanisms for collecting & analysing feedback from students regarding the quality & effectiveness of support & welfare services, using this information to drive continuous improvement.
- Manage & oversee the line management responsibilities of the college counselling team, student support managers, & officers.
- Facilitate &/ or regulatory data returns, including to key regulatory/official bodies, supporting strategic planning & operational delivery.
- Implement initiatives that promote diversity, equity, & inclusion within student support services, fostering an environment where students from all backgrounds feel valued & supported.
- Attend & chair relevant committee(s) & report regularly to the relevant board.
- Collaborate with other departments to ensure that student support services incorporate elements that enhance students' welfare & professional development.
- Keep up-to-date with changes in related legislation (i.e. CMA) & ensure confidentiality & integrity of all corporate information in accordance with the Data Protection Act & other relevant legislation.
- Integrate sustainability initiatives within student support services, promoting environmentally conscious practices & contributing to a holistic approach to student well-being.
- Collaborate with alumni relations to involve alumni in mentoring programmes & support services, creating a network that extends beyond graduation.
- Undertake any other duties reasonably required by the Chief Academic Officer, Executive Principal, or Managing Director.



PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

TRAINING & EDUCATIONS

Essential

- An undergraduate degree in a relevant field, or equivalent qualification or experience.

Desirable

- A postgraduate diploma/ degree in marketing, education, or a related field.

EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Experience in a leadership role within student support services in higher education, demonstrating a successful track record of managing & developing teams.
- Experience in leading & delivering strategic & operational change.
- Experience in a leadership position, managing cross-organisational functions.
- Strong understanding of the Higher Education (HE) landscape in the UK, including comprehensive knowledge of relevant policies, regulations & compliance standards.

Desirable

- Hands-on experience of emerging technical & digital innovation (e.g. AI, marketing automation tools).
- Experience working in a non-traditional higher education institution.
- Experience of working in a similar role for another private HE establishment.

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

Essential

- Knowledge of & experience in the widening participation agenda.
- Strong understanding of market research & data analysis.
- Strong relationship management skills, including the ability to engage, communicate & collaborate with academic & professional staff, students & external partners & regulators.
- Excellent planning skills, combined with proven analytical & problem-solving skills.
- Strong verbal & written communication skills, including the ability to present complex information clearly & effectively.
- Familiarity with external regulatory bodies such as the Office for Students (OfS), OIA, HESA (Jisc), etc.
- Proficiency in software applications & technology for marketing purposes.

BEHAVOURAL SKILLS

Essential

- Strong leadership qualities to effectively manage a team of professionals, including the ability to inspire & motivate.
- Capacity to adapt to changing circumstances & priorities in a fast-paced academic environment.
- High ethical standards & a commitment to maintaining the integrity of academic records & processes.
- Resilience & adaptability to manage the demands of a busy & challenging role.
- A role model for college's core values, which underpin our vision, mission & strategy.