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HARROW, RICHMOND & UXBRIDGE COLLEGES

Candidate brief for the position of Chief Corporate Officer

FEA EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Welcome

Dear colleague,

Chief Corporate Officer

Many thanks for your interest in the role of Chief Corporate Officer. HRUC is the newest college group in London and one of the country's largest and most vibrant college groups with an annual income over £115m. Our operations span the communities of West and Southwest London with our main campuses in Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge. Our values, culture and ways of working are rooted in high performance and high expectations and everything we do is firmly centred on the needs of our learners, communities and the businesses we serve. Boasting five 'Outstanding' and three 'Good' assessments in our last Ofsted inspection, we have our sights on realising our shared ambition of becoming an outstanding provider of education across the group.

Our 2030 strategic vision is to be the college group of choice. A college that celebrates equality and diversity in its learners and staff and is a thriving place to work. Most recently, in a pioneering development for the Further Education (FE) sector, HRUC have joined the Industrial Liaison Program (ILP) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), creating new opportunities for our learners by providing access to MIT's renowned researchers who are widely recognised to be among the best in the world.



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This is a rare opportunity to join HRUC as Chief Corporate Officer, a senior executive role at the heart of the Group's future direction. Reporting to the Chief Executive, you will lead corporate, commercial, legal and strategy functions, helping to shape decisions that are coherent, lawful and capable of delivery.

You will bring a current practising legal background as a solicitor or barrister in England and Wales, alongside the judgement and presence to advise at board level, lead strategic planning and support growth, partnerships and commercial interests across the Group.

We are looking for a confident and thoughtful senior leader who can give clear advice, build strong external relationships and work across a complex organisation with pace, discipline and sound judgement.

We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this important appointment. Prior to submitting an application, interested parties are advised to arrange an initial conversation with our recruitment partner, by emailing Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk, to discuss the role before the closing date.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Keith Smith
Chief Executive



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OUR VISION

To be an outstanding college group that inspires, transforms lives and creates futures.

OUR MISSION

To deliver an exceptional learning experience that creates opportunities and success for all.

We stand for diversity, inclusion and excellence throughout everything we do, and provide outcomes that drive personal growth, wellbeing and economic opportunity.

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- HARROW COLLEGE
- RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
- UXBRIDGE COLLEGE
- WEST LONDON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
- HRUC APPRENTICESHIPS & SKILLS

Job Description

Job title: Chief Corporate Officer (CCO)

Reports to: Chief Executive, under delegated authority of the Corporation

Responsible for: The Group's legal and regulatory advice function; strategy, planning and performance; school partnerships and growth activity; commercial income and the subsidiary companies

Location: Group-wide. The postholder will be required to work across all College campuses (Uxbridge, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Harrow Weald, Richmond and Hayes), with travel to partners, government and regulators.

Hours: 36 hours per week, 52 weeks per year

Salary: Competitive

Pensions: Local Government Pension Scheme

This is a Designated Senior Postholder appointment and the successful candidate will join the Executive Management Team. The role will be evaluated against this job description and the Remuneration Committee will set the salary in line with that evaluation.



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Role Purpose

The Chief Corporate Officer provides executive leadership for the Group's corporate, commercial, legal and strategy functions. The role exists to own the Group strategy, planning and performance framework; to ensure that strategic choices are coherent, lawful and capable of being carried; and to protect the Group's interests as it develops, partners and grows.

The postholder is responsible for the discipline that connects strategy, governance and executive accountability. This includes leading the strategic planning cycle, maintaining the Group-level framework for priorities and performance, testing alignment with capacity and resources and ensuring that delivery by portfolio owners is reported transparently against progress, risk and outcome.

The delivery and legal elements of the role are integral to one another. Major commitments made by the Group - including partnerships, joint ventures, school transfers and structural change - must be capable of being carried, governed, documented and enforced. The postholder will provide the judgement, authority and legal discipline needed to test commitments early, shape them properly and advise against proceeding where the Group should not take the matter forward.

The postholder is accountable for the integrity of the Group's strategy, planning and performance framework; for ensuring that corporate commitments are lawful, enforceable, affordable in organisational terms and capable of delivery; for the active management of commercial and corporate interests; and for ensuring that growth is pursued with proper regard to capacity, governance, risk and public purpose. A practising legal background is essential. The role is not a general counsel post alone, but an executive leadership role requiring the authority to shape strategy and hold delivery to account without displacing the executive owners responsible for implementation.



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Main Duties and Responsibilities

Strategy, planning and performance

- Own the Group strategy, planning and performance framework, ensuring that agreed priorities are coherent, sequenced, governed and capable of delivery by the relevant executive owners.
- Lead the Group's strategic planning cycle and its alignment to the medium-term financial plan and own the performance framework by which the Corporation judges progress - reporting achieved outcome rather than forecast and saying plainly when a commitment will not be met.
- Maintain the discipline of stopping as well as starting: advising when initiatives should be retired or reset and bringing emerging policy, regulatory and market change to the Executive Management Team and the Corporation early enough to act on.

Legal and regulatory

- Act as the Group's senior legal adviser on corporate, commercial, regulatory, employment and education law; determine what is handled internally and what is referred out; and be answerable for the quality of the advice given, including advice the recipient does not want.
- Own the Group's relationship with external legal advisers, including the instruction, quality, cost and value of advice received; secure appropriate control of external legal spend; and maintain arrangements that preserve legal professional privilege for matters requiring external advice.
- Lead the Group's response to litigation, disputes, regulatory investigation and enforcement and hold its position on subsidy control, charity law and public benefit, conflicts of interest and transparency, so that the audit trail would withstand challenge.



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Commercial interests, income and the subsidiary companies

- Own the Group's commercial strategy for income beyond funded provision, including the framework, targets and performance reporting, while operational delivery remains with the relevant portfolio, service or company owners.
- Provide executive legal and corporate oversight of the Group's subsidiary companies as legal entities, including their constitutions, directors' duties, statutory filings, related-party transactions and the terms on which the Group trades with itself; and hold the Group's interest in the apprenticeships joint venture as a corporate relationship.
- Settle the legal terms on which the Group signs its most significant agreements and be answerable for whether the Group can perform and enforce what it has signed.

Partnerships, growth and external relations

- Lead the Group's framework for school partnerships, sponsorship and academy growth, including opportunity assessment, due diligence, Department for Education and regulatory approvals, negotiation and completion, with the Group Executive Principal leading the educational case.
- Provide legal and structural assurance on growth activity, including transferring contracts, liabilities, pensions exposure, TUPE obligations and continuity, drawing on the Chief Financial Officer for the financial case.
- Hold strategic external relationships with the Department for Education, regional and combined authorities, local authorities, employers, sector bodies, trusts and prospective partners where they relate to the post's portfolio and advise the Corporation on which opportunities to decline and what the Group would be taking on if it proceeded.

Leadership and Management

- Lead, develop and hold to account the directorate and manage its budget.
- Contribute as a member of the Executive Management Team to the leadership of the Group as a whole, report to the Corporation and its committees in the postholder's own name on this portfolio.



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Boundaries with other executive portfolios

The Group's design principle is that each executive holds a single professional centre of gravity and that no executive holds a discipline they could not themselves evaluate. Because this post advises across every portfolio, the boundaries are stated rather than assumed. Where a subject appears in two portfolios, the table says which executive owns it.

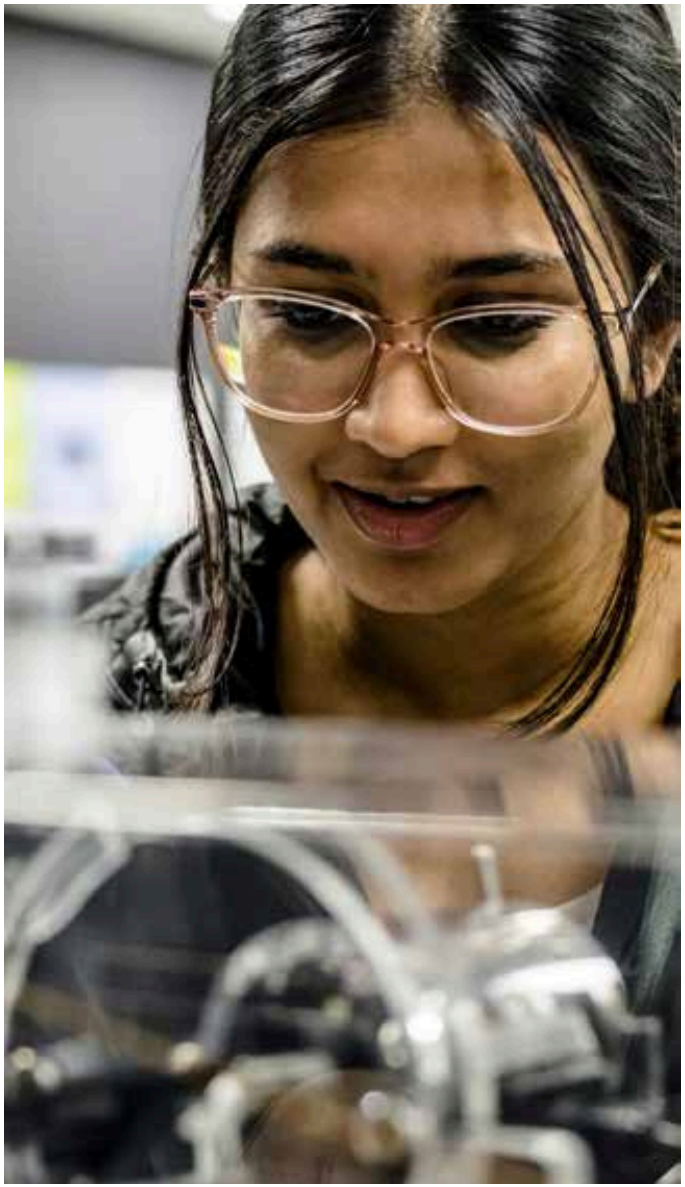
Subject	Held by this post	Held elsewhere
Group strategy and planning	The Group strategy, planning cycle and performance framework reported to the Corporation	Each executive owns delivery within their own portfolio; the Group Executive Principal owns the curriculum strategy; the Chief Financial Officer owns the MTFP, budget setting and the financial KPIs, which feed into the performance framework; the Chief Financial Officer also leads the Department for Education relationship on funding, financial returns, financial oversight and related intervention dialogue
Procurement and contracts	The legal terms on which the Group signs	Chief Financial Officer holds procurement, commissioning, contract management and the commercial terms; Chief Infrastructure Officer holds the specification and the service received
Governance	Legal advice to the Chief Executive, the Executive Management Team and the Corporation	The Governance Professional, accountable to the Corporation, holds Corporation and committee servicing, the register of interests, the scheme of delegation and the Data Protection Officer function. The boundary is to be recorded in writing and agreed on appointment
Risk	Identifying strategic risk and opportunity and bringing them forward	Chief Financial Officer holds the strategic risk register, the assurance framework, the risk registers and external audit
Estates, capital, technology and security	Nothing	Chief Infrastructure Officer, as duty-holder, including health and safety first-line compliance

Subject	Held by this post	Held elsewhere
Employment matters	Advice on employment law and the conduct of employment litigation	Chief People Officer holds the people strategy, employee relations and casework, reward and the pay architecture
Commercial income arising on the estate	The commercial strategy, target framework and performance reporting	Chief Infrastructure Officer is the service owner for catering and campus services delivered on the estate; Chief Financial Officer holds the contracts
The subsidiary companies	The entities, their governance and the Group's interest in them; the legal terms of intra-group trading	Chief Financial Officer holds their financial strategy and performance reporting, including transfer pricing, VAT and tax, consolidates their results and reports their financial performance through the Group accounts
The apprenticeships joint venture	The corporate relationship, the commercial agreement and the due diligence	Group Executive Principal holds education assurance on a transitional basis; Chief People Officer holds staff transfer and consultation
Data protection	Advice on data protection law	The Data Protection Officer function sits with the Governance Professional; the Chief Infrastructure Officer holds the security of systems and data
Growth — the educational case	The transaction and the legal and structural due diligence	Group Executive Principal leads the educational case and holds academic standards

Other responsibilities

- The Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and expects all colleagues to share and promote this commitment.
- Show a commitment to diversity, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices and to the public sector equality duty.
- Support the health and wellbeing of our staff and learners and be a champion for positive mental health.
- Ensure college policy and procedures are fully adhered to, including the Financial Regulations, the scheme of delegation, the code of conduct for senior postholders and the professional conduct rules of the postholder's regulator.
- Ensure that all information is secured, used and maintained in line with internal and external standards including ensuring that confidential information is processed in line with the Data Protection Act and College policies.
- Participate in relevant and appropriate training and development as required.
- Undertake any other tasks and responsibilities appropriate to the level of this post.

Further Education is an ever-changing service and all staff are expected to participate constructively in College activities and to adopt a flexible approach to their work. This job description will be reviewed annually during the appraisal process and will be varied in the light of the business needs of the College.



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Health and Safety

- The postholder is responsible for discharging health and safety duties as outlined in HRUC's relevant Health and Safety policies. To ensure effective fulfilment of these responsibilities, the postholder will undertake any necessary or appropriate training, funded by the College Group.

Equality and Diversity

- All employees are required to work in a non-discriminatory manner and accept responsibility for the implementation of the College Group's equality and diversity policy throughout all personal contacts in the College Group and within their own area of responsibility.

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education including Prevent

- All staff and volunteers are expected to uphold safeguarding and safer recruitment. Appointments are subject to safeguarding checks and ongoing compliance with statutory guidance and the College Group's Safeguarding Policy.



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Person Specification

Essential Values

- Ability to demonstrate understanding and apply our values. These are embedded in all roles and applicants must evidence their values as part of the application process.
- Knowledge of and adherence to the Nolan seven principles of public life.

Qualifications and Experience

Essential

- Senior legal practice in corporate, commercial, regulatory or employment work, at a level carrying responsibility for the advice given.
- Owning an organisation-wide strategy, planning or performance framework and holding delivery owners to account for measured outcomes.
- Advising a board, corporation or equivalent governing body, including advice it did not want to receive.
- Executive accountability for a function delivered through others, with a director-level second line.
- Instructing and controlling external legal advisers, including securing value, quality and proportionate use of external advice.



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Qualifications and Experience cont'd

Desirable

- Qualified solicitor or barrister of England and Wales, admitted and with a current practising background.
- Chartered governance qualification (CGI / ICSA).
- Programme or portfolio management qualification (MSP, MoP, APM) or equivalent.
- NPQEL or an equivalent education leadership qualification.
- Commercial income generation, or accountability for trading subsidiaries or a joint venture.
- Mergers, transfers, joint ventures or partnership transactions in a regulated environment.
- Engagement with government departments, regional or combined authorities, or sector bodies.
- Experience within a further education setting, or another public-sector environment.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Essential

- Corporate, commercial and employment law as it applies to a statutory corporation.
- The regulatory framework governing further education corporations and the ability to become authoritative on it quickly.
- Governance obligations of a corporation and the role of a governing body, including the boundary between governance administration and legal advice.
- How strategy is actually delivered in a complex organisation: sequencing, capacity, benefits and the reasons programmes fail.
- Legal professional privilege and how it is preserved and lost in an in-house executive role.
- Gives clear, decisive advice under pressure and is prepared to be the person who says no.



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Knowledge, Skills and Abilities cont'd

Essential

- Turns an agreed strategy into a clear framework with priorities, owners, milestones and reporting and holds peers to account without taking over their delivery responsibilities.
- Works within a clear boundary with other executives and raises an ambiguity rather than absorbing or ceding the ground.
- Writes for a governing body: concise, evidenced and explicit about risk and recommendation.
- Builds and holds external relationships — regulators, departments, employers, partners, advisers.
- Sound judgement about opportunity: distinguishes a good one from an available one.
- Knowledge of safeguarding requirements in educational settings.

Desirable

- Company law and the governance of subsidiary entities, including directors' duties and related-party transactions.
- Academy and school structures and the Department for Education approvals route.
- Subsidy control, charity law and public benefit as they apply to a college group.

Essential Personal Attributes

- A strong commitment to HRUC's values and mission.
- Ability to work under pressure and manage multiple priorities.
- Commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion.
- Fit and proper person for a senior postholder role; no conflict requiring management.
- Enhanced DBS clearance and satisfactory safeguarding checks.



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How to Apply

We have retained FE Associates to support us in finding an outstanding individual to inspire excellent practice across our organisation. The application process is outlined below.

1

Initial Discussion

Prior to submitting an application, interested parties should arrange an initial conversation with our FE Associates lead consultant, by emailing **Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk**, to discuss the role before the closing date.

2

Recorded First-Stage Teams Interview

Once it is agreed for you to proceed with an application, the lead consultant will schedule a first-stage interview via Teams with you which will take place before the closing date and will be recorded. Once this interview has been scheduled, you should submit your application.

3

Apply Online

Please visit **www.fea.co.uk/job/hruc-cco/** and complete the registration form to access the online application form and the equality and diversity form. At Step 2: Submitting your application, click Apply now.

4

Shortlisting and Invitation to Interview

After the closing time/date, our lead consultant will send all applications and recorded first-stage discussions to the College for shortlisting. Once the shortlist has been agreed, candidates will be notified by the lead consultant and shortlisted candidates will be invited to a formal interview/selection process with the College.

5

Safer Recruitment and Due Diligence Checks

Applicants are advised that, as part of the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education, colleges/training providers are advised to make arrangements for an online search as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates. The searches are aimed to assist in identifying things said or done that may harm the organisation's reputation or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where a cause of concern arises from the online search, a risk assessment will determine whether the concern is of such a nature that it is appropriate to exclude a candidate from the process or whether a clarification discussion, before or during an interview, is needed.

Key Dates

Closing date for applications: 9am on Friday 20 November 2026.

Interviews to take place on Monday 7 December 2026.

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www.hruc.ac.uk



"STRONG FOR SKILLS"

"As one of the newest college groups we are on an incredible journey, so to achieve such a positive judgement from Ofsted is a real testimony to the extraordinary progress students and staff have made."

- Keith Smith CEO