

VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC

The Vice President Academic is a part of the Full Time Officer (FTO) team in the Student Union. In this role, you will work closely with FTOs, staff across the Union, and our brilliant student representatives to make sure we understand what our members (any students enrolled at our UK campuses) need and represent them at all levels.

This is a **full-time position**, based in Riccarton, and is fixed term. You will be in post from 1st June 2024, with your first day being 3rd June 2024, and you'll finish on the 31st May 2025. The salary is around £23,800.

For this role you must be available for in-person training during the handover period (27th – 29th May) and induction period in the first two weeks of June.

ABOUT HERIOT-WATT STUDENT UNION

HWUnion works to support the student experience, whether that is by speaking up for students in university meetings, making students feel like they belong in the Heriot-Watt community, helping people to make a change, championing people when they're doing well or dusting people off when things don't quite go to plan. Our elected officers, staff and volunteers all make this happen under one simple goal.

Students First, Always.

HOW DO I GET THE JOB?

This is an **elected** position. Applications open on the 31st January, and close on the 21st February, then you'll get your campaign ready! From the 11th March, **students will vote** for who they think the VP Academic (along with other elected positions) should be. You get the job by convincing them you're the right person for the role.

You'll be elected based on the experience you have and what skills you'll bring to the team, as well as what you think the key areas for students are going to be next year.

JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a job like no other, and no two days will look the same! You'll be elected in on a set of 'promises' you've made to students (your manifesto!), and you also have

day-to-day responsibilities on top of that. Some days you'll need to work a bit later (or even start a bit earlier if you're in a global meeting!).

THE ROLE IN A NUTSHELL...

- U Work with School MPs, Department Officers, and Class Representatives to make the academic experience the best it can be at Heriot-Watt.
- U Support and Chair Academic Congress (our big rep meetings that happen three times a year) and Department Officer Meetings (every other week) to drive positive changes on campus.
- U Collaborate with your counterparts in Malaysia and Dubai to consistently represent students' academic needs globally.
- U Work with staff at the University to improve the academic experience for students.
- U Work with the University on the [Student Partnership Agreement](#).
- U Go and speak to students about their experience.
- U Keep students and staff updated with what you're working on and achieving.
- U Speak at key events (like inductions and graduations!)
- U Attend, support and promote activities the Union are carrying out, like Freshers' Week.
- U Anything else that is required which may not fall within your remit (like painting the office, filling in for other FTOs if they're off, decorating the Union for Christmas etc).

WHAT MIGHT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC LOOK LIKE?

This isn't what every day will look like, but it'll give you a snapshot of what a day *might* look like.

- U You come into work at 8.50am and start your laptop up. After you've made a cup of tea and said hello to the team, you head into the Learning and Teaching Group. You're asked to give an update on how students are feeling about the exam format changing. You've already spoken to Department Officers about it, so you have plenty of information to give them!
- U After the meeting, you feedback to relevant staff members and have a catch-up with the Representation & Democracy Coordinator about actions that came up. You create a to-do list ahead of the next Learning and Teaching Group meeting in two weeks.

- U** You have an online meeting with the Orkney and Galashiels based class representatives, and chat through any issues that have arisen on their respective campuses.
- U** You have a catch-up with one of the Directors of Learning and Teaching. You've had some feedback from a class in that Discipline, so you let them know and agree on next steps that need to be taken.
- U** Phew, it's lunch time and you spend an hour with the other FTOs and some of the Union staff team in Liberty's, chatting about what you'd all been up to at the weekend.
- U** Once you've finished lunch you are responding a bunch of emails, some from university staff, and others from students who have concerns or want to get more involved in the union.
- U** You've planned an 'Ask Me Anything' with the Marketing Coordinator, so you hop onto Instagram and respond to any questions students have, giving honest updates and sharing what you've achieved in the last month!
- U** You drop into the Department Officer Meeting that's running from 5 - 7pm. You give an update on what you've been working on, and then Department Officers have the chance to ask you any questions. They then split into break-out groups to discuss any areas in their School. While they feedback, the Representation & Democracy Coordinator make notes and creates an action list going forward which you'll review tomorrow.
- U** It's a late one today, so you know you'll get a bit of a lie in tomorrow to make up for it! You drop the Student Engagement Manager and FTOs a quick Teams message to let them know you've just finished, and you'll be in at 10.30am tomorrow because that's when your first meeting of the day is.

TRUSTEE

As Vice President Academic, you're also automatically a member of Heriot-Watt Student Union's Trustee Board, overseeing the financial, legal and strategic activity of the organisation. It sounds like a lot, but you'll have guidance and support from the Chair of the Board, and it is really valuable experience that will make you stand out in future!

KEY ATTRIBUTES THE VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC SHOULD HAVE

Anyone can run to be Vice President Academic! To be successful in the role, you should be:

- U Passionate about making the academic experience the best it can be for students.
- U Excited to make positive changes – this role is not about keeping things ticking along.
- U Organised – you’re going to have to juggle a lot of meetings, emails, and student demands!
- U A brilliant communicator – you’re going to have to adapt your language and communication style. One minute you’ll be speaking to our students, and the next you’ll be speaking to the Directors of Learning and Teaching!
- U A team player – you’re going to work within our brilliant team of elected officers, and you might have to work on things that aren’t always based on education.

WHO YOU’LL WORK WITH...

The Vice President Academic works with a bunch of people across the Union and the University. In this role you’ll need to develop and build relationships with our key stakeholders:

- U Students!
- U School Officers
- U Class Reps
- U School Members of Parliament
- U Full Time Officers
- U Union Senior Management Team
- U Student Engagement Department (especially the Representation & Democracy Coordinator)
- U Communications and Marketing Team
- U Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life)
- U Head of Academic Quality
- U Directors of Learning and Teaching
- U Your counterparts in other Unions

TRAINING

Don’t worry, we’re not expecting you to understand or know everything before you start! There will be extensive training and support to make sure you’re ready and able to take on the job. Once you’re elected, you’ll have the opportunity to shadow meetings, attend a Student Parliament and have handover with the outgoing Vice President Academic.

We run a full induction programme in the first two weeks of June, where you'll get to know the other Full Time Officers, staff at the Union, and build on skills you'll need in the role!