

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 the office in Riccarton (Edinburgh), and is fixed term. Your first day will be the 25th May 2026 and you'll finish on the 31st May 2027. The salary is around £25,000.

For this role you must be available for in-person training during the handover and induction period in the first three 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 12th January, and close on the 9th February, then you'll get your campaign ready! From the 2nd 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 what you think the key priorities for students are going to be next year as well as the experience you have and what skills you'll bring to the team.

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 Department Officers and Class Representatives to make the academic experience the best it can be at Heriot-Watt.
- U Support and Chair 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 Sit on a range of Learning and Teaching Committees (like Senate, Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Group and more!) to represent the student voice and make sure decisions are in student's best interest.
- 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 Welcome Week events!)
- U Participate and engage with academic events for students e.g., academic mixers, or networking sessions.
- 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 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?

Around a third of your time in this role will be spent preparing for or engaging in committee meetings! 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 potential changes to consolidation week. You've already spoken to Department Officers about it, and you have Big 6 data 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 Student Engagement Coordinator (Academic) about actions that came up. You create a to-do list ahead of the next Learning and Teaching Group meeting next month.
- U You have a Department Officer Meeting later on today, so you meet with the Student Engagement Coordinator (Academic) and make sure the agenda is prepared and a reminder has gone out to DOs.
- U You have a catch-up with one of the Associate Executive Deans (Education & Student Life). 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 to 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 Every other week you Chair the Department Officer Meeting from 4 - 6pm. You give an update on what you've been working on, and then Department Officers have the chance to ask you any questions. You then split them into break-out groups to discuss any areas in their School. While they feedback, the Student Engagement Coordinator (Academic) 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 Head of Student Engagement 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 Department Officers
- U Class Reps across all levels (Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Research)
- U Executive Team
- U Full Time Officers
- U Union Senior Management Team

- U Student Engagement Department
- U Communications and Marketing Team
- U Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life)
- U Head of Academic Quality
- U Associate Executive Deans (Education & Student Life)
- U Director of Information Services
- 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 Executive Meeting and have handover with the outgoing Vice President Academic.

We run a full induction programme in the first few 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!