



UCS  
HAMPSTEAD



# Chief Operating Officer

Candidate Pack  
Autumn 2022





# The UCS Foundation

## *“An Enlightened Education”*

UCS is one of the leading independent day schools in the UK, educating 1,300 pupils aged 4 to 18. It was founded by University College London in 1830 to promote the principles of intellectual curiosity, creativity, breadth of study and independence of mind as a basis for academic excellence. It provides a best-in-class education and outstanding pastoral care, supported by a liberal ethos that forms the bedrock of the school. This equips pupils with something it calls ‘a foundation for life’ – qualities young people need in order to go into the world and live out their full potential.

The school is fortunate to be guided by a committed and capable Council and an experienced and ambitious Headmaster. The Council members generously give their time and expertise to support the school’s leadership in mapping out a successful future for the entire UCS Foundation.

The UCS Foundation consists of three schools, all situated within the Hampstead area:

### **UCS Pre-Prep:**

Pre-Prep on the Finchley Road site joined the UCS Foundation in 2002 and provides a happy, supportive and stimulating environment for boys aged 4 to 7.

### **UCS Junior Branch:**

In the heart of Hampstead Village on the Holly Hill site, the Junior Branch – for boys

aged 7 to 11 – offers pupils the opportunity to develop academic and personal discipline, self-confidence, thoughtfulness and public spirit.

### **UCS Senior School:**

The largest single element of the UCS Foundation is the Senior School on the main Frognal site. The School is for boys aged 11 to 18 and girls aged 16 to 18. Year 6 pupils at the Junior Branch automatically transfer to the Senior School each year, where they are joined by boys who come from a range of maintained and independent junior schools. The Sixth Form is co-educational, and about 60 girls join Year 12 each September. The curriculum throughout the Senior School is enriching and academic. Pupils progress to top universities with the confidence and motivation of exceptional independent learners.

The Foundation’s Games Fields are situated a mile away in West Hampstead: 28 acres of sports pitches upgraded recently with a multi-million-pound investment.

Click here for further information about UCS:  
<https://www.ucsf.org.uk>

Please also see an example of one of the school’s commercial ventures, UCS Active, a family health, fitness and sports club operating from the Sir Roger Bannister Sports Centre on the UCS Senior School campus:  
<https://ucsactive.org.uk>

# The Opportunity

The Chairman, Council members and Headmaster are seeking to appoint a high-calibre Chief Operating Officer (COO) to provide strong strategic, financial and operational leadership at an important stage in the Foundation's evolution. As a key contributor to whole school decision-making, the COO will be an important member of both the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Foundation Management Team (FMT). The COO's overall responsibility will be to support the Headmaster in the implementation of the Foundation's ambitious vision and strategy.



The COO is appointed by the Headmaster and Governors. They will report directly to the Headmaster on a day to day basis, but will have a line to the Council through the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The COO will meet regularly with the Headmaster, members of the SLT, members of the FMT, the Chairman and the wider Governing Council.

The COO oversees a sizeable and multi-functional team which supports the non-teaching needs of the Foundation, operating as a critical central support function. They will develop and steer the Foundation's infrastructure and operational strategy whilst ensuring the effective management and delivery of support services for: finance, commercial activities, estates, including capital projects, health and safety, HR, Administration (including GDPR), IT and Catering.

The appointed candidate will work in an engaged and constructive way to support the Headmaster in achieving the agreed aims for UCS. This will include ensuring, within the agreed financial and operational constraints,

the best possible levels of service and responsiveness to the needs of the three schools and taking a lead on ensuring that UCS continues to have a secure and healthy financial position.

This is a full time, year-round, role. It would suit someone who has led multi-functional teams and has a strong financial skillset together with strategic and operational leadership experience. The COO will be commercially minded, proactive, comfortable working across multiple sites at some scale, and a first-class communicator.

The successful candidate will combine experience of managing complex, multi-disciplinary and support functions with excellent interpersonal and relationship building skills. They will be comfortable operating at the most senior levels within an organisation or business unit. Whilst the COO does not need to be financially qualified, there is much to this role that is about leadership of a finance function, so a strong finance background is likely to be preferable. Previous independent school experience is not a pre-requisite (although some understanding of the sector would be an advantage), and applications are encouraged from candidates with commercial, private sector, charitable and other non-profit sector backgrounds.

It is critical that the postholder has an evident interest in the idea of working within an educational community and will see value in the direct link that their role has on the educational achievements of the children and young people who attend UCS.







# The Role

**Job Title: Chief Operating Officer (COO)**

**Responsible to: The Headmaster**

## Overview and Purpose

Key to the continued success of the UCS Foundation is the recruitment of a high-calibre COO who, together with the other members of the Foundation Management Team (FMT), will support the Headmaster in the implementation of the Foundation's ambitious vision and strategy. The COO will develop and steer the infrastructure and operational strategy and ensure the effective management and delivery of support services for: Finance, Commercial Activities, Estates, including capital projects; Health and Safety; HR; Administration (including GDPR); IT; and Catering.

With PA support, the COO will initially act as Clerk to Council but it is likely this role will become a separate one in its own right in due course.

## Key Responsibilities

- To work with the Head and FMT to ensure the successful execution of the Foundation's strategic plan and vision for the future.
- To provide effective leadership and operational strategy to ensure the successful management and delivery of the above support services.
- To have overall responsibility for the

day-to-day operations of the above support functions, building strong, professional and diverse teams and a culture of continuous improvement, as well as facilitating operational and organisational development and growth.

- To embed a culture and ethos of service and excellence in pursuit of the Foundation's vision and values.
- To develop and build trusted working relationships with colleagues across the Foundation and other key stakeholders.
- To ensure the Foundation has effective risk management strategies which enable it to respond effectively to situations, always ensuring the safeguarding and health and safety of pupils and staff, and the reputation of the Foundation.
- To develop, implement and monitor Foundation policies within the COO's remit.
- To ensure the school follows all statutory and regulatory requirements as required in schools; in particular adherence to Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) Regulations, for the areas within the COO's remit.
- To provide appropriate and timely reports to the Council and FMT to support effective leadership and governance.
- To work closely with senior staff, external partners, and the local community to create an environment that encourages creative thinking and empowers others to achieve a high level of performance.
- As part of the Senior Leadership Team will take responsibility for EDI.





# Person Specification

It is essential that the COO understands the absolute importance of safeguarding in the school and their role in ensuring that they are not only compliant, but that there is a culture across the communities that places safeguarding central to decision making. They will demonstrate a personal commitment to the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people.

The successful candidate will also likely have the following:

## Experience and Skills:

- Experienced and successful business manager
- Sound financial awareness and proven record of strong budget management skills
- Experience in senior responsibility across multiple functions
- Strategic thinker with proven project and change management
- Digitally literate with thorough knowledge of IT systems and digital technology within the educational setting
- Natural motivator and influencer, adaptable, diplomatic and resilient, with exceptional interpersonal and communicative skills, as well as high levels of emotional intelligence
- Leader and team player able to maintain and develop productive and long-term working relationships within a diverse community
- High attention to detail, high expectations, can motivate others when working at pace or under pressure
- Understanding of GDPR and experience of GDPR compliance would be desirable
- Understanding and appreciation of environmental and sustainability issues in an educational setting would be beneficial
- A strong background in finance and an understanding of financial strategy, planning and best practice
- Experience in strategic finance as well as budget management.



### Qualifications:

- Degree or equivalent
- Appropriate/relevant professional or managerial qualification, level 6 or above, in any of the disciplines required with excellent numeracy and literacy skills
- Relevant H&S qualification and a relevant qualification in supply/procurement/facilities management would be desirable

### Professional Attributes:

- Demonstrate intellectual capacity, the ability to assimilate data swiftly and to think creatively
- Demonstrate the ability to build effective and long-lasting relationships, and be an outstanding communicator
- Be driven, tenacious, energetic, empathetic, approachable and exemplifying high standards of conduct and personal behaviour
- Have a proven ability to delegate and multitask; demonstrate an organised and efficient approach with the ability to prioritise.
- Be both a leader and a team player, a natural motivator, clear thinking, adaptable, innovative, diplomatic, articulate, resilient, have drive, judgement, integrity, dynamism and personal presence
- Be outward-looking, open, diplomatic, persuasive and capable of inspiring trust in people from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Committed to the ethos and values of UCS



# Terms of Appointment

An excellent remuneration package is offered for the post of Chief Operating Officer, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position and at the top of the industry norm. The main provisions are likely to include:

- 40 days' holiday per year (including bank holidays and seven shut down days covering Easter and Christmas)
- Private health and dental care; the school operates a BUPA scheme, which staff are entitled to join at their own cost
- Membership of the School's defined contribution pension scheme with Royal London. The Foundation matches employee contributions up to a maximum of 10% of the annual salary
- school fee discount
- Death in service benefit
- Employee assistance programme through Health Assured
- Complimentary use of UCS Active during school hours and heavily subsidised membership for use outside of these hours and during the school holidays
- Free breakfast and lunch provided during term time
- Membership of the Cycle to Work scheme

*UCS is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. The appointment is subject to the necessary pre-employment checks in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, including an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, proof of identity and qualifications and medical fitness.*







# How to Apply

The CLOSING DATE is close of business on **Friday 2nd December 2022**.

Applications should be emailed to [ucs@minervasearch.com](mailto:ucs@minervasearch.com)

**Please enclose with your application:**

- A completed application form - found here [www.minervasearch.com/ucs](http://www.minervasearch.com/ucs)
- A CV
- A covering letter addressed to the Headmaster, Mr Mark Beard. The letter should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role.

**The process will follow as such:**

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact Minerva by telephone on 020 3714 0962.
- Preliminary interviews will take place with Minerva via Microsoft Teams in the weeks commencing 5th and 12th of December.
- Interviews will take place at the School on Thursday 5th January 2023.