



**OPPORTUNITY**

Where change  
gets real.



**Reference: 0579-26**

**Grade: 10**

**Salary: £ 58,225 to £67,468 per annum, depending on experience**

**Contract Type: Permanent**

**Basis: Full time**

## Job description

### Job Purpose:

This is an exciting period of strategic transformation at Aston University, Birmingham. [Aston 2030 Strategy](#) promises to redesign the development planning and delivery of professional education and training programmes around the needs of employers, businesses, and local communities.

Aston University is embarked on a significant expansion of its doctoral programmes and partnerships with an ambition to double doctoral student numbers to 1,000+ by 2030. The Aston Doctoral School (ADS) is responsible for such advancement and will be known for its vitality, the rigour of its doctoral programmes and commitment to providing sector-leading, researcher-led training for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers as well as early career academics. The Doctoral School also plays a vital role in the development and maintenance of a positive research culture and environment for enhanced doctoral and postdoctoral researchers' experience.

The ADS Director of Operations, based in ADS, will provide operational leadership for the University's doctoral provision (PhD and Professional Doctorates such as DBA) and postdoctoral researchers (ECR) support, ensuring academic quality, student experience, regulatory compliance, and innovation, while developing national and international doctoral partnerships, including joint and dual awards. The ADS Director of Operations will report directly to and be line-managed by the Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Enterprise (REF, Doctoral School and International Research).

The successful candidate will have experience of operational leadership and process improvement, knowledge of the external policy environment in which Higher Education sector operates and issues pertinent to doctoral research, together with an ability to work authoritatively and respectfully with stakeholders across the University.

### Main Responsibilities:

#### Strategic and Operational Leadership

- ▶ Provide strategic input for the development of doctoral programmes (PhDs and Professional Doctorates such as DBA) and postdoctoral researchers (ECR) support, aligned with institutional research and internationalisation strategies.
- ▶ Foster, develop and manage national and international partnerships for joint doctoral initiatives.
- ▶ Provide operational leadership for the Aston Doctoral School.

#### Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Enhancement

- ▶ Lead on quality assurance and enhancement for doctoral provision, ensuring compliance with internal regulations and policies.
- ▶ Provide leadership regarding UK PGR regulations and policies with willingness to develop an understanding of overseas universities' PGR regulations and policies.
- ▶ Lead the development of robust postgraduate research QA processes to meet OfS expectations and align, where practicable, to taught provision equivalents (e.g. Programme Enhancement Framework, Peer Observation, Evaluation & Reflection).
- ▶ Provide professional QA advice and support for key research governance committees, including the Graduate School Management Committee.
- ▶ Oversee maintenance of relevant Regulations for Research Degrees and Professional Doctorates, associated Code of Practice including those for Supervision, together with efficient dissemination of codes of practice and guidance.
- ▶ Handle formal PGR appeals and complaints up to level of Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

- ▶ Contribute to development of appropriate data dashboards and digitisation of postgraduate research data through PowerBI and other university-wide platforms. Adopt AI and digital technologies for accessible, user-friendly services.

### **Doctoral Programmes Oversight**

- ▶ Ensure robust processes for recruitment, admissions, progression, supervision, and examination.
- ▶ Oversee PhD External Examiner appointments, reporting, and response processes pre- and post-viva.
- ▶ Enhance doctoral student experience and outcomes across doctoral programmes to improve the PGR student experience and PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) performance.
- ▶ Improve postdoctoral researchers (ECR) experience and enhance research culture in accordance with the Researcher Development Concordat.
- ▶ Maintain and develop highly effective learner support and wellbeing structures, leading to successful outcomes.

### **National and International Doctoral Partnership Development**

- ▶ Support identification and manage strategic doctoral partnerships with academic institutions, government bodies and industry including the flagship PhD+ scheme.
- ▶ Support the due diligence processes for external partnerships.
- ▶ Develop robust recruitment and progressions processes and procedures for partnership programmes to ensure seamless student journey.
- ▶ Build strong and effective partnerships with other teams across the University, to support delivery of joint doctoral programmes.

### **Staff Management**

- ▶ Provide leadership and support for the PGR Administration team and line management of the PGR Administration Manager.

### **Doctoral Studentships/Funding Opportunities**

- ▶ Support operational processes regarding Doctoral studentships to ensure fairness and consistency across the University.
- ▶ Proactively identify and raise awareness of doctoral funding opportunities for home and overseas students.

### **Additional responsibilities**

- ▶ Support operational processes regarding Doctoral studentships to ensure fairness and consistency across the University.
- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development activities.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ▶ Carry out duties in a way which promotes fairness in all matters, and which engenders trust.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity and support diversity and inclusion as well as working to support the University's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.

## Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Experience of operational leadership in University's School/Department.</p> <p>Ability of operational leadership in doctoral programmes or related programmes.</p> <p>Experience/ability in quality assurance and regulatory compliance in the context of Higher Education.</p> <p>Ability to support highly effective teams and functions within a regulated and compliance-driven context with high employee satisfaction.</p> <p>Ability to handle formal PGR appeals and complaints/OIA.</p>	Application form and interview
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	<p>In-depth understanding of UK doctoral education and funding landscape.</p> <p>Familiarity with QAA and UKRI frameworks.</p> <p>Knowledge of international doctoral education models.</p> <p>Ability to lead and influence across academic and professional teams.</p> <p>Strong written and verbal communication.</p> <p>Commitment to academic excellence and student success.</p> <p>Collaborative and inclusive leadership style.</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of the HE sector and the challenges it faces.</p> <p>Excellent judgement and creative thinking; ability to resolve complex issues and problems which may arise with a diverse range of stakeholders.</p>	Application form and interview.


	Essential	Method of assessment
	<p>A clearly demonstrable commitment to Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion.</p> <p>Integrity, collegiality, collaboration, empathy, and action-and-outcome-centred leadership abilities.</p> <p>Strong emotional intelligence, with the ability to challenge constructively.</p> <p>Personal resilience, with a supportive approach that promotes a trusting and empathetic work environment</p>	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
<b>Education and qualifications</b>	<p>A Master's degree or equivalent.</p> <p>Leadership training or qualification</p>	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Understanding of transnational education and dual/joint degree frameworks.</p>	Application form and interview

## University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University. In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them.

Values + Behaviours

				
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Integrity</b>
We strive for excellence within ourselves and others, providing solutions to new and existing challenges.	We work best when we are collaborative, working together to contribute to the Aston community.	We strive together for improvement and innovation looking ahead to see the bigger picture.	We treat everyone in our community equally and how they would like to be treated.	We are open, honest and fair. We take ownership of the way we work and how we treat each other.

## How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs>.

Applications should be submitted by 23.59 on the advertised closing date.

All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted.

If you require a manual application form, then please contact the Recruitment Team via [recruitment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@aston.ac.uk).

## Contact information

### Enquiries about the vacancy:

**Name:** Professor Jun Jie Wu, MS(Oxon) DPhil (Oxon)

**Job title:** Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Enterprise (REF, Doctoral School International Research)

**Email:** [junjie.wu@aston.ac.uk](mailto:junjie.wu@aston.ac.uk)

### Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via [recruitment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@aston.ac.uk) or 0121 204 4500.

## Additional information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits Aston University staff enjoy.

**Salary scales:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

**Benefits:** [Benefits and Rewards | Aston University](#)

**Working in Birmingham:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

**Employment of Ex-Offenders:** Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they applying for is listed an exception under the act.

**Eligibility to work in the UK:** Where an individual is subject to UK immigration control, they will require a visa to work in the UK.

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

The main routes available for those who need a visa to work in the UK are **Skilled Worker**, **Global Talent** and the **Graduate Route**.

Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa> You can also find further information on our candidate immigration [web page](#).

If you will conduct research in your role, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application. Please see our candidate immigration [web page](#) for further details.

## **Before you start and Right to Work**

### Right to Work Check

All employees must complete a Right to Work check before they commence work at Aston. HR will contact you during the onboarding process to arrange your check.

### Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents that can help you find suitable accommodation. Useful websites for support and guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent/how-to-rent-the-checklist-for-renting-in-england> and <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

You can also use property search websites such as Rightmove or Zoopla.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level.

The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form. Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment.

Individuals will not be identified by name.

## **Data Protection**

Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) ("GDPR"). The University's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies>

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