



Student Retention Manager

Job specification, June 2025

Job description

Employment status and working hours

Permanent, full time.

Full time hours at the University are 35 per week with the standard working pattern Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 17:00.

Place of work flexibility

Horizons based: The majority of your working week will be spent at our office in Reading and the rest at your home*. The exact split of days/hours is negotiable but must include a minimum of three working days each week in Horizons on the core days (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday). The office closes on Fridays. You can attend the office on Mondays if you have worked the three core days. *Working from home is only possible if your environment is suitable (see Attachment).

Department and team

Education and Students, Retention team

Line manager

Jade Dunstan, Head of Academic Registry

High level summary of job role

As the Student Retention Manager, you will be responsible for the effective delivery of student engagement and retention initiatives, playing a key role in supporting student progression and success. Reporting to the Head of Academic Registry, you will lead a student-centred service that works proactively to enhance the student experience and ensure retention strategies are successfully executed.

You will collaborate closely with both academic and professional service teams, ensuring students receive timely, targeted support. You will oversee key student lifecycle processes, including re-registration, progression, withdrawals, and interventions, ensuring these processes are in line with University policies and regulatory requirements. By leveraging data-driven insights, you will identify trends, inform targeted interventions, and drive continuous improvement across retention efforts.

A key focus for this role is the leadership, development, and management of the Retention team, ensuring high standards of performance, accountability, and service excellence. You will foster a culture of continuous improvement, working collaboratively with various departments to implement and align retention strategies with University-wide objectives.

Specific job role accountabilities and responsibilities

- Lead the Retention team in delivering effective student engagement and retention activities.
- Manage processes for the re-registration of students and take proactive steps to ensure student retention targets are met.
- Lead the effective coordination of student intervention activities, ensuring timely and appropriate support for students at risk of disengagement.
- Manage processes for interruptions of study, programme transfers, and withdrawals, ensuring compliance with University policies and regulations.
- Ensure apprenticeship student records are accurately maintained and processed in line with University policy and ESFA funding rules.
- For integrated apprenticeships, manage the gateway process, ensuring compliance with apprenticeship standard requirements.
- Monitor student progression and engagement data, using insights to inform targeted interventions and improvements.
- Drive continuous improvement initiatives, ensuring retention strategies remain effective, proactive, and aligned with institutional priorities.
- Provide regular reports and updates on student retention trends, challenges, and improvements.
- Monitor and maintain data integrity within the student record.
- Actively engage with sector-wide best practices to inform institutional retention strategies.
- Regularly review, update, and enhance policies and procedures to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, while maintaining a student-centred approach that supports and promotes student success.
- Serve as the main point of contact for the team, offering expert guidance on complex cases and relevant policies for both staff and students.
- Foster a student-centred culture, ensuring high standards of service excellence and continuous improvement.
- Monitor and enhance the quality of responses to student enquiries, ensuring all are addressed within agreed service level timeframes.
- Promote and implement University-wide strategies and objectives in collaboration with other line managers within Academic Registry and the wider Education and Students department.
- Set clear objectives, monitor performance, and ensure accountability through regular one-to-ones and Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) with team members.
- Proactively identify and resolve operational issues, escalating matters where necessary.
- Investigate and respond to student complaints and appeals in accordance with University policies.
- Support the planning and organisation of graduation ceremonies.
- Represent the Academic Registry team in university committees, departmental meetings, and working groups as required.

Other important features of the job role

- Line management responsibilities: Yes, and the number of direct reports is 5.
- Budget responsibility: None.
- In this role you will liaise with the following: School of the Built Environment, Academic Operations, Technology, Apprenticeship Operations, Digital Learning and Engagement, Academic Performance, Student Services, Academic Quality Unit.

Person specification

X in the table below indicates whether the person requirement is essential or desirable, plus how the requirement will be assessed during the selection process:

A = Application; I = Interview; T = Test.

Qualifications and training	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Relevant professional qualification or equivalent experience	X		X		
Evidence of continued professional development	X		X		
<i>Please be aware that as part of onboarding processes, we will seek original documentary evidence of the relevant academic and/or professional qualifications which you include within your job application.</i>					
Previous experience	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Experience in a similar role	X		X	X	
Data management, report generation, and ensuring accurate record-keeping	X		X	X	
Proven track record of setting and maintaining high professional standards	X		X	X	
Making fair and effective decisions, considering multiple viewpoints	X		X	X	
Cross-team collaboration, preventing siloed working	X		X	X	
Implementing change and continuous improvement	X		X	X	
Working within the higher education sector		X	X	X	
Experience in managing student record or registry processes		X	X	X	
Supporting personal and professional development within a team or organisation, including managing performance and undertaking personal development reviews		X	X	X	
Working with diverse student populations and understanding their unique needs		X	X	X	

Using a student record management system or CRM		X	X	X	
Skills, knowledge, and aptitudes	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Digital skills: We use MS Office which includes Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint	X		X	X	
Strong leadership and management skills, with the ability to motivate and develop a team	X		X	X	
Organisational skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines	X		X	X	
Strong attention to detail, ensuring accuracy in assessment processes and reporting	X		X	X	
Communication and relationship-building skills across teams and stakeholders	X		X	X	
Ability to foster a culture of feedback, challenge, and professional values	X		X	X	
Problem-solving and decision-making skills, particularly in a regulatory and compliance-focused environment	X		X	X	
Ability to adapt and respond to new situations, identifying opportunities for improvement	X		X	X	
Knowledge of assessment policies, quality assurance and academic regulations in higher education		X	X	X	
Strong analytical skills with the ability to interpret data and generate actionable insights		X	X	X	
Familiarity with regulatory requirements related to higher education and student retention		X	X	X	
Other requirements or special requirements	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Alignment to the University core values of Passion, Integrity, Excellence and Support; all employees are expected to demonstrate our values at work: https://www.ube.ac.uk/about-us/	X			X	
Commitment to delivering positive outcomes for our students; we want our students to be successful	X			X	
You must be prepared to undertake mandatory online training should you be appointed including Data Protection, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Prevent, and EDI	X			X	

Willingness to engage in continuous professional development and stay updated with the latest trends in student retention and engagement	X		X	X	
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Pay and benefits

- Salary £37,000 to £40,000 per annum.
- 26 days paid holiday (rising to 28 with service) **plus** paid bank/public holidays **plus** up to five paid closure days (typically between Christmas and New Year); all per holiday year Full Time Equivalent. Our holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July. We also have a holiday buy and sell scheme in place. Sometimes the University does not need to close for five days per year and any balance (for example one day), can be used as a paid Wellbeing Day to take time out for your own physical or mental health.
- Pensions auto-enrolment to the People's Pension which is a default salary sacrifice scheme. You may opt out of salary sacrifice but remain in the scheme, or you may choose to opt out altogether.
- Policies in place for all types of family-friendly statutory leave with enhanced pay available from day one of employment for some leave types.
- Wellbeing support and full access to the Employee Assistance Programme, as well as the Thrive Mental Wellbeing app. Several University of the Built Environment employees are trained Mental Health First Aiders and can support staff.
- Cycle to Work and Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice schemes and access to Tax-Free Childcare (Government scheme).
- For Horizons based roles, we may in the future be able to offer parking on site however you must not assume this will be possible. Every now and then we may have a spare parking space become available and you can ask to join the waiting list. University of the Built Environment is keen wherever possible, to encourage staff to commute as sustainably as possible.
- Life assurance (death in service) cover.
- Employer-funded Health Cash Plan (Simplyhealth) and voluntary dental insurance (Unum).
- Charity giving options available including one voluntary paid day, per annum.
- As a University of the Built Environment employee you will have access to Microsoft Office 365 applications for personal use. You will also have access to range of lifestyle discounts (savings on everyday purchases) and access to learning platforms.
- On the Join the team page of our website, you will find the full list of employee benefits.

Application process

How to apply

All job applications must be sent to **recruitment@ube.ac.uk** and if you apply via a jobs board, please make sure you have sent all required documents otherwise we will be unable to consider your application. If you apply on the recommendation of an existing University of the Built Environment employee, please make sure to mention their name within your application. A **complete** job application consists of the following:

1. An up to date curriculum vitae.
2. A covering letter or email message outlining your suitability for the role.
3. A completed Recruitment Check Form which is available from the current job vacancies page of our website.

We are committed to driving forward our sustainability agenda to secure a sustainable future and our long-term ambition is to be the world's most sustainable University. We recommend you visit our website to find out more about our Sustainability Strategy:

<https://www.ube.ac.uk/sustainability/>

Informal discussion / Other enquiries

If you are unsure whether to apply, perhaps because you do not meet all essential criteria, we encourage you to call the hiring manager to discuss this further (details below). If you are excited by this vacancy do not rule yourself out; it still might be worth applying. For an informal discussion about the role please contact Jade on 0118 921 4383 or email j.dunstan@ube.ac.uk other enquiries please contact HR on 0118 467 2454 / 2433 or email recruitment@ube.ac.uk

Closing date and next steps

We will receive applications until the advert closes on **01 July 2025 at 5.00 p.m.** We will not consider late applications. HR will screen all applications in person and all applicants will receive a response confirming the status of their application. We value the time taken to make a job application and the interest shown in the University. Applications may be reviewed prior to the closing date and occasionally, you may be invited to interview ahead of the closing date.

Interview details

Dates for interview will be advised to you later in the process. Please indicate on your Recruitment Check Form any dates you cannot make, up to 4 weeks from the closing date; this helps us to plan interviews should you be shortlisted, prior to contacting you.

Interviews are normally carried out over Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Depending on the job role and place of work, your interview may be at our Reading office. Please be prepared for a two-stage interview process, held on different dates. As part of the interview process, you will likely meet a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Note for internal candidates

If you are an existing University of the Built Environment employee, we request you inform your current line manager of your intention to apply for this role.

Note to recruitment agencies

We are **not** using agencies for this vacancy, and we cannot accept any candidate submissions. Please do not contact us as we can only repeat this message.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Here at the University we champion equality, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce. We celebrate diversity and the strengths it brings to our staff body, our student community and our Board of Trustees, recognising that people are key to our success. Our aim is to attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce, therefore we welcome and encourage applications from all backgrounds.

Pre-employment checks

The University undertakes thorough pre-employment screening as part of its recruitment process. Given we have contracts with Government offices, we make sure our checks comply with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). Checks will include identity, right to work, basic disclosure criminal record check, and three years of employment history.

Attachment: Homeworking

We are a flexible employer and flexibility is built into our different place of work options. As such, it is reasonable to ask employees to adhere to some general principles, requirements, and conditions when working from home. Flexibility must offer value to both you and the University.

General principles

- You must undertake an online Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment and repeat this at such intervals as may be instructed by the Facilities Management Team. The purpose of this is to look after your health and safety at work. You will be asked to provide a photo of your home workstation setup.
- You must adhere to our IT Security and Data Protection policies at all times.
- You must be accessible to colleagues during your normal working hours and keep your Outlook Calendar up to date.
- Line managers are expected to be accessible to their team during working hours.

Requirements and conditions

- When working from home, this must be within the United Kingdom for UK employees.
- Your homeworking environment must be suitable and professional at all times. It must be private and confidential to you, free from interruptions and noise, and away from other household members.
- You must have sufficient space on your home workstation in which to safely and securely house the technology and equipment required for your work. It must not be accessible to any other household member at any time. It is not appropriate to work from a sofa or other location which is not in keeping with presenting a professional work environment. Opting to use the blurring function on Teams/Zoom is not an acceptable workaround.
- You must provide, at your own cost, a secure and reliable internet connection which allows you to work as effectively as if you were in the office; this includes undertaking video and audio calls and connecting permanently to the VPN.
- In the case of known broadband outage you should plan to work at the Horizons office or elsewhere, noting that elsewhere must still meet the place of work requirements. Should you be unable to do either of these options, you will be required to take holiday. In the event of unexpected outage, you should discuss with your line manager whether you need to find an alternative place of work or take holiday.
- If you do not have space to accommodate these requirements or your circumstances change, you are not permitted to work from home and need to consult your line manager and HR.