



## Chief Operating Officer (COO)

**Reference:** EHCOO-1123  
**Salary:** Competitive  
**Contract Type:** Permanent  
**Hours:** Full Time  
**Location:** Ormskirk, Lancashire

**Accountable to:** Vice Chancellor

**Reporting to:** Vice Chancellor





## Welcome

Thank you for enquiring about the post of Chief Operational Officer at Edge Hill University. I hope you find the details in the applicant pack of interest.

We are looking for an experienced senior professional with the capacity to work effectively across a full operational portfolio and alongside an outstanding team of colleagues. And, whilst your skill set is of vital importance, we also want to appoint an individual who supports and enhances the vision, culture and ethos of a university that seeks to place students at the forefront of all we do.

Edge Hill University is a hugely successful provider of higher education. A past winner of the Times Higher University of the Year (and the only university to have been shortlisted on five occasions), Educate's University of the Year in 2020/21 and the Times and Sunday Times' Modern University of the Year in 2022, we have risen further in national league tables than any other provider. Our task is to continue and strengthen that progressive trend.

If successful, you will join a well-run, financially-sound university with a clear set of achievable aspirations. We look forward to hearing from you.

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully,

Dr. John Cater CBE DL  
Vice-Chancellor





## About the University

Edge Hill University has been providing higher education since 1885, with a mission to create and harness knowledge to deliver opportunity.

From our beginnings as the country's first non-denominational teacher training college for women, Edge Hill has always embraced equality and diversity. These values are inherent in our community and reflected in our culture, attitudes, and behaviours.

The University continually strives to improve, and our efforts are regularly recognised. We were Educate's University of the Year in 2020/21 and in 2022 The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022 named us Modern University of the Year. And in 2018 we were one of only three English universities to be allocated a free-standing medical school by the Department of Health and Social Care.

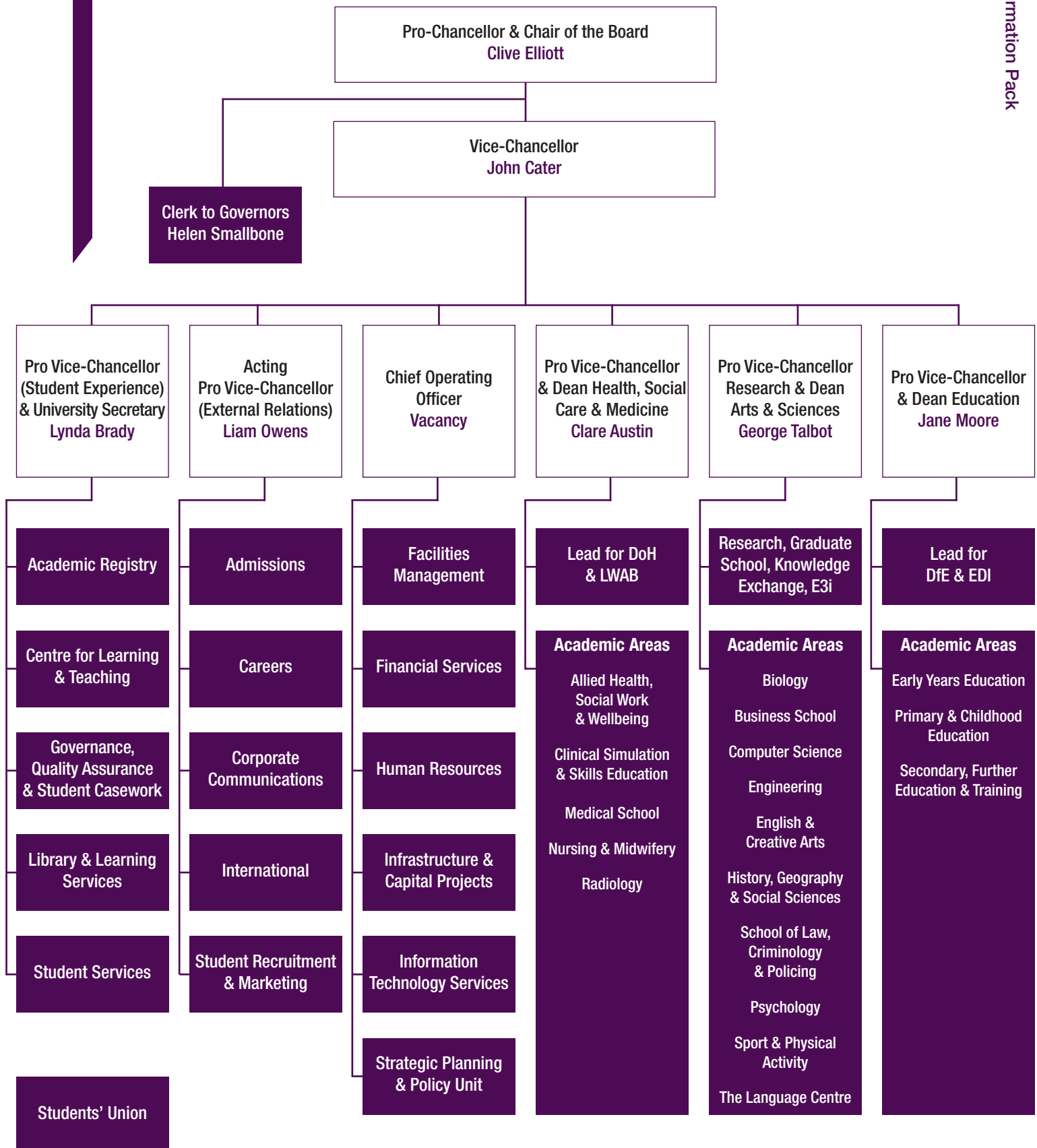
The University's strength is reflected in its balance sheet. We have invested over £350 million on our campus over the past fifteen years with marginal debt, have substantial cash balances and are in the process of constructing new STEM facilities, a new Students' Union, 250 new en-suite rooms and a central campus square, all for September 2024.

We are also proud of our results in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, which saw our funding doubled and which classed over half our research as 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'.

## Information about the Region

Located in the heart of the North West, Edge Hill University is situated close to the thriving market town of Ormskirk and the vibrant cities of Liverpool and Manchester. The seaside resort of Southport is nearby, and the University is only a short distance from stunning areas of unspoilt natural beauty, such as the sand dunes and pinewoods of Formby and within easy driving distance of the Lakes, the Dales, and the Peak District. Described as 'the best place in England to bring up a family' by The Telegraph, reporting on The Family Friendliness Index, the region also has excellent schools, nurseries, and green spaces.

# Organisation Chart







## About the Role

Reporting to the Vice-Chancellor and a key member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (known as Directorate), the Chief Operating Officer (COO) has a critical role in supporting the University's strategic development and delivery of operational plans and objectives. The COO provides commercial insight, drives financial and operating performance, and through effective collaboration delivers an appropriate long-term strategy to achieve best overall value and financial sustainability for the University as articulated in the Strategic Plan.

The COO portfolio is broad and includes Finance, Facilities Management, IT and Digital Services, Strategic Planning, Human Resources and Capital Developments. The day-to-day management of the operational activities in all areas within this portfolio are led by the respective directors of services with the COO providing leadership and overarching strategic guidance and support.

The COO will engage with the Executive, the University's Directorate Manager Group (DMG) and academic leaders, to develop and deliver outstanding services that enable the delivery of the university's strategic objectives. The overall emphasis will be on driving quality, efficiency and efficacy across all operations and services, supporting growth and innovation, and within a culture underpinned by our core values.

Working collaboratively with the Vice-Chancellor (VC), Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVCs) and Directors the COO will support and participate in decision-making and delivery. As a key senior leader, the COO will have a successful track record in managing a broad range of operations within one or more large complex organisation. The successful candidate will be a positive role model, able to demonstrate a noticeable commitment to improving our working culture and helping to build a positive and enabling environment for all.

# Duties and Responsibilities

## Strategy, Policy Development and Planning

1. As a key member of the Vice Chancellor's Executive and the University Directorate Management Group, play a critical role in supporting the University's Strategic Plan and operational plans and objectives.
2. Provide commercial insight, drive financial and operating performance, and deliver an appropriate long-term strategy to achieve best overall value for the University.
3. Develop a unified approach across the COO portfolio, establishing consistent standards, and a high performing 'customer service' culture focused on quality, agility and continuous improvement and value for money, across all services.
4. Anticipate and identify strategic business needs and business drivers and put in place appropriate actions to address these needs and maximise benefits to the University.
5. Act in an ambassadorial capacity to represent the University across relevant sector bodies and local/national stakeholders to understand, influence and implement relevant policies and regulatory requirements.

## Performance Improvement

6. Empower, develop, and support Directors of Service in the COO portfolio to maximise levels of engagement and performance, ensuring they work as an integrated team to a consistent set of expectations and standards.
7. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and engagement and ensure staff are effectively encouraged and developed thus supporting the University's succession plans.
8. Deliver the highest standards of quality and cost effectiveness, including the production of business plans and financial forecasts and oversee the delivery of agreed targets within approved budget and set timelines.
9. Provide sound commercial management and demonstrable ROI for all the university's significant investments and projects.
10. Deliver COO portfolio's KPIs, initiatives and projects, ranging from ITS, data, OHS, estates, HR, and infrastructure services through a team of leadership experts.

## **Risk Management**

11. Ensure strong risk management across COO portfolio including digital and infrastructure, safety, industrial relations, and security risks.
12. Promote an environment in which controls and compliance are seen as a value-add expertise by stakeholders.
13. Anticipate, identify, and effectively mitigate safety and security risks of all stakeholders engaged in university activities and on university premises.
14. Ensure regulatory obligations are met on time and to the level of accuracy, safety and security required.
15. Alongside all PVCs ensure optimal student wellbeing and experience.

## **Financial Integrity**

16. Take overall responsibility for ensuring effective project investment appraisal, financial planning and implementation, efficient financial operations, the integrity of financial processes, procedures and systems and sound financial controls.
17. Working in partnership with the Director of Finance, to actively implement and oversee strategic investments and development of the University's local, national, and global ambitions, providing appropriate constructive challenge, professional guidance, management acumen and support.
18. Provide sound commercial management and demonstrable ROI for all the University's significant investments and projects.
19. Anticipate and identify potential financial risks and oversee their management and governance as required across the operations portfolio and associated functions.
20. Lead the annual business planning process, thus supporting the institution to deliver its strategic objectives within budget and set timeframes.

## **In addition to the above all Edge Hill University staff are required to:**

- a) Adhere to all Edge Hill's policies and procedures, including Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Health, and Safety
- b) Respect confidentiality: all confidential information should be kept in confidence and not released to unauthorised persons.
- c) Undertake appropriate learning and development activities as required
- d) Participate in Edge Hill's Performance Review and Development Scheme
- e) Adhere to Edge Hill University's environmental policy and guidelines and undertake tasks in a sustainable manner
- f) Demonstrate excellent Customer Care in dealing with all customers

Please note that applications will be assessed against the Person Specification using the following criteria, therefore, applicants should provide evidence of their ability to meet all criteria.

Methods of Assessment include Application Form (A), Supporting Statement (S), Interview (I), Test (T) & Presentation (P).

## Qualifications

	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment A/S/I/T/P
A relevant degree	*		A
Member of one of the CCAB bodies (ACA, CA, ACCA, CIPFA) or CIMA		*	A

## Experience and Knowledge

Track record as an experienced CFO, Finance Director, or Chief Operating Officer (or senior deputy in a sizeable organization)	*		A, I
A strong applied knowledge of financial and resource planning, performance management, service delivery and estates management at senior leadership level	*		A, I
Experience of successfully delivering cost improvement and financial growth programmes	*		A, I
Relevant commercial experience in managing operations portfolio in a large complex organisation	*		A, I
A comprehensive understanding of Higher Education purpose, governance, funding, and markets		*	A, I
Demonstrable experience of transforming processes, systems, data, culture, and skills to deliver competitive advantage.	*		A, I
Excellent and effective communicator with experience of working to Board level to lead strategy, manage risk, drive performance, and engage internal and external stakeholders	*		A, I
Experience of designing, leading, and evaluating transformational change programmes involving infrastructure, systems, and people	*		A, I
Experience in developing an agile culture and enabling processes and systems within a large organisation	*		A, I



## Abilities, Skills and Competencies

	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment A/S/I/T/P
Evidence of excellent business acumen and commercial competencies.	*		A, I
Evidence of building effective partnerships internally and externally and specifically evidence of collaborative working across multi-disciplinary teams within complex organisations.	*		A, I
Effective chairperson for committees, sub-committees, and project boards.	*		A, I
Astute and effective managerial skills	*		A, I
Able to influence and operate effectively in a challenging environment.	*		A, I
Evidence of entrepreneurialism and innovation, with an ability to identify and capture commercial opportunities to maximise revenue and financial sustainability for the University	*		A, I
Evidence of appreciation of the dynamics of Higher Education and an empathy with academic culture and ways of working	*		A, I
Strong commitment to Edge Hill's Values, Wellbeing and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	*		A, I



## Eligibility

Shortlisting will be based on the candidate's ability to demonstrate they meet the essential criteria, as described in the Person Specification, through the information provided within their Application Form, Supporting Statement and accompanying CV.

The ability to participate in handover activity during April 2024 would be desirable.

At Edge Hill University we value the benefits a rich and diverse workforce brings to our community and therefore welcome applications from all sections of society.

## How to Apply

Edge Hill University has appointed Veredus, an executive search agency, to assist with this appointment.

To apply for this post, you will need to submit the following documentation to us by no later than **5pm on Friday, 12th January 2024**:

1. A **CV** setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements. Please ensure you have provided reasons for any gaps.
2. A **Supporting Statement** (approximately two pages) explaining how you consider your personal skills, qualities and experience provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with particular reference to criteria in the person specification.
3. A completed **Diversity Monitoring Form and Candidate Supporting Information Form**. Forms can be downloaded from the Veredus job page.

Applications should be sent via Veredus website - [www.veredus.co.uk](http://www.veredus.co.uk), quoting reference number **14937**.

All submissions will receive an automated response. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt when submitting your application, please contact us on [education@veredus.co.uk](mailto:education@veredus.co.uk).



## Further Information

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact our advising consultants at Veredus:

- Veronika Dergal on 07547 769 762 or [veronika.dergal@veredus.co.uk](mailto:veronika.dergal@veredus.co.uk)
- Meghan Knight on 07761 447 885 or [meghan.knight@veredus.co.uk](mailto:meghan.knight@veredus.co.uk)

## Indicative Recruitment Timeline

**Closing date:** 17:00 Friday, 12th January

**Longlist:** w/c 15th January

**Preliminary Interviews with Veredus:** w/c 22nd January

**Shortlist:** w/c 29th January

**Final Interviews/ Presentations:** w/c 12th February

Please note that the dates above are indicative and may be subject to change.

At Veredus, we take care to protect the privacy of our candidates and clients. To read more about how we collect, store and share your data please read our privacy notice which can be accessed here: <https://www.veredus.co.uk/privacy-policy/>





St Helens Road  
Ormskirk  
Lancashire  
L39 4QP  
United Kingdom

**We look forward to  
receiving your application**

[edgehill.ac.uk](http://edgehill.ac.uk)