

Net Zero Applicant Briefing – Question and Answer Session Summary

What opportunities might there be to incorporate student projects or the research that's going on at the moment in the university, into the net zero strategy or the sustainability strategy that we are trying to take forward?

This is an area that the University wants to improve within and we are pioneering new ways of working across staff and student groups. There is academic work, including the work that our students do as part of their courses, that can inform operational practices. One of the things we have just concluded is a piece of systems mapping research around climate which has informed our strategy around net zero and generative practices going forward, not just in our operations, but also in our teaching and research as well. We are really keen to continue that work and think about how to link with students.

Are there specific qualification requirements required for the candidates to apply for the roles?

There are only specific sustainability qualifications required for the Assistant Director Estates Sustainability. For the other technical roles based in estates awareness would be helpful. There are no requirements to have sustainability qualifications for the other roles.

Leadership within the University and HE sector for net zero has been discussed. However, do UAL include working with and providing leadership to communities within which the University sites are situated?

The University actually already do quite a lot through our academic staff and our teaching and research colleagues. We have got quite a lot of work going on in the communities around our colleges, but it does tend to be very driven by individual academics at the moment. One of the things that we are implementing is a placemaking manifesto across the university. We have got a really big footprint in London, but each community in London is very different and each college is located in communities that are really quite different. Actually pulling that together into a strategy is much harder than you might think. The place making manifesto is a step in that direction and will help coordinate some of the college level and academic level efforts.

Though slightly beyond the question posed we are seeking as a university to use our influence within government policy and also our industries. We have a really solid

foundation to build on there but we can go even further and as such have to walk the talk and that's why we are investing in our operational net zero efforts.

Have you actually got any funding allocated across this project?

The university is making this investment from its own funds for these ten new roles which will add to our existing roles within the institution. As the project progresses we will learn more about the institution and what work is required and there might need to be further cases for investment made. We also want to work with the sector to understand what sort of percentage of revenue Universities should be investing in decarbonization efforts and try to be part of that conversation as well.

How do you manage energy usage across the University?

UAL is not a campus University and so each site has to be reviewed in terms of potential. This is being explored and a good example would be our Camberwell College where we have got halls of residence on the same campus and we are looking quite closely at the at the benefits of balancing loads across our site. We are also looking across all the sites at potential for linked heat networks.

What sort of experience are you looking for for the Head of Net Zero and Social Purpose Programme role and how supportive is the university leadership of the transformation project? Could further information also be provided about the social purpose bit of the of the role.

What we're looking for in terms of a candidate for the role, which is a programme management role, is somebody who has experience of behaviour change, experience of employing systems thinking to affect behaviour change within an organisation, ideally a large organisation, but obviously it'll be interesting to hear from candidates from different types of spaces. You don't necessarily have to have worked within higher education. Whilst this is something which appears in the advert it is not an explicit requirement of this role.

The post holder will be expected to be able to relate to and work with colleagues from the different parts of the university, whether they're within professional services where the Social Purpose Lab resides, or our colleagues in colleges, in the academic side of their community or with our students. So we're looking for somebody who is used to working with different types of people who are at different stages of their journey of understanding of the programme. If you've done that within

the context of sustainability and net zero, social value or social purpose, that would be extremely helpful but it is not a requirement.

First and foremost, what we're looking for is somebody who gets the idea that we need to have really robust strategies but that we also need to be able to implement them. So somebody who's used to developing tactics and developing action plans and working with others to develop those and then to deliver against those. For the Head of Net Zero and Social Purpose Programme the post holder needs to turn some of this theory and this knowledge into action and actually get us to the point of meeting our carbon reduction ambitions.

The social purpose part of the role is covered in the first bullet point of the person spec. We are looking for somebody here who understands the role of environmental social governance and the role that plays within the way a successful organisation runs. What are the governance arrangements needed to be put in place? Who are the people within the organisation that need to be concerned with and care about environmental and social issues?

The University leadership are supportive of this work. The Social Purpose Lab has been created and the organisation has had our Chief Social Purpose Officer in post for around two years. There has been significant investment in developing the Lab and we have also then had a strategic investment bid, which is why all of these roles have been created.

Can you explain more about the relationship with the Social Purpose Group and the wider university and how you operate and what that will mean for this role?

The Social Purpose Lab sits within a department which is called the Social Purpose Group. The Social Purpose Group is made up of four teams or 4 units, of which the Social Purpose Lab is one of them. There is also Communications, the AKO Storytelling institute and the Development Department.

The Social Purpose Lab are developing an understanding of the environment that we're in, the concerns and the issues that persist and establishing what our role is in trying to support the organisation achieve its social purpose and net zero ambitions. So there's a role we can play in supporting collaboration and convening. Ensuring that the good practice and good work, which is already happening within the university, is advocated upon and we can act as advocates on behalf of other parts of the community. Then there is partnering with other parts of the organisation, as we

have the opportunity to work across the whole of the university because we sit as a central function, so we can convene, we can collaborate, we can partner, we can advocate, but we also can steer and we can also lead initiatives as well. We will be looking to the Head of Net Zero and Social Purpose Programme to identify those opportunities for us to steer and to direct action from within the Social Purpose Lab. Identifying the key stakeholders that we will need to work alongside to actually achieve results.

What is the level of maturity within the university around social purpose and social value and the buy in that stakeholders have to it?

The idea of being a social purpose university, or rather making that explicit, came about because it is already there within our university community. This is a university community of staff and students that really do care a lot about social issues. Within the university you can feel that by just going around and talking to people and interacting with them and seeing what people are doing. The 10 year strategy elevated what was already there and stated explicitly that this is central to what we do. There are areas that are not quite there yet, particularly within our operational practices, and that's the nature of a lot of the challenge that we're facing now.

There are tensions that exist at all levels, at the senior management level as well, we do have leaders who really understand this and are committed to it but there are others that are rightly focused on keeping the wheels turning of the university, for whom this feels like something extra, or perhaps they haven't yet fully worked out how to integrate it into their day-to-day work. There is ongoing work to support colleagues in this transition, but what does make UAL a really exciting place to be doing something like this is that there is a groundswell of support and this real passion for working in a social purpose aligned way within the university community.

I wanted to know a bit more about the current data infrastructure, the tools that you use and the current data resources that you have and access.

One of our big challenges for this year is not just getting the data strategy for sustainability data, it is that wider piece of understanding. We have just employed a new Director of Data Architecture at the institution with a view to properly understanding how we go about it. We currently have a number of SQL databases that we use within the Planning Unit and we integrate with our different software solutions and we bring data in. This was a pragmatic approach to data but the university is a lot more mature around data needs and wants now. Therefore, this is a key time for us to take the next step and work across the organisation and work

out how we bring more sources of information together. Our Planning databases are very good in terms of the student data we hold, and there are other pockets of good practice. However, we are not as mature in terms of bringing together our staff, space, finance and student data into one place.

The data post holder will be part of a larger project across our teams to try and better understand how we make use of our data, integrate it and how UAL moves forward in terms of storage and use. Whoever comes in won't be on their own and will be supported by the wider team.