

# Chair Recruitment Pack.



# Welcome

*Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of NCUK.*

## NORTHERN CONSORTIUM

Northern Consortium UK Ltd (NCUK) is unique in UK higher education. We are the subsidiary company of the Charity, Northern Consortium (NC), which was set up thirty years ago by a consortium of leading UK Universities [based in the North of England] who are united by their belief in the value of international education and their commitment to widening participation. NC established NCUK Ltd in 2003 to provide a vehicle to deliver activities both safely and effectively in other countries.

NCUK Ltd are dedicated to giving international students access to partner Universities, worldwide, and helping them to succeed when they get there. NCUK offer a range of high-quality programmes that combine the highest academic standards with the development of exceptional language, study, and cultural skills. In conjunction with NCUK's excellent student placement service, our programmes provide students with the best route to University in the UK and selected other countries. This is demonstrated by the tens of thousands of students who, over the Consortium's history, have excelled on their NCUK programme, at their destination University and onwards into their career.

NCUK adapted to ensure it performed well during the pandemic, moving quickly to an effective remote working model support for remote teaching and learning, and digitally supported assessments for its students. To continue to thrive and succeed, NCUK will continue to capitalise on these successes, realise new and existing market opportunities, further develop its products and services, and make its offer relevant to new groups of students. With a strong international brand, and an ever-growing range of partnerships, NCUK has laid the foundations for further growth and success.

NCUK is wholly owned by 'Northern Consortium', as Chair, you will be a key relationship holder with the Board of Trustees and will regularly liaise to support appropriate reporting and good governance within the Group.

We are seeking to appoint a Chair who can lead the Board of Directors and work closely with the Chief Executive to focus upon the academic and commercial development of the company as it delivers its strategy to grow in a very competitive, constantly changing and dynamic international market. As Chair, you will lead an established Board of Directors and your knowledge, experience and commercial acumen will enable you to shape NCUK's growth and deliver NCUK's new strategy in a way that is consistent with our mission and values of Agile, Bold, Connected, Committed, Driven, Expert. You will bring an external, independent perspective to the Board, assist with strategy formulation, manage key relationships, help develop the business, and ensure that the risks are appropriately managed.

The NCUK Chair and Board of Directors are expected to challenge and advise the senior leadership team, in line with our company values (outlined below) and help them to reach balanced judgements. We are seeking an experienced Chair and outstanding leader who is well-organised, able to think strategically and possesses exceptional interpersonal skills, tact, diplomacy, and the powers of persuasion. If this sounds interesting, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

You can find out more about NCUK on their website (see below), and our advising consultants at Anderson Quigley would be pleased to discuss the role with you, in strict confidence - their details can be found below.

With best wishes,



Dr Malcolm Butler, Chair, Northern Consortium Board of Trustees

# About Us

## What We Do

NCUK is a unique organisation, founded by UK universities, with a history of innovation in international education. Since the Consortium's inception in 1987 – in a pioneering UK-Malaysian university partnership – our high-quality pathway programmes have enabled over 45,000 overseas students to gain admission to University. Today, NCUK has a network of quality-assured delivery partners in 41 countries across four continents.

NCUK programmes prepare international students for study at undergraduate and postgraduate level, with embedded English language and study skills. NCUK students have access to universities in the UK, Australia, the USA, New Zealand, Canada, and the Caribbean, and benefit from excellent advice and guidance on university admission.

NCUK develops, maintains and administers academic qualifications that prepare students for entry to university. The company also provides a university admission or 'placement' service, which supports NCUK students in progressing to university following their course.

NCUK licenses educational institutions to deliver its academic qualifications. We currently have more than 90 Study Centres in 41 countries, spanning 4 continents.

Our largest partnership, the Sino British College (SBC) in Shanghai, offers full UK degree completion and has over 1,000 students registered on NCUK pathway programmes.

You can read more about NCUK's global network by visiting our main website here: <https://www.ncuk.ac.uk/>

## Academic Pathway Programmes

NCUK currently offers three pathway programmes:

- The NCUK International Foundation Year (IFY) is a modular Level 3 qualification that prepares students for first-year entry to a wide range of bachelor degree courses. Students take a combination of three modules appropriate for their intended degree course and NCUK's English for Academic Purposes for proof of English where needed.
- The NCUK Pre Masters Programme (PMP) provides specialised English for Academic Purposes (EAP) training and an introduction to the research skills needed for success at Master's level.
- The NCUK International Year One programmes (IYOne) in Business and Engineering are first year undergraduate degree level equivalent programmes that articulate into the second year of selected undergraduate degree courses at NCUK Universities. The IYOne can be combined with the IFY to form a 2+2 study programme.

## Our UK Partners

The following 16 UK universities are at the core of NCUK's offer to students:

Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Bradford, University of Huddersfield, University of Kent, Kingston University, University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Salford, Sheffield Hallam University, University of Sheffield, and Queen Mary (University of London).

NCUK qualifications are recognised by universities worldwide. Those within the expanded network include additional partners in the UK, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Canada and the Caribbean.

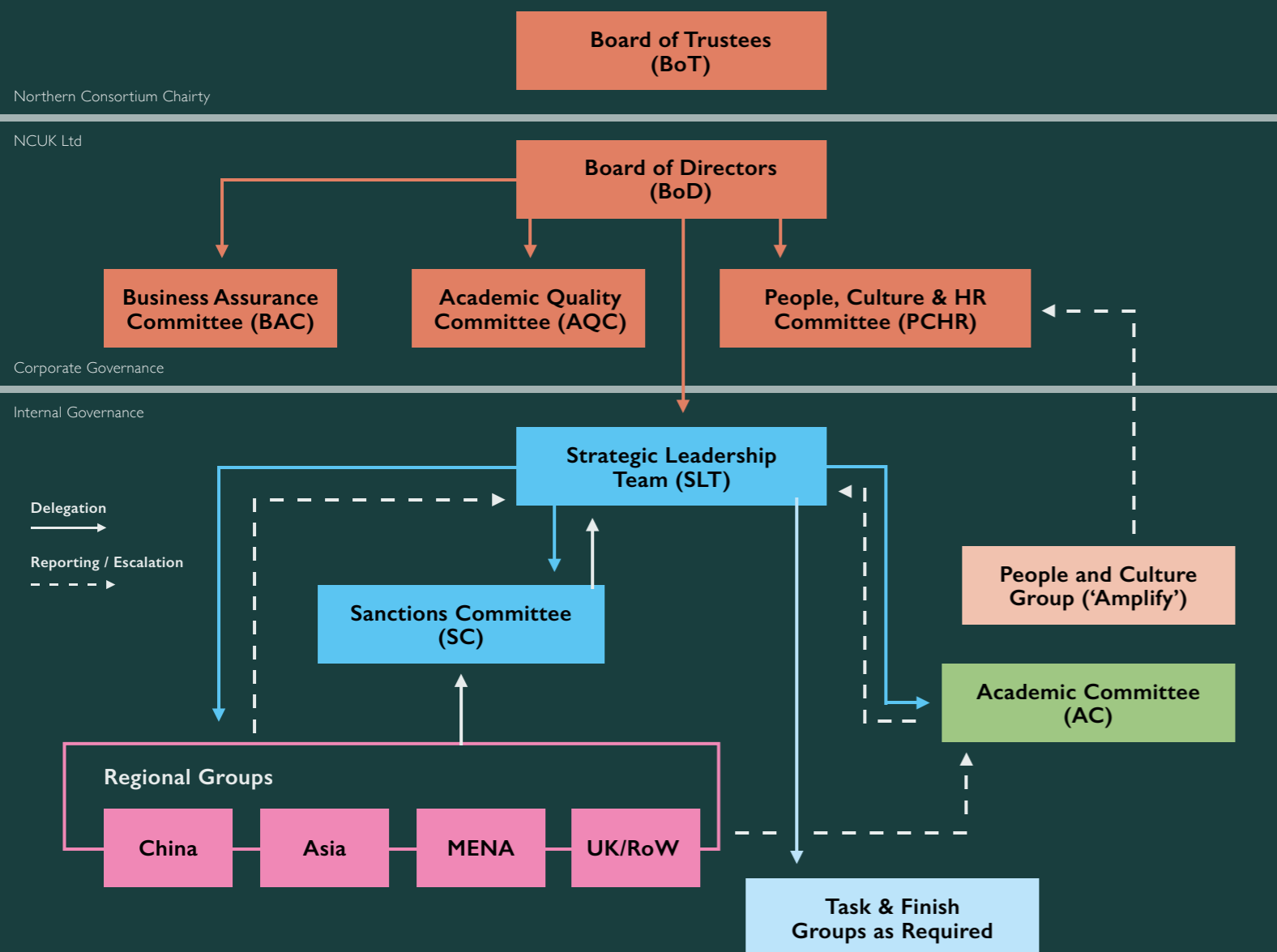
## Our Business Model

NCUK raises revenue through three main sources:

- Annual operating fees from delivery partners;
- Registration fees, paid by delivery partners for each student registered on an NCUK qualification; and
- Commission payments from universities for placement of students onto university courses.

The company has an annual turnover of approximately £5 million. More detailed financial and academic performance information will be provided for short-listed candidates.

## Our Structure



### NCUK Directors

The NCUK Board of Directors has a wealth of experience from a range of commercial backgrounds and higher education institutions. The current Directors are Carl Stychin, Arfan Ismail, Andy Micklethwaite, Jenifer Moody, Jason Andrews, Merryl Webster and Stuart Smith.

### NCUK Staff

NCUK employs a team of approximately 65 permanent staff and buys in services from around 75 external contractors, particularly for academic development and examination activities. Following COVID-19 and a complete move to remote working, the organisation has since switched to hybrid working (remote first) with flexible premises in Manchester which provide a base. The organisation also has a team based in a representative office in Beijing, China as well as in a newly established hub in Malaysia.

## Our Ambition

NCUK's not-for-profit ownership and core values (Agile, Bold, Connected, Committed, Driven, Expert) distinguish it, in an increasingly competitive and commercial sector. NCUK has bold plans for growth and is currently making considerable investment in digital infrastructure to support its continued success. The staff team and the company's finances have recently been reorganised and the organisation is both well positioned and focused on achieving its considerable potential.

### Charitable Objectives, Structure and Governance

NCUK Ltd is wholly owned by Northern Consortium (NC), a registered Charity founded by ten Northern UK Universities. NC and NCUK form the NC 'group' of companies. NCUK supports the Charity's ability to fulfil its objects – the advancement of education – through provision of educational programmes and associated services. NCUK benefits from strong support and close relationships with those founding universities.

Additionally, NCUK provides NC with funds to distribute in pursuit of its charitable objectives via its grant strategy which provides funding to charities delivering educational programmes and activities within the communities of the [founder]member universities. NC also funds research into areas which align with its strategic aims, such as, for example, the benefits of overseas programmes for students from widening participation backgrounds, and the equity agenda within the higher education sector. NC member universities recognise the value of international experience in the global jobs market, and that finance can be a barrier to access, particularly for students from lower socioeconomic groups. NC supports universities' international and 'widening participation' activities, to enable increased access to the educational and social benefits of international experience.

NC's Board of Trustees oversee the group's strategy, fulfilment of its charitable objectives and public benefit obligations. The Board of Trustees comprises nine Consortium Trustees (who are nominated by the founder Universities) and four external Trustees (who are appointed by the Trustees).

NCUK's Executive reports to a supportive and engaged Board of Directors with expertise in higher education and international business. A set of stakeholder groups support engagement across the NCUK network, between delivery partners, universities and across the sector.



# Vision, Mission and Values

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## **Our Vision**

NCUK is a provider of high-quality qualifications which offer a pathway to leading universities for students worldwide.

## **Our Mission**

To expand access to world leading education for aspirational students worldwide and support them to succeed.

## **Our Values**

*Agile:* We respond to market demand pro-actively and creatively to maximise quality, reputation and impact.

*Bold:* We believe in our capabilities and innovate to achieve ambitious goals.

*Connected:* We are dedicated to building a global NCUK community with a shared vision for success.

*Committed:* We are committed to the pursuit of quality for our partners, students and the business.

*Driven:* We are committed to our goals in the long term and progressing towards them each day.

*Expert:* We are experts in our field, and confidently apply our deep sector knowledge to realise our mission.

# The Role

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## **Objective:**

The prime objective for the Chair is to lead and direct the business to achieve its core objective of advancing education in an efficient and effective way in accordance with its strategic and business plans with due accountability and responsiveness to its stakeholders.

To do this the Chair will lead, guide and hold the Board and executive officers to account for NCUK's mission and objectives, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Directors, ensuring that all Directors fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation. The Chair will support, and, where appropriate, challenge, the executive officers and ensure that the Board functions as a unit and works closely with the executive officers to agree and work towards strategic aims and achieve agreed objectives. Specifically, the Chair will act as line manager to the Chief Executive in terms of objective setting, critical challenge and support.

The Chair is the primary liaison between NCUK and its owner [the charity] Northern Consortium and acts as an ambassador of the company. The Chair will report to the Trustees of NC (during their two annual meetings and at other times as required) providing information to support them to discharge their duties as the owner/shareholder.

## **PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Strategic leadership:

- Provide leadership to the NCUK Board, ensuring that the organisation delivers maximum impact for its customers, partners, staff and stakeholders.
- Ensure that NCUK operates as a successful commercial enterprise in accordance with its objectives and those set by its charity owner, Northern Consortium.
- Develop a clear vision for the future of NCUK and work with the Chief Executive to deliver this and provide a clear strategic direction for the organisation\*.
- Ensure that NCUK can work effectively within a rapidly changing HE landscape.
- Support and facilitate NCUK's digital transformation journey.
- Monitor the effective implementation of the Business Plan and Budget.
- Ensure that Non-Executive Directors fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation.
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Directors.
- Be responsible for the appointment and performance management of the Chief Executive.

\*NCUK has an agreed strategic plan which it is working to at present

## **Governance:**

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the organisation.
- Appraise the performance of the Non-Executive Directors on a regular basis (at least bi-annually) by facilitating an annual/biennial evaluation of Board effectiveness
- Ensure that the Board regularly reviews a) that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and b) the management and mitigation of risk.
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by NCUK.
- Encourage positive change where appropriate and address and resolve any conflicts within the Board.
- Liaise with the Trustees of the Northern Consortium and manage the relationship between NCUK and the Northern Consortium on behalf of NCUK.
- Report, as required, to the Trustees.

## **External Relations**

- Act as an ambassador for NCUK.
- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate.
- Represent NCUK at external functions, meetings and events from time to time.
- Facilitate change and address any potential conflict with external stakeholders.

## **Efficiency and effectiveness**

- Set agendas for board meetings in consultation with the executive officers and other Non-Executive Directors.
- Chair and facilitate board meetings, give direction, and monitor whether decisions taken at meetings are implemented.
- Chair meetings of the Board of Directors effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process.
- Ensure that Non-Executive Directors are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of NCUK and that the Board takes collective ownership
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Non-Executive Directors, and between the Board and the executive.
- Ensure timely and regular communication to Trustees on any matters arising for their consideration or approval.

## **Relationship with the NCUK Executive Officers**

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the executive officers, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives.
- Support the executive officers, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the roles.
- Ensure regular contact with the executive officers and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges.
- Liaise with the executive officers to maintain an overview of NCUK's affairs, providing support, as necessary.

## **Equality & Diversity**

- Promote and monitor equality and diversity legislation, policy, practice and legislation.
- Promote good practice in equality and diversity

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

In addition to the qualities required of a Non-Executive Director of NCUK, the Chair must also meet the following requirements:

### **Personal Qualities**

- Demonstrate a strong and visible commitment to NCUK's mission, values and strategic objectives.
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role.
- Good, independent judgement, and the ability to think creatively in the context of the organisation and external environment.
- Demonstrate (and foster in the team) drive, enthusiasm, and vision.
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively.
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of NCUK.
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment.
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel, face-to-face contact, and attending events out of office hours.
- Availability to regularly meet with the executive officers to be accessible for discussions and responsive.

### **Experience**

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level.
- An understanding of international higher education is desirable.
- Successful track record of achievement through their career.
- Experience of business transformation or major change programmes.
- Experience of good corporate governance and management and working with or as part of a Board of Directors.
- An understanding of working with and/or governance of charities is desirable.
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders.
- Significant experience of chairing meetings and events.

### **Knowledge and skills**

- A provable track record of personal contribution to the development and success of a commercial enterprise preferably operating in the international sphere.
- Evidence of the ability to successfully use and exploit transferable skills.
- Broad understanding of higher education and current issues affecting it.
- Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate staff, partners and stakeholders and bring people together.
- Commercial financial management expertise.
- Good understanding of governance.



## How to apply

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Anderson Quigley is acting as an advisor to NCUK, an executive search process is being carried out by Anderson Quigley in addition to the public advertisement.

The closing date for applications is **Thursday 05 September 2024**.

Applications should be made by submitting a full and updated CV, with a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4.

Your supporting statement should give evidence of how you meet the requirements of the person specification relating to the role as well as outline your motivation to join NCUK.

Along with your application, please include:

- Contact details for your referees (who will not be contacted without your permission)
- A contact email address and telephone number.

All applications should be uploaded via AQ's website at [www.andersonquigley.com](http://www.andersonquigley.com) (Ref: AQ2709). At the point of uploading your application, you will be asked to complete the equal opportunities monitoring form, with the option not to disclose should you wish.

Should you wish to discuss further details about the role in strict confidence, please contact Helene Usherwood at [helene.usherwood@andersonquigley.com](mailto:helene.usherwood@andersonquigley.com) or +44 (0)7719 322 669, or Elyse Turner-Pearce at [elyse.turner-pearce@andersonquigley.com](mailto:elyse.turner-pearce@andersonquigley.com) or +44 (0)7808 648 559.

### IMPORTANT DATES TO BE AWARE OF:

If longlisted for a preliminary interview, with Anderson Quigley, these will take place via Teams between 09 – 20 September 2024.

If shortlisted for a final panel interview, these will take place on Tuesday 15 October 2024 and will consist of a formal panel interviews (face to face).

## Terms of appointment

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### *Role Reference AQ2709*

An honorarium of £12,456 is attached to the position. The Chair & Directors terms of office are for a three-year period and are subject to a maximum of three terms (of three years).

NCUK hold in person Board Meetings usually in Manchester. The Directors meet 4 times a year and hold an annual strategy/away day too.

NC hold three meetings per year in Manchester, and the Chair and Chief Executive are invited to attend.