

Position Description

Vice Chancellor and President – Adelaide University

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Vice Chancellor and President

Position details

Employment type	Executive Contract – Fixed Term
Portfolio	Office of the Vice Chancellor
Reports to	Adelaide University Council, through the Chancellor
Direct reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor• Deputy Vice Chancellor - Academic• Deputy Vice Chancellor - Corporate• Deputy Vice Chancellor - Indigenous• Deputy Vice Chancellor - International and External Engagement• Deputy Vice Chancellor - People and Culture• Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research and Innovation• Deputy Vice Chancellor - Student Engagement and Success• Executive Director Office of the Vice Chancellor
Key external stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alumni• Australian Commonwealth Government• Australia's Group of Eight research intensive universities• Business and Industry Partners• Philanthropic Donors• South Australian community leaders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and leaders• South Australian State Government• Universities Australia

Role purpose

The Vice Chancellor and President (***Vice Chancellor***) of ***Adelaide University*** is the chief executive officer of the newly created ***Adelaide University***, providing inspiring leadership through the University's transformation phase and institutional oversight to propagate a high-performance culture that delivers exceptional outcomes. This role is pivotal in realising the benefits and strong transformational opportunities presented by the amalgamation of The University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia (foundation universities). The Vice Chancellor will build a distinctive institutional culture, deliver and implement against agreed and emerging strategic priorities. In addition, the Vice Chancellor will harmonise operational policies, practices, and systems to capitalise on the creation of a new university with a nation-leading comprehensive curriculum, an outstanding student experience, and world-class research excellence – towards delivery of a transformed enterprise that sustainably ranks ***Adelaide University*** among the world's top 100 universities.

As set out in the *Adelaide University Act 2023*, the Vice Chancellor is the principal academic and chief executive officer and is accountable to the Adelaide University Council for maintaining academic standards, effective management and administration of ***Adelaide University***, ensuring alignment with its mission and vision.

Working collaboratively with the members of the Adelaide University Council, its Committees and Academic Board, the Vice Chancellor will be responsible for delivering the institution's transformative strategies.

The Vice Chancellor will embrace the challenge of leading Australia's new comprehensive public university and be responsible for the fiscally sustainable realisation of the agreed goals articulated in the University's Strategic Ambition and Direction 2024-2034, bringing the necessary skills, focus, energy and determination for this purpose. To achieve the Strategic Ambition and Direction 2024-2034, the Vice Chancellor must inspire and engage a newly formed community of colleges, staff, and students, and engage with the wider community, demonstrating strong strategic thinking and problem-solving capabilities.

In addition to having an open and constructive working relationship with Council, the Vice Chancellor will establish and model the highest personal integrity and professional standards for ***Adelaide University's*** services, operations, administration, governance, and culture.

About Adelaide University

Adelaide University is Australia's new public comprehensive university. By combining the strengths of the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide, ***Adelaide University*** will, as a new member of Australia's Group of Eight research intensive universities, deliver a nation-leading comprehensive curriculum, an outstanding student experience, and create world-class partnered research excellence. Opening its doors for the first time in January 2026, ***Adelaide University*** strives to be both proven and audacious and will immediately rank among the world's very best young universities from Day One of its operation.

Adelaide University's decadal ambitions are set out in our strategic plan, *Adelaide University: Our Strategic Ambition and Direction 2024-2034*. Through our ambition, we will drive the innovation and scale needed to make transformational investments for South Australia and beyond. We are building a future-focused, for purpose university, committed to achieving

greater access to education, transforming lives and livelihoods, and breaking the cycle of inequality through flexible entry, pathways, scholarships, and dedicated student support.

Our founding legislation appropriately recognises the significance and innovation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and makes provision for **Adelaide University** to be Australia's first tertiary education institution to have a legislated Aboriginal name. We will meaningfully embed First Nations knowledges into our curricula through purposeful collaborations with Elders, Aboriginal communities, and knowledge holders.

We will shape a contemporary university that is connected to priority industries, producing graduates that are highly sought after around the world. Adelaide University will embed work integrated learning and enhance employability throughout the student experience. A new university of global standing sustainably ranked among the world's top 100 universities, **Adelaide University** will create brighter futures for contemporary learners and global citizens which, along with partnered future-making research of scale, excellence and focus, will strengthen our prosperity and propel the next generation of leaders towards their own significant 'firsts'.

Our values

Adelaide University's values create a shared purpose and understanding of who we are, what we stand for, and how we act.

The values will guide us every day as we strive to achieve our strategic aspirations. Each value has been brought to life through an accompanying descriptor that will guide our behaviours and interactions with each other, our students and partners.

- **Trust:** We trust one another, and are trusted, by the community we serve.
- **Inclusivity:** We are consciously inclusive.
- **Ambition:** Together we are bold and energetic in our pursuit of excellence.
- **Respect:** We are respectful in all that we do.
- **Discovery:** We are inquisitive and challenge the status quo.



Trust

We are authentic in our interactions and act with integrity and reliability.



Inclusivity

We embrace the uniqueness of each member of our community.



Ambition

Together, we are bold and energetic in our pursuit of excellence.



Respect

We listen and learn through respectful dialogue and debate.



Discovery

We move beyond boundaries with curiosity and innovation.

Principal responsibilities

Strategic leadership and impact

- Drive and deliver the **Adelaide University** Transformation Agenda against its Strategic Ambition and Direction 2024-2034 to provide focus and cohesion across the institution and position it for success as it establishes itself in operation from 2026.

- Build on the institution's strong foundational financial position and chart the course for continued prosperity through financially sustainable growth and diverse revenue streams, resolutely determining the University's priorities and goals and the strategic investment of resources to achieve them.
- Champion those opportunities that will serve to heighten the economic prosperity and social cohesion of South Australia and create a better Australia through impactful and engaged partnerships.
- Lead the institutional strategy to significantly increase participation on campus and online as Australia's largest domestic higher education provider and enact strategies and systems to enhance student success through deliberate investments that extend access and equity of opportunity.
- Steer the recognition and strengthening of Aboriginal peoples and knowledges across all facets of the University's operations and services through deep, meaningful engagement and collaboration.
- Build a compelling value proposition to leverage a network of over 400,000 existing alumni from the foundation universities and develop a connected and cohesive **Adelaide University** alumni identity and offering.
- Lead innovative advancement campaigns and donor engagement strategies to enhance the institutional reputation, connection and endowment corpus while also generating new income streams to support the University to achieve its ambitions.
- Be approachable and visible, fostering collaboration by engaging with individuals at all levels - both within **Adelaide University** and across external boundaries.
- Implement a comprehensive framework for measuring and evaluating the impact of strategic initiatives, ensuring accountability and transparency in achieving **Adelaide University's** goals.
- Sponsor diversity, equity, and inclusion within the **Adelaide University** community, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes.
- Foster a strong, united, and collaborative Vice Chancellor's Executive Leadership Group (VCELG) that drives delivery against **Adelaide University's** strategic vision and enhances institutional effectiveness.

Academic excellence and purpose

- Drive connections between education, research, industry, and the wider community, implementing the new University's unique attainment model as the cornerstone of a contemporary and comprehensive curriculum to meet the needs of lifelong learners, and leveraging the scale of the institution through disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Foster a culture of academic innovation and excellence by encouraging engagement in cutting-edge research and the adoption of best practices in teaching and learning methodologies.
- Catalyse the potential of **Adelaide University's** research strengths to generate globally relevant impact, outcomes and enterprise through a culture of research translation, meeting the needs of communities both across Australia and internationally.

- Set and ensure the highest standards of academic quality, integrity and enquiry, and scholarship, positioning **Adelaide University** as a pre-eminent teaching, learning and research institution.
- Gear the institution to deliver inspiring work integrated learning and an outstanding student experience, ensuring **Adelaide University** students are equipped with future-facing capabilities and always provided with an inclusive and safe campus and online learning environment as well as world class facilities.

Operational leadership and governance

- Lead, coach, and collaborate with members of the VCELG to strengthen the integration of education, research, and services creating a culture of operational and service excellence and high performance.
- Set the expectation for and ensure compliance with **Adelaide University's** strategic, policy, and risk frameworks, registration and accreditation requirements, and legislative obligations while modelling the highest professional and academic standards.
- Oversight the operational efficacy and efficiency of **Adelaide University's** operating models ensuring appropriate consistency of structures, ways of working and delegated authorities, that enable organisational agility and integrity of services.
- Through the VCELG, establish clear performance metrics and accountability frameworks for all operational areas, ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reported to stakeholders.
- Implement risk management strategies that proactively identify and mitigate potential challenges, ensuring **Adelaide University** is prepared for unforeseen circumstances.
- Promote transparency and ethical decision-making in all operational processes, ensuring that governance practices align with **Adelaide University's** values and mission.
- Commit to and create a culture of continuous improvement and renewal to build organisational capacity to anticipate and respond to external influences and challenges that will ensure the resilience and future trajectory of the University.

Change leadership

- Facilitate the evolution of a strong, distinct and new shared **Adelaide University** cultural identity by leading initiatives which build from the cultures of the foundation universities and promote shared vision and values which foster unity and collaboration among college, staff and students.
- Ensure the establishment of a robust communication plan to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged throughout delivery of the University's transformation agenda, ensuring transparency and addressing concerns effectively.
- With the VCELG, develop and execute change management strategies that facilitate the transformation deliverables of the new institution, ensuring that all staff and students are supported throughout, without diminution of experience or outcomes.
- Establish metrics and evaluation processes to assess the effectiveness of the integration, adjusting as necessary, to ensure the University meets its strategic goals.

- Build and enhance partnerships with industry, government, and other educational institutions to create opportunities for collaboration, funding, and resource sharing that benefit the University.

People and culture

- Attract and retain the highest performing talent by providing best in class facilities, flexible working practices, enabling policies, an inclusive and safe working environment, and a commitment to ‘culture first’ institutional strategies that enable **Adelaide University’s** people to fulfil their potential.
- Connect people to the vision and ambition of the University and oversee the development of strategies that enable collegiality, collaboration, and growth to lift **Adelaide University’s** performance, nurture innovation, drive its competitiveness and generate pride in what **Adelaide University** stands for.
- Set clear expectations that all members of the **Adelaide University** community will uphold the University’s core values in all aspects of their work and interactions with colleagues, students, partners, and stakeholders.
- Ensure **Adelaide University** delivers on its Employer Brand by scaffolding co-creation at the heart of the institution’s practice, ensuring the voices of our staff and students are actively encouraged and responded to, and that their achievements are always appropriately celebrated.
- Ensure that all staff, students, and partners of the institution embrace diversity as an engine of innovation and aspiration. Personally promote a commitment to harnessing Aboriginal knowledges and the development of cultural awareness, mutual respect, and recognition as a hallmark of the **Adelaide University** institutional culture.
- Set the expectation that a physically and virtually safe environment in which to work and study is a key priority for which all **Adelaide University** community members take responsibility.

Advocacy and external engagement

- Earn the support of the University community as a trusted and authentic leader who champions their institution and its success.
- Play a leadership role in the higher education sector to ensure that **Adelaide University’s** interests are effectively represented, by collaborating with network partners, alumni and other universities, engaging with, and influencing government, and being a leading voice in discussions on Australian higher education policy.
- Establish and maintain credibility within the higher education sector globally.
- Promote and bolster the profile and future standing of **Adelaide University** by building on the strengths of the foundation institutions and pursuing and cultivating State, national and international partnerships aligned to **Adelaide University’s** mission and vision.
- Represent the institution in advocating for universities and the future direction of higher education policy in Australia as a member of the Group of Eight research intensive universities, Universities Australia, and across the wider community.

Key selection criteria

Qualifications

- A recognised higher degree and an outstanding record of scholarship or recognised professional standing and profile.

Role-specific requirements

- An extensive and evidenced track record of successful inspirational and visionary strategic leadership and executive management and the capability to execute and deliver in a multi-faceted, complex environment of comparable scale and context.
- Successful leadership of transformational change at a whole of institution level to enhance performance, prosper strategic intent, and deliver tangible benefits and outcomes.
- Proven aptitude and skills to build a cohesive and constructive culture together with a physically and psychologically safe working and learning environment.
- A proven track record of inspiring teamwork and shared ownership through effective delegation and engagement. Evidence of a personal commitment to discovery and intellectual enquiry and proven ability to build the respect of academic colleagues and to foster and enable academic and intellectual freedom within a comprehensive institution.
- Demonstrated understanding of the global higher education sector's complexities, opportunities, challenges, and competitive tensions, along with the confidence to navigate them, ensuring **Adelaide University** is positioned and remains in the top 100 of universities worldwide.
- Demonstrated strong commercial acumen, evidenced ability to diversify, generate and grow revenue streams, proven fiscal probity and a record of extensive experience and delivery in strategic planning, management, and administration.
- Demonstrated track record of successful institutional level decision-making and prioritisation across people, financial, and commercial considerations that leads to organisational performance and prosperity.
- Evidenced substantial success in leading or partnering with complex research institutions and in embedding research translation that delivers social impact and commercialisation opportunities.
- Track record of successful fundraising and expanding philanthropic donations together with proactive donor and alumni engagement.
- Exceptional advocacy and communication skills, and demonstrably able to act as a credible voice capable of influencing policy and forming partnerships across government and industry by effectively considering multiple perspectives.
- Demonstrated authenticity, integrity, resilience, dynamism, and commitment to being a visible role model for Adelaide University's core values, upholding the highest ethical standards in leadership.

- Evidence of commitment to, and demonstrated respect for, First Nations Peoples and Indigenous knowledges and diversity, equity and inclusion resulting in tangible outcomes.
- Demonstrably responsive to feedback, personally resilient and tenacious with a proven capacity to navigate uncertainty and complexity through the highest levels of self-management.

Application process

Adelaide University is being supported in this global search by executive search partner, Korn Ferry.

For a confidential discussion about this rare opportunity, please contact Dr Courtenay Atwell on +61 403 553 836 or at adelaideuniversityvc@kornferry.com

Please do not provide original documents as part of your application.

Timelines

The closing date for applications is ***Tuesday 18 March 2025***.

Confidentiality

All applications and personal data will remain confidential. For more information, please email adelaideuniversityvc@kornferry.com

Resources

[Adelaide University Strategic Ambition and Direction 2024-2034](#)

[Adelaide University Corporate Brochure](#)

[Adelaide University Act 2023](#)

