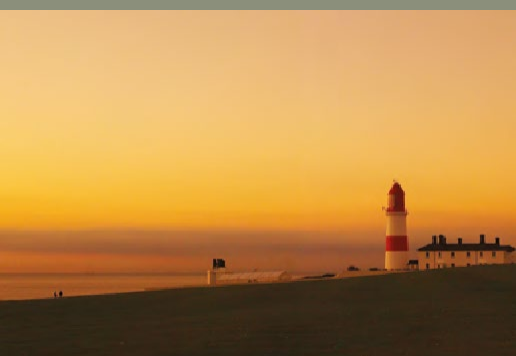




**University of
Sunderland**

Appointment of
**Academic Head of
Sunderland Online**

May 2023



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Dear Candidate

Thank you for expressing an interest in the role of Academic Head of Sunderland Online at the University of Sunderland, and I hope the information set out in this document provides you with insight into the opportunity to enable you to consider further.

Right from our inception, the University of Sunderland has been committed to producing graduates who positively shape society, while reducing the persistent economic and social inequalities facing communities, not only at our University campuses (in Sunderland, London and Hong Kong), but for our Sunderland Online students (in partnership with Higher Ed Partners), our Independent Distance Learning (IDL) students, and our many students at multiple Transnational Educational (TNE) partners around the world. It is this twin purpose that has earned Sunderland its reputation as a “life- changing” university and a truly global institution. The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide named Sunderland as the 2021 University of the Year for Social Inclusion, and we were also shortlisted for the University of the Year in the 2022 Times Higher Education awards.

The role of Academic Head of Sunderland Online is new to the University. It has been created to oversee the delivery of the University’s strategic ambitions for learning and teaching through excellent student experience in online education. Specifically providing strategic leadership in the development of learning, teaching and assessment for students studying our Sunderland Online and IDL programmes, leading on relevant strategic and operational initiatives designed to improve student outcomes, including retention, attainment and progression to employment.

Our Sunderland Online and IDL provision is extensive and growing. Currently, Sunderland Online provision encompasses three faculties in the areas of Business, Management, Nursing, Computer Science and Psychology. It includes 16 postgraduate programmes and one undergraduate programme (BSc Nursing Top Up). IDL comprises ten programmes, all currently within the Faculty of Education and Society, including PGCE, Postgraduate Certificate and MA awards. Our online students are a global student body, studying both within the UK and in many different locations across the world. With this in mind, it is an exciting point in our journey, and we are seeking an Academic Head who will enhance our provision and provide strategic leadership to ensure an excellent student experience and student outcomes.

Sunderland Online has Executive oversight from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Commercial). Your role will sit within the Learning and Teaching service area, which is led by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching). You will work closely with myself as Academic Director for Educational Partnerships, with the central Sunderland Online unit, the Sunderland Online Manager, the programme teams in facilities, and our Online Instructors and markers. You will play a significant and strategic role in contributing to the development and implementation of the Student Success Plan for improved student outcomes for online students in line with the University’s Strategic Plan, values, and priorities.

I hope that you will join us on our journey, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely

Dr Helen Driscoll

Academic Director for Educational Partnerships

[Staff profile](#)



About the University of Sunderland

The University's **Strategic Plan** sets out our **purpose** and **ambitions**



Our **values** guide our **behaviours**



Inspiring – we provide a supportive, empowering and enriching experience for our staff and students



Innovative – we value people for their creativity and update our knowledge and practice to enhance the student experience



Collaborative – we work together as a community with our partners and build lasting relationships to achieve our shared ambitions



Inclusive – we celebrate our diverse culture, which welcomes and values everyone's contribution



Seeking excellence – we strive for the highest quality in academic delivery, research and service standards

About us

At the University of Sunderland, we pride ourselves on being a life-changing university.

Our curriculum is career-focused and professions-facing, with work-based learning featuring strongly.

Whether it is doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, journalists, computer scientists or business leaders, we are training students who will help shape our everyday lives, communities and workplaces, not just here in the north east, but around the globe.

Championing social inclusion and diversity is at the heart of our strategy – we welcome people from all backgrounds to study here and support them to achieve their potential.

Working to shape the city of Sunderland, the north east region and the wider world, the University of Sunderland is proud of its positive contribution to economic and social change. Its graduates leave equipped with the knowledge, skills, confidence and connections to make a positive difference in the world.

In 2021, we were delighted to be shortlisted for the Times Higher Education's *University of the Year award*.

Our Global Reach

The University of Sunderland has a global community of 20,000 students, based at our campuses in Sunderland, London and Hong Kong, as well as learning partnerships in 15 different countries.

Our London campus, based in Canary Wharf, has over 4,400 students and celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2022.

Our IDL provision has been established for some years, and Sunderland Online was launched in 2020. We have around 2200 students currently across the provision, with plans for further growth.

Our Strategy

In 2020, the Board of Governors agreed a new five-year strategy for the University, which sets out our purpose and ambitions:

Student-focused

The University offers transformative experiences to talented students from all backgrounds. We have an excellent track record in attracting students from under-represented groups and raising aspirations at a local, regional and national level.

- 89% of our fee income is invested in student-facing developments and activities
- 156 nationalities are represented in our student population
- The University was named 'University of the Year for Social Inclusion' by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2021

Professions-facing

Our refreshed curriculum is focused on delivering ready to work graduates aligned to a particular employment sector, and we have introduced new programmes that respond to the changing health, social and cultural needs of society, including Special Educational Needs, disability, policing and music production.

- Students and staff have been in the frontline supporting the NHS and local schools during the pandemic
- A new multi-million-pound Cadaveric Centre opened in Sunderland in 2022, forming a vital part of the recently established School of Medicine, and playing a key role in training the next generation of medical professionals.
- We are the lead partner in a European Social Fund project worth £15m to develop the key skills of thousands of workers across the north east.

Society-shaping

As an anchor institution in the city of Sunderland, we are central to the collective local effort to bring about positive change in the city and wider region; and are a key driver of culture-led regeneration, health sciences and innovation through our partnerships and investments in projects such as Sunderland Software City, Sunderland Culture and the National Glass Centre.

- We are in the top 10% of universities nationally for contributing to local growth and regeneration; and one of the top 30% of universities nationally on research partnerships
- We are a key member of Sunderland Partnership, which brings together public, private and voluntary sectors to collaborate for the benefit of the city.
- In 2021, we signed University UK's Knowledge Exchange Concordat and are committed to promote KE within the University and acting as a catalyst for collaboration with employers.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We believe that creating an inclusive and supportive culture is not only the right thing to do, but what is best for our community.

Not only does it make us better at understanding the needs of our students, but it also creates a sense of belonging that enables all our staff to perform at their best.

Inclusivity is a value at the heart of what we do and we want all our staff to be part of that journey with us.

Watch our new film "Think Sunderland" [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLia-bH7G4)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLia-bH7G4>

Our teaching

Our excellent teaching is informed by research and engagement with employers, ensuring our graduates are equipped with the skills required to succeed in their chosen career or path to further study. Several of our academics have been recognised as National Teaching Fellows in acknowledgement of their outstanding impact on student learning and teaching. We have established a Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) to support our academics in their continuous professional development. The work of CELT was vital in supporting and enabling staff when teaching and assessment moved online overnight, in response to the Covid-19 lockdown. to support our academics in their continuous professional development.

Our Academic Deans are engaged with new developments in the area of inter-disciplinary learning as we work to deliver programmes of relevance for our graduates of the future.

Our Student Success Strategy includes integrated plans to ensure the best possible success and progression outcomes for graduates. The strategy has specific objectives to improve:

- student retention and completion rates
- the proportion of students achieving good honours – particularly reducing the differentiation between categories of students
- the levels of student engagement to build student confidence
- graduate employability outcomes

A set of challenging key performance indicators underpin the ambitions outlined in the strategy.

Our research

Research inspires and drives our academic community; it delivers outstanding outcomes for the student experience and plays an influential supporting role in developing economies and societies regionally, nationally and globally.

We have a strong focus on applied research that responds to the needs of real-life issues in the economy, in culture and society. Our research stands out because it is relevant and responsive, as well as inclusive and collaborative.

In 2017, we announced a new Research and Innovation Strategy with the launch of research institutes closely aligned to our academic departments. These institutes lead faculty research ensuring it is relevant and informs our curriculum which in turn benefits our students. Each Institute brings together a number of research themes, encouraging multidisciplinary collaborations as well as innovation around the boundaries of specific subjects.

www.sunderland.ac.uk/more/research

Download the Report and Financial Statements 2021/2022

<https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/help/corporate-legal/legal-finance/financial-reports/>

More information available on our website www.sunderland.ac.uk

- 1 Centre for Enterprise and Innovation - Hope Street Xchange
- 2 David Goldman Building - Sir Tom Cowie Campus at St Peter'
- 3 CitySpace - City Campus
- 4 Prospect library
5. School of Pharmacy c.1930

Our history

With its long distinguished history, and a record of adaptability and agility, the University of Sunderland is recognised as one of the great, civic universities.

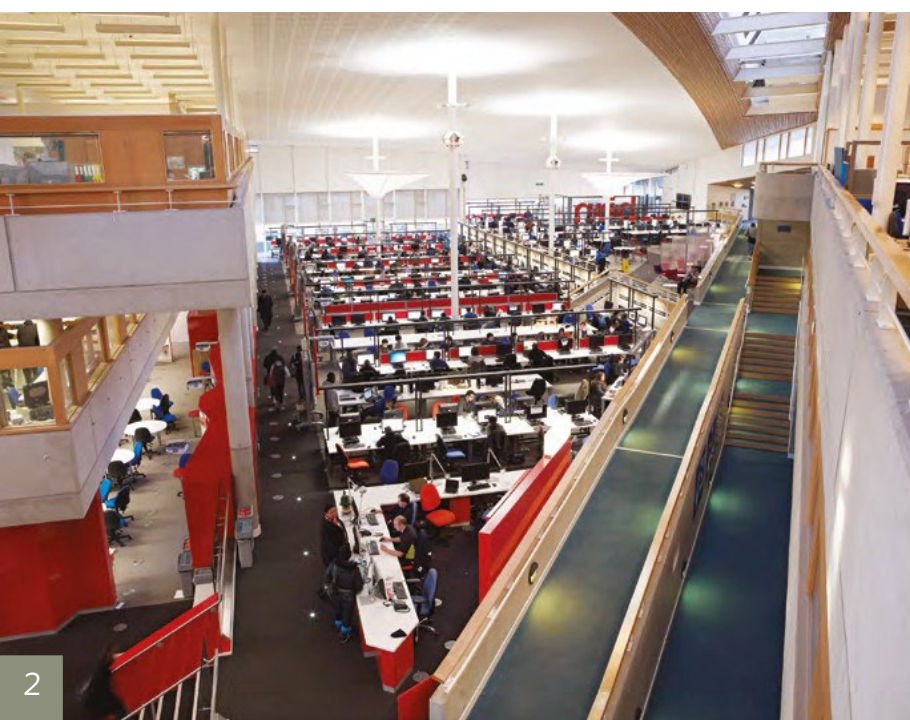
Our modern roots lie with Sunderland Technical College, which opened in 1901 in order to develop high-quality vocational programmes to support the regional skills needs for the 20th Century.

Pharmacy, a flagship area for the University, was introduced in 1921, and in 1934 Sunderland Technical College was recognised for its exemplary Bachelor of Engineering programme, the first in the country to offer placements as an integral part of the curriculum.

By 1959 ambitious plans for expansion were underway and in 1969 The Technical College, The School of Art, and Sunderland Teacher Training College were brought together and became Sunderland Polytechnic. In 1992 the Polytechnic was awarded university status and became the University of Sunderland.



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Sunderland prides itself on its inclusive and supportive culture.

Our work on equality, diversity, inclusivity and social responsibility has never been more important and we believe inclusivity is an essential value at the heart of what we do.

Here are some of the things we have been doing:

- Each year, campaigns such as Black History Month, International Women's Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, Pride, LGBT History month, along with a host of others, give us an opportunity to demonstrate our support to underrepresented groups and prompt discussion.
- We have introduced a variety of staff networks that have provided invaluable support and a sense of belonging for many people over the past year. The networks also helped create ideas that we could action.
- Our commitment to gender equality was highlighted through the awarding of an Athena SWAN bronze recognition to the University's School of Psychology. The Athena SWAN Charter, first established in 2005, is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research.
- We continue with our commitment to being a Disability Confident Employer. Through the Disability Confident campaign, the Government works with employers to challenge attitudes towards disability, remove barriers, and ensure that disabled people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

Read more at

<https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/about/about-the-university/equality-diversity-inclusion/>





City Space, City Campus

The role

Academic Head of Sunderland Online

We are looking for an Academic Head of Sunderland Online to support the Academic Director for Educational Partnerships in the delivery of the University's strategic ambitions for learning and teaching through excellent student experience. In particular, this new position will provide strategic leadership in the development of learning, teaching and assessment for students studying our Sunderland Online and Independent Distance Learning programmes across the globe.

This is an exciting opportunity for the right candidate to play a central role in helping all our students reach their potential.

The successful candidate will be required to

- Provide strategic academic leadership for all of the University's online provision, ensuring it delivers on ambitious targets for student experience and outcomes, maintaining exceptional quality across a range of online student provision, and informing financial sustainability.
- Ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to meaningfully capture and respond to the online Student Voice in a timely manner.
- Working with the Sunderland Online Manager, lead and manage academic operations across Faculties and services (including working with Programme Leaders, Module Leaders, Academic Registry and other professional services), for example, responding to student feedback, timely and smooth processing of assessment outcomes, progression decisions and awards, and effective external examiner support.
- In collaboration with Schools, Faculties, professional services and external partners effectively lead and manage high quality programme and module development and enhancement, adhering to specific timelines.
- Work with Faculties and Schools to ensure online provision is effectively designed and delivered in line with the University of Sunderland Curriculum principles, and embedding current best practice in online learning across the provision.
- Work with internal stakeholders and external partners (including Higher Ed Partners) to develop systems, policies and procedures which support the effective management and delivery of online provision.
- Ensure University strategies, priorities, policies and procedures are implemented effectively to support online provision.
- Utilise available data to recognise trends of programme success and high performance, along with data indicators of areas requiring development and action.
- Implement effective change to manage regulatory framework implications.
- Manage the programme review process to address issues, enhance provision and support success in key performance indicators.
- Work with other internal stakeholders to foster a positive and effective working relationship with Higher Ed Partners (HEP) in relation to the Sunderland Online provision.
- Foster a culture of inclusion and belonging in the Sunderland Online community, for staff and students.
- Work with internal and external stakeholders, to design and deliver effective staff development packages to enhance the delivery of distance learning provision.
- Be aware of the external landscape in relation to Higher Education and online, international, and transnational provision and advise internal stakeholders on associated opportunities and risks.
- Ensure up-to-date knowledge of current progress and trends in online, international, and transnational learning as relevant to the provision and apply this knowledge to enhance the provision.
- Work with the Academic Director for Educational Partnerships, internal stakeholders and external collaborators if relevant to develop impactful programmes of research relevant to the provision, for example, in online learning, transnational education, collaborative provision, internationalisation and sustainability.
- Support and deputise for the Academic Director for Educational Partnerships as and when required to support academic leadership in partnership provision.

The person

Essential and Desirable Criteria

Essential

Qualifications and Professional Membership:

- Relevant Postgraduate (or higher) qualification or equivalent professional qualification.
- Higher education teaching qualification / membership of the Higher Education Academy.

Knowledge and Experience

- Proven record of successful academic leadership in a large/complex organisation.
- Demonstrable experience of effective people management within an academic environment.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (written, presentation, oral) and demonstrable ability to communicate effectively with a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
- Experience of effectively chairing university meetings and Boards.
- Significant experience of higher education teaching, quality assurance and enhancement, curriculum design and review.
- Experience of the design and delivery of effective online programmes of study.
- Demonstrable understanding of evidence-based and current pedagogy and experience of its application to effective online programmes of study.
- Demonstrable understanding of effective curriculum design and support for international students.
- Good knowledge and understanding of the higher education environment, nationally and internationally, and the major influences on institutional success.
- Demonstrable understanding of regulatory environments in the UK and internationally, and their implications for online provision.
- Demonstrable experience of the accreditation processes and standards of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.
- High personal academic and/or professional standing in an area relevant to the provision

Desirable

Qualifications and Professional Memberships

- Senior Fellowship (or higher) of the Higher Education Academy

Knowledge and experience

- A demonstrable track record in academic research.
- A demonstrable track record in pedagogic research.
- Experience of effective project management within a Higher Education context.

Key Competencies

- Displays strong leadership and management skills, motivating others to achieve their potential.
- Ability to deliver organisational change in a challenging environment.
- Demonstrates honesty, loyalty and integrity.
- Takes ownership and displays resolve to be accountable for delivering against objectives.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with an ability to engage effectively and positively across a range of stakeholders.
- Displays self-confidence, demonstrating a 'can do' approach.
- Cultural awareness, intercultural competency and a high level of commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

Recruitment Timetable

Closing date: **16 June 2023**

Enquiring about the role

We encourage informal discussions regarding the role. Please contact Dr Helen Driscoll, Academic Director for Educational Partnerships at:

helen.driscoll@sunderland.ac.uk

www.sunderland.ac.uk

Welcome to Sunderland

Our city by the sea

Sunderland is a welcoming coastal city, offering an excellent quality of life...

Sitting on the beautiful north east coast at the mouth of the River Wear, our warm and friendly people are proud of their rich history - that stretches back to Anglo-Saxon times – and positive about the future.

Sunderland's wide sandy beaches with their big-sky views attract walkers, surfers, runners and cyclists to enjoy the fresh sea air; while the Marina Complex provides top-class facilities and friendly service all year round.

Our city boasts acres of green space and is close to wide, open countryside and urban attractions, with Newcastle, Durham and the North Yorkshire Moors on the doorstep. Over £1billion is being invested in exciting projects across the city, from the spectacular new Northern Spire bridge across the Wear and development of a vibrant cultural quarter near City Campus, to attractive new spaces for enjoying leisure time at the seafront. With more investment and ambitious plans in the pipeline, Sunderland is attracting (and enjoying) plenty of attention!

The former Chair of Arts Council England described the University of Sunderland as the “poster child” for driving economic regeneration through creativity and nowadays opportunities to enjoy culture are plentiful in Sunderland too.

With our Sunderland Culture partners we recently launched an ambitious seven-year, £60m project to build on the momentum and positive support generated through over the last few years around culture, incorporating themes of Light, Friendship and Inventiveness.

The Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art relocated to its new home at National Glass Centre.

Our busy retail centre offers plenty of places to eat and drink, including cosy pubs serving hearty food and cask ale, alongside independent restaurants, coffee shops and bars.

Sunderland is an affordable place to live and offers a great quality of life. It's a friendly city with ambition and a bright future – join us and be part of our story.

Getting here

Sunderland is connected to the rest of the UK by excellent road and rail links; and accessible by major airlines through nearby Newcastle International and Durham Tees Valley airports. Once you arrive, getting around is easy with plenty of local buses and the Tyne and Wear light rail, as well as a good network of cycle routes and public footpaths.

There are direct direct to Sunderland from London Kings Cross. The Metro service is an easy way to get around Sunderland and the north east. There



is a stop opposite City Campus and it takes approximately 25 minutes to travel in from central Newcastle.

For more information about everything Sunderland has to offer, check out the My Sunderland website:

mysunderland.co.uk

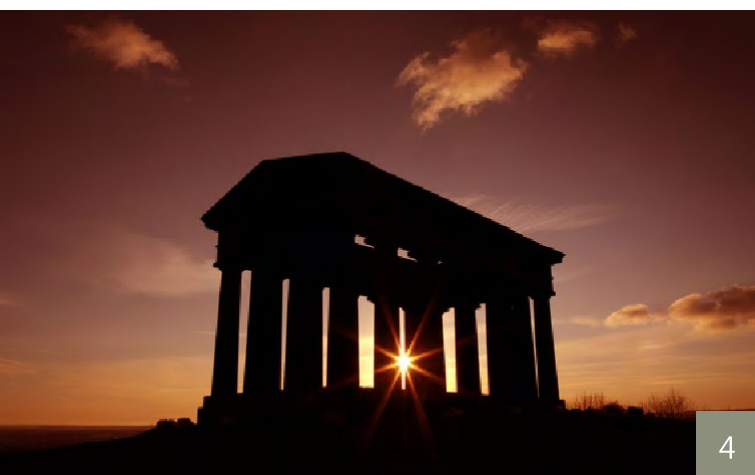
- 1 Seaburn Beach**
- 2 Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens**
- 3 New Northern Spire Bridge**
- 4 Penshaw Monument**
- 5 Tall Ships Races Sunderland**



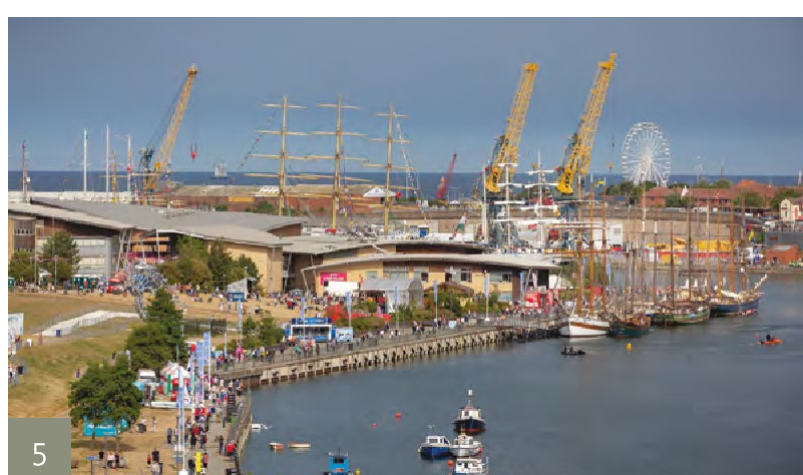
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Our University community



“Here at the University of Sunderland our ethos is that of inclusivity, giving people the chance to reach their full potential. We want our graduates to go on and be a force for change.”

Emeli Sandé MBE

Our University Chancellor (from July 2019)

“The principal reason I jumped at the chance to become Chancellor was because the University clearly shared the same fundamental belief in extending opportunities by widening access to university education.

“What the University of Sunderland has achieved in offering thousands upon thousands of people - who almost certainly would not have had (or in many cases sought) the chance - a truly life-changing experience - cannot adequately be put into words. I’m enormously proud to have played a small part in this achievement.”

David Puttnam - Lord Puttnam of Queensgate
Chancellor, University of Sunderland 1997-2007

“I’ve been lucky enough to do a job that I love and to feel like I’ve made an impact. We’ve made incredible progress in diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, and I am now more sure than ever that we will find a cure. I am increasingly thankful to the University of Sunderland for helping me start my journey. I love this place.”

Dr Andrew Singleton
Chief of the Laboratory of Neurogenetics at the National Institute on Aging, in Maryland, USA



“The University has clear plans to further enrich its impactful research and its innovative teaching and learning practice. Having seen it operate in these areas at close quarters for over a decade I am in no doubt whatsoever it will achieve its ambitions.”

Baroness Morris of Yardley
Pro-Chancellor

"I had a brilliant time at Sunderland and the support from the University was really helpful."

Katy McLean

BSc Sports Studies

World Cup winning England Women's Rugby Captain, Olympian and former primary school teacher



"Sunderland have excellent links with industry and their mix of purely academic lecturers, who can explain difficult and complex tasks and the importance of research, coupled with lecturers and staff more focused on real-world application, makes you feel ready and comfortable when you get into industry."

Blaine Huntington

BEng (Hons) Electronic and Electrical Engineering
Hitachi Rail Europe



"I love my job and I know none of it would have been possible without Sunderland."

Tolu Oyebanji

BSc Biomedical Science
Biomedical Scientist at Scarborough General Hospital



"I'm really proud of what I have achieved so far, and I can't thank Sunderland enough for getting me off to a great start."

Matt Riggs

BA Sports Journalism
Content Producer West Ham FC



"I'm not afraid to say I've worked hard to get where I am. To know that the University of Sunderland recognises that hard work shows how supportive they are."

Charlotte Knill

BSc (Hons) Computer Forensics
Digital Forensics Investigator and Alumni Achiever of the Year 2017



"The best four years of my life, Sunderland really prepared me for the real world."

Amy Orange

LLB Law
Family Paralegal



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