

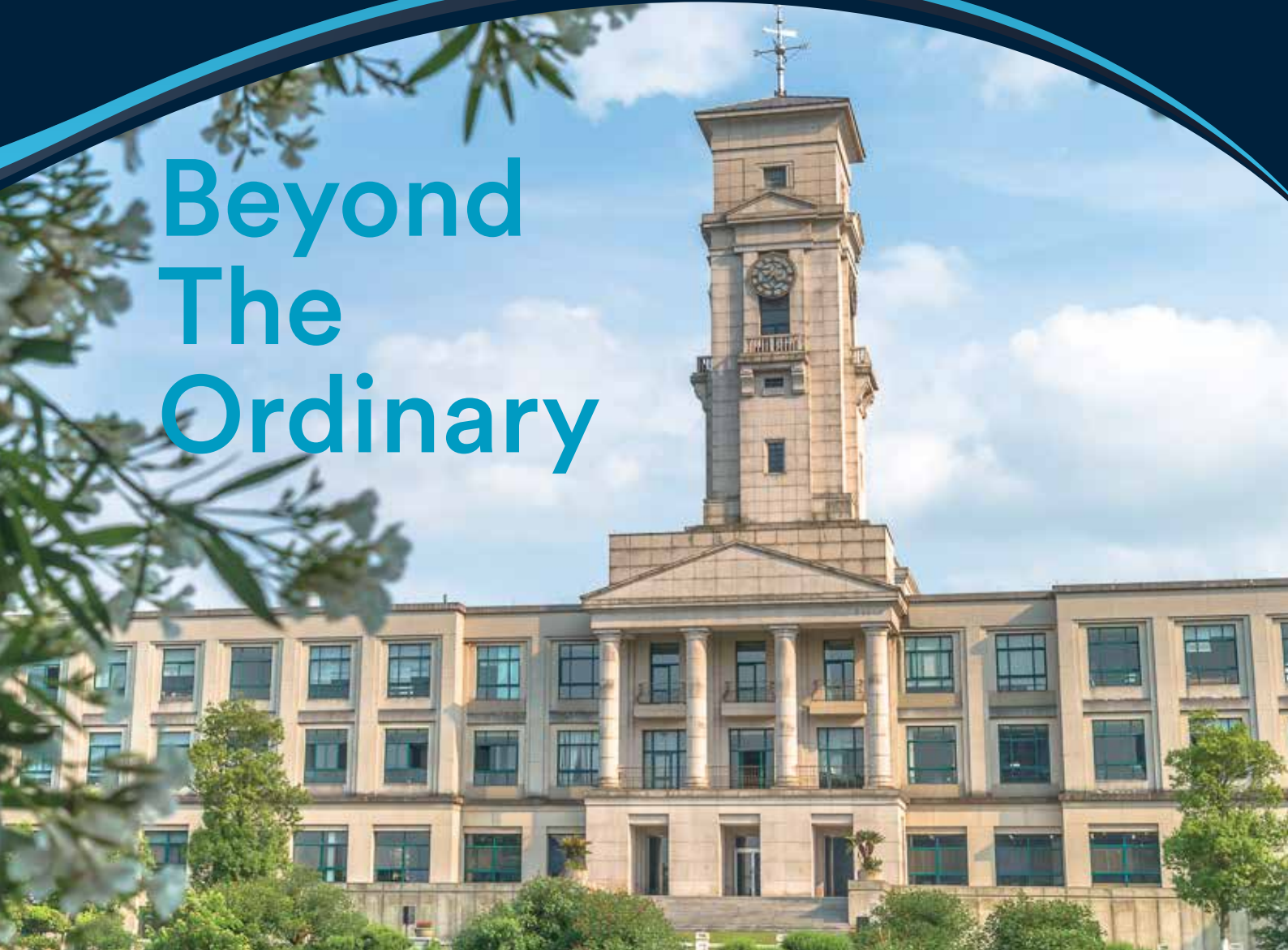


University of
Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

CANDIDATE[■] BROCHURE

Chief Operating and Strategy Officer

Beyond
The
Ordinary



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A WARM WELCOME



Professor Jon Garibaldi
Provost, University of Nottingham Ningbo China
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham

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hank you for your interest in applying for the role of Chief Operating and Strategy Officer at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.

At UNNC, we believe that operational excellence is the foundation upon which academic and research excellence is built. The COSO is a newly established role on our Management Board, designed to integrate and elevate our operational functions, ensuring they are agile, efficient, and aligned with our strategic goals.

This role will be instrumental in driving the implementation of our Strategic Roadmap to 2030, spanning six key themes including Education, Research, Global Engagement, People, Sustainability, and Infrastructure. We are seeking a leader who can navigate complexity, foster collaboration, and build a culture of continuous improvement and inclusivity.

If you are an operational leader with the vision to inspire change, the skill to execute strategy, and the passion to build a world-class university environment, we encourage you to apply.

I look forward to receiving your application and potentially welcoming you to our community.

WHO WE ARE

UNNC IN NUMBERS

1st

Sino-foreign University in China

1st

postdoctoral research station
among Sino-foreign universities

15

Research centres & institutes

1100+

Staff & teachers

9000+

Students

70+

Countries where staff & students
come from

UNNC AWARDS IN 2024-2025

World's Top 2% Scientists

Published by Stanford-Elsevier in 2024, 39 UNNC scholars were included in the single year database and 21 scholars in the career-long database of the World's Top 2% Scientists

Global Top 1% Subjects

UNNC has 6 subjects ranked in the top 1% of Essential Science Indicators (ESI) global rankings: Chemistry, Economics & Business, Engineering, Environment/Ecology, Materials Science, and Social Sciences, General.

Global Ranking Academic Subjects

Released by Shanghai Ranking in 2024, 7 subjects have been listed in the Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS).

Highly Cited Researchers

Released by Elsevier in 2024, 12 academics from UNNC were included in the "Highly Cited Chinese Researchers" list.

5 Stars Institution

UNNC was recognised as a 5 Stars institution according to the latest QS Stars Rating results. UNNC also received 5 Star scores in all nine participating categories.

LOOKING BEYOND

OUR VISION

Our vision is to be a university without borders, where we embrace the opportunities presented by a changing world, and where ambitious people and a creative culture will enable us to change the world for the better.

OUR MISSION

We have inspiring campuses in three countries, energising us to be a globally engaged university that is also committed to making a difference in our cities and regions.

We empower and support students and staff to collaborate in learning, scholarship and discovery across all realms of knowledge, solving problems and improving lives.

We are stewards of a pioneering and entrepreneurial tradition of creativity and innovation.

OUR VISION

We are a community where everyone can contribute and be appreciated for who they are.

Inclusivity

We set the highest standards for ourselves and our work and support each other to achieve them.

Ambition

We adopt a straightforward and transparent way of communicating with each other and with the world, championing the free exchange of ideas.

Openness

Our decisions and actions are consistent, impartial and ethical.

Fairness

We have regard for each other's rights and feelings, and demonstrate this in our behaviour, treating each other with kindness.

Respect

THE POSITION

Role Profile for Chief Operating and Strategy Officer

Job Title	Chief Operating and Strategy Officer
School/Department	Management Board
Job Family	Administrative, Professional and Managerial
Job Level	Scale B Level 7
Contract Status	Full time, fixed-term for 5 years. This contract may be extended based on mutual agreement.
Working Hour	Irregular working hours
Location	University of Nottingham Ningbo China
Responsible to	Provost & Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Nottingham Ningbo China

Purpose of role:

The Chief Operating and Strategy Officer (COSO) is a new and vital leadership role and a member of the Management Board (MB) of the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) designed to drive operational excellence, strategic growth, and a transformative culture. The COSO will play a pivotal strategic role in shaping, driving, and enhancing the university's operational effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The ideal candidate will bring extensive experience in higher education or similar industries, with a proven ability to navigate complex cultural and political dynamics while delivering sustainable change. This person will have a solid understanding of developing and/or implementing robust strategies that make UNNC a leading higher education institution in China.

The COSO will be a key architect of the university's future, combining sharp operational acumen with deep cultural and emotional intelligence to work collectively with other senior leaders at the University. The ideal candidate will serve as an operational strategic leader by ensuring that all decisions align with the university's values, ambitions, and our Strategic Roadmap to 2030. The candidate will play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of key objectives across the six themes: 'Education and Student Experience', 'Research and Knowledge Exchange', 'Global Engagement and Reputation', 'People and Culture', 'Sustainability' and 'Finance and Infrastructure'. The successful candidate will do this through supporting each member of Management Board responsible for the respective objectives by putting in accountability and supportive mechanisms that are informed by robust data driven approaches to enable successful advancement towards the Strategic Roadmap to 2030.

The successful candidate will lead strategic initiatives to enhance resource competitiveness, operational efficiency, and service excellence while championing organizational culture and values to elevate institutional prestige. By prioritizing operational cohesion, the COSO will deliver exceptional service to the university community while advancing strategic priorities and forging impactful corporate and civic collaborations that support academic excellence and service innovation.

The COSO will act as a trusted advisor to the Provost, working with Members of the Management Board (MB), Wanli Education Group and Wanli University, and the Joint Venture Board, driving the strategic vision and integrity of UNNC while maintaining transparency and accountability in all operational matters. The COSO is responsible for the following departments: Estates, IT, Procurement, and the Strategic Planning Team (SPT). This initial allocation is provisional and will be reviewed, with the likely outcome that the COO's portfolio will be expanded to include additional functions from other areas of the University.

Main responsibilities

(Primary accountabilities and responsibilities expected to fulfil the role)

Approximate
% time per year

Strategic Leadership and Operational Excellence:

30%

- Oversee the planning, execution and monitoring of our Strategic Road Map to 2030, ensuring operational plans support institutional ambitions
- Lead capital projects and infrastructure development, optimizing returns while maintaining alignment with institutional priorities
- Liaise with senior leaders and similar portfolio holders with the University of Nottingham in UK and Malaysia to ensure that UNNC strategy/policies are aligned with other campuses
- Develop strong networks with related professional bodies as well as other Sino-foreign universities locally and internationally
- Oversee technology and digital systems strategy, ensuring data integrity and compliance with legal and University policies
- Partner with the CFO to ensure operational and financial strategies are fully aligned, delivering value for money and long-term sustainability

Governance and Compliance:

30%

- Chair relevant committees and other key groups of relevance to the operational efficiency of UNNC
- Ensure compliance with legislation, risk management frameworks, and health & safety standards
- Champion university-wide sustainability initiatives and business continuity planning
- Drive high performance across all University operations fostering collaboration and accountability and value for money while instilling confidence in service delivery

Leadership and People Excellence:

20%

- Foster an inclusive, high-performance culture where staff feel valued and empowered, directly contributing to talent retention and satisfaction
- Collaborate with HR and other leaders to refine policies that enhance UNNC's reputation as an employer of choice
- Embed equity, diversity, and inclusion principles across all operations.
- Provide ample opportunities to their teams to ensure that they are best equipped to deliver the state-of-the-art services related to the COSO portfolio

Employability and Partnerships:

15%

- Drive initiatives that elevate the university's employability outcomes, including industry partnerships, alumni engagement, and student recruitment
- Build and leverage civic, regional, and global partnerships to enhance the university's reputation and operational reach

Additional Responsibilities:

5%

Undertake other tasks and responsibilities as might reasonably be required

This job description may be subject to revision following discussion with the person appointed.

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solid track record of leading, delivering, and developing strategic operations for a large, complex HE and/or allied industry organisation. • Experience in coordinating and managing intricate capital and revenue budgets, digital and physical resources, and strategic business planning processes. • Proven experience in designing and delivering major projects with the appropriate rigour to manage risk vs gains. • Background in leading strategies that drive long-term cultural and operational change, embedding new working practices. • Extensive experience in leading teams and supporting them to strive to deliver high quality outcomes. • Understanding of the changing nature of regulatory requirements and ability to ensure the University is best positioned to respond both in governance and compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in strategic role(s) in UK or ASEAN region • Experience of working across multiple higher education or research-intensive environments • Strong stakeholder engagement in HE, including with faculty, staff, and students • Extensive strategic and operational management experience in HE sector
Skills and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An advanced degree (MBA, MPA, DBA or related field) is highly preferred, particularly in business administration, higher education management, public administration, or organisational leadership • A dynamic leader with strong leadership skills who works swiftly and displays the drive and determination to create seamless, integrated operations and infrastructure • Demonstrated ability to influence and inspire others, fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and high performance across the University • Strong strategic and analytical thinking and problem-solving skills, with the ability to manage complexity and ambiguity • Exhibits foresight and courage to act in the organisation's strategic interests, ensuring the University's long-term sustainability • Demonstrates sound judgment and decision-making, with strong commercial and political acumen • Skilled at translating strategic goals into effective operational execution, maximising impact, return on investment, quality, and efficiency • Capable of optimising operations in the digital landscape and realising future digital potential • Proven ability to drive change quickly and manage multiple high-stakes projects and programmes simultaneously • Quick to assess situations and act decisively through effective horizon scanning • Offers a creative, solution-oriented approach to complex problems, maintaining attention to detail without losing sight of the bigger picture • Focused on solutions and committed to fixing and resolving challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep understanding of strategic operations in a China/UK context • Familiarity with international higher education trends, challenges and opportunities (particularly the UK, China, and Malaysia) • Mandarin speaking would be an advantage

Expectations and behaviours

The University has developed a clear set of core expectations and behaviours that our people should be demonstrating in their work, and as ambassadors of the University's strategy, vision and values. The following are essential to the role:

Valuing people

Role models the highest ethical standards to cultivate a collaborative workplace that develops talent and enhances wellbeing, while also balancing the needs of the various stakeholders.

Taking ownership

Translates the vision into a strategy for their own area, enabling people to take the right action for the wider organisation. Can resolve complex problems, balancing the needs of varied stakeholders.

Forward-thinking

Always has the overall strategic goal in mind, manages to stimulate agile and forward-thinking in others, motivating them and giving them the confidence to drive for continuous improvement.

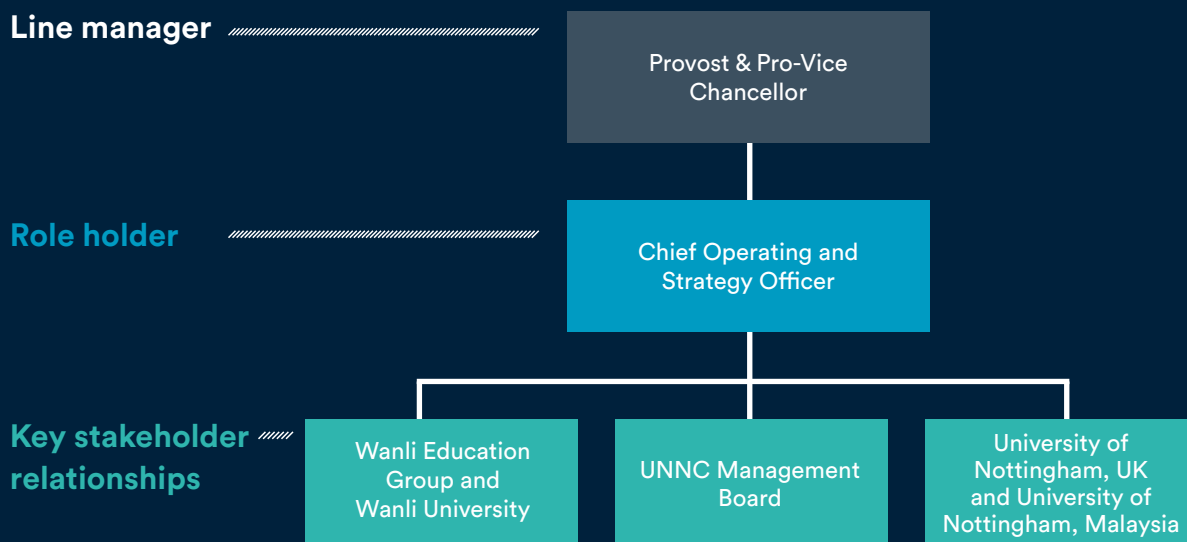
Professional pride

Goal is to be best in class; ensuring this can be achieved in line with long term strategy regardless of short term challenges. Supports people to do what is best for both the organisation and the department.

Always inclusive

Promotes how collaboration and positive partnerships are essential to success, always looking ahead to explore how to involve other potential stakeholders.

Key relationships with others



HOW TO APPLY

The University has partnered with GatenbySanderson for the executive search for this position. To apply, please visit [here](#). For an informal conversation about the role, please contact our recruitment partners at GatenbySanderson: Jacqueline Lau at jacqueline.lau@gatenbysanderson.com or Maliha Ahmed at maliha.ahmed@gatenbysanderson.com.

Applications should include a full CV and a cover letter which addresses the key selection criteria.

The closing date for applications is 13 October 2025.

Equal opportunities

The University of Nottingham Ningbo China is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff. It is our intention to ensure that job applicants and staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.



WORK AT UNNC

WE aim to foster an environment in which talent is supported, motivated and empowered to reach their full potential and contribute the most to the University's success. We provide internationally competitive compensation and sound benefits. For individuals and families relocating, your journey will be fully supported at every step.

Compensation & Benefits

Our compensation and benefits packages are designed to attract and retain diverse, highly motivated talents while reinforcing our care for staff members and shared purpose to work beyond the ordinary. which includes:

Competitive salary, with a clear road ahead for progression

Various types of leave benefits

Long Service Awards

Team building activities

Annual health check

Additional allowance and support to eligible staff, covering relocation, accommodation, home leave. private medical insurance, education support and more.

Career development

We are committed to a collaborative, flexible and interactive approach to staff learning and development, to empower individuals to contribute fully to the achievement of the University's goals.

The UNNC Learning Academy was launched in April 2021 to provide a wide range of training opportunities in line with the University's strategy by providing our staff with the tools to empower high-performing talent and to unlock their full potential and develop further, cultivate inspirational leadership, and a support a high performing and learning culture across UNNC.

Members of staff have enriched opportunities to engage in a mixture of in-house and externally provided learning and development activities, as well as digital learning.

Support

UNNC provides a variety of staff support allowing you the opportunity to customize an employment journey that meets your personal needs to live beyond the ordinary.

Before you onboard:

For international staff members, we have a dedicated team providing visa support and assisting with the application of the work and residence permits for you and your accompanying family.

For overseas-based staff members, we provide support for flight bookings, airport pick-ups and accommodation arrangements.

As you embark on this exciting chapter of your career, we are dedicated to facilitating your seamless transition and sustained success. From onboarding assistance to induction programmes, buddy schemes, and cultural and engagement events, we are committed to enabling every new colleague achieve a solid start at UNNC.

To promote an inclusive university experience that encourages a proactive, accessible, holistic approach to health and wellbeing, we provide an array of professional services tailored to support your physical, emotional, mental health and wellbeing needs during your time at UNNC.

OUR CAMPUS



To promote intellectual engagement, stimulate innovative inquiry, and preserve knowledge, the University establishes an intellectual setting equipped with cutting-edge technologies to facilitate learning, teaching, and research.

UNNC provides world-class sports infrastructure and campus activities, with staff

Active staff clubs promote activities that foster connection, collaboration, and communication among staff members and their families, such as the Mama and Papa Club, Arts Club, Staff Gardening Club, Staff Wellbeing Club, and many more. There are also numerous sports engagement programmes like badminton, basketball, cycling, Taiji, rugby, and yoga.

With extensive resources, advanced technologies and a welcoming environment, our Library aims to build flexibility and responsiveness to support your working beyond the ordinary.

The comfortable and clean staff lounges offer employees a place to unwind and recharge. For nursing mothers, we have private lactation rooms furnished with confidential access.

There are numerous cafes, restaurants, stores, and canteens on campus to help facilitate daily life.



LIFE IN NINGBO

Ningbo is a dynamic, modern city steeped in thousands of years of history. Eight million people live in this port city at the mouth of the Yangtze, and the Ningbonese people are known for their entrepreneurialism and innovation, as well as their famed Jiangnan cuisine.

Surrounded by mountains and nature, Ningbo has plenty to see and do and enjoys warm summers and mild winters. Many staff members value being able to readily access both a vibrant city and the countryside so easily. Whilst Dongqian lake – which offers hiking and biking trails as well as water sports – is close to campus, there are plenty of shopping centres and city activities to explore, too. Ningbo has always been home to people from all over the world, and as a result the city has many international restaurants, supermarkets and shops.

Ningbo has fantastic transport links to cities all over China and is within hours of other major cities such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nanjing and Hangzhou, as well as countryside getaways and tourist spots such as the Zhoushan island chain. Ningbo is home to high speed train stations and an international airport with links to Bangkok, Tokyo and Singapore and other regional hubs.



Find details on
Career Website



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