

Role Description: Trustee

The Association of Higher Education Professionals (AHEP) is the professional home for staff working in higher education professional services across the UK and beyond. We connect and develop individuals at every stage of their careers, providing professional recognition, learning opportunities and a strong sense of community.

This is an exciting time to join AHEP's Board of Trustees. The higher education landscape is evolving rapidly, and the need for a confident, skilled and connected professional services community has never been greater. We are seeking new trustees to help guide the Association's strategic direction, strengthen governance and ensure that AHEP continues to serve members and the wider sector with credibility and impact.

About AHEP

AHEP is a registered charity and professional association representing higher education professional services staff. Through our membership, professional development and consulting services, we enable institutions and individuals to achieve excellence in management, leadership and operational delivery. Guided by our five-year strategy *Reaching Higher (2023–2028)*, AHEP's work focuses on three core strands:

- **Identity, purpose and engagement** – raising the profile and recognition of higher education professionals.
- **Fit-for-the-future development** – providing relevant, high-quality professional development and membership benefits.
- **Strategic sector partnerships** – building collaboration and alignment across higher education.

Our values underpin everything we do. We are credible and trusted, collaborative and inclusive, empowering and member-focused, welcoming and reflective. These values guide how we work with members, partners and one another. AHEP's activities are delivered by a small, dedicated team led by the Executive Director, who reports to the Board of Trustees. The Board provides strategic oversight, ensures good governance and upholds AHEP's charitable purpose.

The Sector Context

The UK's higher education sector is experiencing major reform, as government policy seeks to link education, skills and employment more closely, expand technical learning routes and strengthen financial sustainability. These shifts are changing how universities operate and how professional services contribute to strategy, efficiency and innovation.

For AHEP, this context reinforces the importance of sound governance, strategic clarity and strong financial stewardship. The Board's role is to ensure that AHEP remains a confident, resilient and forward-looking organisation that represents and supports the professional services community through change.

The role of Trustee

Trustees share collective responsibility for the charity's and the trading subsidiary's governance and strategic direction. Working as a team with the Executive Director, they ensure that AHEP operates within its charitable objectives, complies with relevant legislation and delivers long-term value for its members and beneficiaries.

Key responsibilities include:

- Setting and monitoring AHEP's strategic priorities and performance.
- Ensuring that AHEP operates in line with its charitable purpose and values.
- Overseeing financial planning, risk management and sustainability.
- Acting as ambassadors for AHEP within and beyond the higher education sector.
- Supporting and constructively challenging the Executive Director and team.
- Contributing actively to Board discussions and decisions, drawing on professional expertise and insight.

Trustees are also encouraged to take part in subcommittees or working groups, depending on their experience and interests.

Person Specification

We welcome applications from both within and outside higher education, provided there is a genuine appreciation of the higher education context and the distinctive role that professional services play within it. Our priority is to strengthen the Board's breadth of experience, insight and independence.

We are particularly interested in candidates who can demonstrate:

- Experience in professional associations, membership bodies or education sectors.
- Commercial, financial, marketing or governance experience in a complex organisation.
- Strong strategic thinking, curiosity and judgement.
- Excellent communication and listening skills, with a collaborative mindset.
- A commitment to AHEP's mission to empower, connect and develop higher education professionals.

Prior board or trustee experience is welcome but not essential. Induction and governance support will be provided.

Term and commitment

Trustees are typically appointed for a term of three years and may be reappointed for one further consecutive three-year term. After serving two terms, trustees step down for at least three years before being eligible for reappointment.

The overall time commitment is modest but meaningful. The Board meets quarterly, combining online and in-person meetings, and trustees are also encouraged to attend key events such as the AGM, Annual Conference and Annual Lecture. Between meetings, most trustees give a few hours each month to reading papers or supporting specific areas of AHEP's work, such as a trustee working group or representing AHEP at sector events. These are voluntary positions. AHEP reimburses reasonable travel and subsistence expenses in line with its policy, and attendance at the Annual Conference is covered.

Equality and Inclusion

AHEP is committed to equality of opportunity and values diversity in all its forms. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, particularly those currently under-represented in leadership positions in higher education and the broader professional community. Appointments are made on merit through an open and transparent process.

How to Apply

Please send your CV and a short covering letter outlining your relevant experience and motivation for joining AHEP's Board to chair@ahep.ac.uk.

Closing date: 31st January 2026