

Chief Advancement Officer

Classification: SSC

POSITION NUMBER	Insert 000000
POSITION REPORTS TO	DVC External Relations and Partnerships
COLLEGE / PORTFOLIO / DEPARTMENT	External Relations and Partnerships
LOCATION/CAMPUS	The position is currently located at the Footscray Park Campus of the University. The position and incumbent may be relocated to any other existing or future University work locations where it conducts its operations.

OVERALL PURPOSE

Victoria University (VU) is entering a new phase of ambition and impact, strengthening its role as a university of opportunity, deeply connected to place, industry and community, while delivering world-class education, research and innovation.

The role of Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) is designed to build and lead a contemporary advancement function that mobilises philanthropy, alumni and partners in service of VU’s mission, values and long-term strategic priorities.

The CAO will play a critical leadership role in shaping and embedding a sustainable advancement culture across the University, positioning VU for transformational philanthropic investment and deepening engagement with alumni, donors and impact partners.

The CAO will have a strong external focus, leading the University’s pursuit of major and principal gifts. The position is responsible for proactively engaging high value prospects, leveraging the incumbent’s existing networks while cultivating new strategic relationships, to secure transformational philanthropic investment.

The CAO will work strategically across the University to ensure that priority projects are well designed, investment ready, and capable of delivering on donor intent. This includes partnering with academic and professional leaders to shape compelling philanthropic propositions and ensure projects supported by donations are effectively established and managed.

The CAO will lead, motivate and coach a highly committed team of staff who work alongside donors, alumni, funders, partners and stakeholders to support the VU community, increase revenue, deliver high quality engagements, and drive VU’s brand equity.

As a senior leadership role, the CAO will also provide expert advice and support to the Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor’s Group and VU Council on the University’s advancement strategy, with a sustained focus on working with leadership to achieve revenue goals.

Deepening the relationships between Victoria University and its partners to support our students, our people and our community, the CAO will play a key role in helping Victoria University become a leading impact driven university.

People and Culture use only

ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Victoria University has a bold and ambitious new vision and a seven-year strategic plan characterised by five strategic drivers. Victoria University's [Strategic Plan 2022-2028. Start Well, finish brilliantly.](#) also commits the University to the bold ambition to be a global leader in dual sector learning and research by 2028.

VU has innovated a new pedagogic and curriculum approach: the VU Block Model. This, along with the VU First Year College, has been one of the leading learning and teaching innovations in the Australian tertiary education sector over the past decade. Our embedded VU TAFE is a leading TAFE provider, renowned for its industry collaboration and its digital innovation in delivery. As a result, Doing Dual Differently is one of our five core drivers and points of uniqueness.

At Victoria University, our research is focused on the development and sustained application of ethical knowledge in all its forms, done in partnership and collaboration, to address the challenges of people, places and planet. In 2022, VU launched its [Research and Impact Plan 2023-2028](#) and is one of the top ten sports science universities in the world with more recent, yet equally profound, achievements in health sciences; immunology; green engineering; the circular economy; and First Nations.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

To achieve our vision, we have identified five Strategic Drivers, with a high-level objective, and the goals to get us to our 2028 target. Our vision is big and ambitious. It is also achievable.

1. Learner Centred for Life
2. Partnering with Principle
3. Maximising Research with Impact
4. Protecting Country
5. A Thriving Place to Study and Work

VISION

To be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030.

PURPOSE

We are of Melbourne's west and of the world – championing progressive and excellent education, research, service and a deep commitment to Protecting Country.

Commitment to Protecting Country:

Victoria University honours its deep diversity as a foundation for collaboration and social progress. We will demonstrate sensitivity in respecting First Nation perspectives. We will ensure that we respect our Indigenous voices and commit to sustainable Protecting Country. We will take leadership responsibility, in all that we do, to improve the health and wellbeing of our local and global communities, and the planet that we share.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion at VU:

Victoria University believes that diversity of the workforce adds value to the University and creates a stronger, richer working environment for everyone. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to

ensure that our employees have positive, barrier-free work environments that accommodate their access needs. Employees who require adjustments are encouraged to discuss their needs with their line manager.

The External Relations and Partnerships portfolio at Victoria University is responsible for strategies relating to external engagement, advancement, marketing and communications, all aimed at benefiting students, staff, partners, industry, government and the community.

The operations of the External Relations and Partnerships portfolio and this position are currently located at the Footscray Park campus of the University though this position may be relocated to any other existing or future University work location. The role will also require work to be undertaken from the VU City Tower and any other external locations deemed necessary for growing our advancement function.

MAJOR CHALLENGES / FREEDOM TO ACT

This position reports to and receives broad direction from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor External Relations and Partnerships and operates within the University policies, procedures and guidelines.

The Chief Advancement Officer will work closely with the Vice-Chancellor's Group and other senior roles within the university, and operates within the University policies, procedures and guidelines.

The position acts with a high level of autonomy and manages key internal and external relationships and significant resources. It will deliver high value to the University in a number of ways, including but not limited to, the generation of income through fundraising revenue. As such, the position requires high levels of integrity, commitment, analysis and judgement. The role is critical in providing leadership to optimise VU's reputation in a highly competitive market and deliver of our strategic objectives.

This role requires exceptional relationship-building, communication and influencing skills, supported by strong commercial acumen and analytical capability. The CAO needs to inspire confidence across donors, alumni, academics and senior leaders with strong people leadership and change management capability.

A high level of judgement, integrity and discretion is essential for this role, together with a deep understanding of contemporary philanthropy, alumni engagement and advancement best practice. The role also requires an appreciation of Victoria University's mission, diverse student cohorts and place-based impact, along with a strong commitment to equity, access, inclusion and social impact.

MAJOR DUTIES PERFORMED

In performing the following duties, the incumbent is required to comply with quality assurance policies and procedures, and other relevant legislative requirements applicable to the University.

The major duties performed include:

- Develop and lead the implementation of VU's comprehensive, multi-year advancement strategy, with a strategic focus on significantly increasing philanthropic income, strengthening donor and alumni engagement and enhancing operational efficiency aligned to the University's priority focus areas and revenue goals.
- Collaborate on the development of a comprehensive revenue plan for VU and lead the implementation of major funding plans that leverage philanthropy and industry partnerships, with a strong focus on advancing VU's strategic initiatives.
- Develop a structured fundraising pipeline focused on major and principal gifts, increasing annual philanthropic funds year on year. This includes securing transformational philanthropic investment aligned to VU's priorities in student equity and excellence (scholarships and student support), research with impact and other major strategic initiatives.
- Establish and scale a bequest and legacy giving program as a core component of VU's structured fundraising model, strengthening long-term income, donor lifetime value and future financial sustainability. In addition, cultivate and steward a portfolio of major and principal gift prospects, including individuals, trusts and foundations.
- Lead best-practice proposal development, prospect research, donor recognition, pipeline development, stewardship and impact reporting, strengthening VU's reputation as a trusted steward of significant philanthropic investment.
- Develop and lead an alumni engagement strategy that empowers alumni to champion VU, and supports future giving and bequest intentions, while strengthening student employment outcomes, mentoring, advocacy and the University's reputation.
- Champion a whole-of-university culture of philanthropy, stewardship and external engagement, increasing awareness and understanding across the University community of the opportunities for growth and impact.
- Design and refine the portfolio and resourcing model to support sustainable growth in line with University priorities. Lead the development of a high-performing advancement team with clear accountability and professional capability pathways.
- Oversee the advancement budget and ensure the effective and strategic allocation of resources.
- Establish clear KPIs and performance metrics; and establish a governance, data and operating discipline to drive scalability, strengthen stewardship and ensure strong return on investment.
- Commit to sustainable practice and ensure decisions align with our commitment to Protecting Country.
- Identify, assess, prioritise and control risks to the health and safety of staff, students, visitors and contractors to the environment arising from the operation of the area under their responsibility, and ensure that a safe system of work is developed and followed through appropriate training, supervision and monitoring in line with the annual OH&S Plan.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

1. Knowledge or training equivalent to: relevant postgraduate qualifications and/or equivalent combination of extensive professional experience in a leadership role at a senior level in advancement, philanthropy, development or external engagement within a university or complex mission-driven organisation.
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2. Extensive expertise in initiating, managing and sustaining significant, high-value relationships with donors, funders, partners and stakeholders within a large and complex organisation with a demonstrated ability to drive revenue growth.
 3. An existing professional network, that can be effectively leveraged to accelerate the establishment of a high-value donor pipeline, while maintaining the highest ethical, legal and confidentiality standards.
 4. Demonstrated ability to work strategically across complex organisations to develop and deliver donor ready projects, including shaping compelling philanthropic propositions and ensuring that funded initiatives are appropriately governed and executed.
 5. A proven record of building or scaling fundraising and engagement functions, preferably within higher education or comparable mission-driven sectors.
 6. Demonstrated experience leading major gift strategies and/or large-scale fundraising programs with evidence of sustained results.
 7. A strategic leader with extensive experience building, leading and developing high functioning and agile teams, with excellent communication skills and the ability to represent the University confidently in diverse internal and external settings.
 8. Demonstrated experience managing staff, budgets and complex projects in challenging environments.
 9. Demonstrated commitment to applying quality assurance and other relevant and applicable policies, procedures and legislation, in the effective day-to-day performance of the role.
 10. Demonstrated leadership aligned to the University's capabilities and values.
 11. Proven ability to implement and monitor management systems to ensure that OHS risks arising from the operations of the area under their responsibility are managed well, combined with a sound knowledge of, and commitment to, OHS principles with a demonstrated ability to integrate and implement these at the strategic level.
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ORGANISATIONAL CHART

