

Role Profile

Role title:	Head Chef
Salary:	£37,000 - £41,000 per annum
Full/Part Time:	Full-Time
Contract term:	Permanent
Accountable to:	General Manager
Accountable for:	Sous Chef and Casual Kitchen Team
Hours:	40 hours per week
Location:	Usually located at University Green, Oxford Road, occasionally at the main Students' Union Building
Eligibility:	Open to applicants with relevant skills and experience who are eligible to work in the UK. A Personal Licence is essential.
Benefits:	We offer a great range of benefits. You can see them here .

Our Organisation

We are Manchester Students' Union, a large charity and commercial operation based on Oxford Road, supporting more than 48,000 students at the University of Manchester throughout their time here. Alongside our advice, representation and student activities work, we are a serious hospitality operator, running Manchester Academy Venues, Bar 532 & Kitchen and Corridor Coffee.

In 2026 we are opening a new all-day bar at University Green in partnership Bruntwood. The new venture is designed to trade from morning coffee through to late-night drinks, serving students, University staff, Academy gig attendees and the wider general public. It is the flagship of our commercial growth plan and the first step in a longer-term ambition for UMSU to become a significant operator across the city centre.

We employ around 90 permanent staff and around 400 part-time studying staff and believe in the importance of great employment opportunities to equip our students for their future work-life. When you join UMSU, you'll be immersed in an environment that empowers staff to make great things happen and we are always looking for innovative, passionate and proactive people to join us.

Our Organisational Values

Our values are foundational to us and shape the work that we do every day. As part of our recruitment process, we want you to demonstrate how your experiences, behaviours and skills align with our values.

Our values are

- We put students at the heart of what we do
- We provide a 'great experience' service

- We believe in improvement and progression
- We are a community
- We are open and transparent
- We are inclusive

You can find more detailed explanations of our values on [our website](#).

Role Overview

This new venture is our most significant commercial launch in a decade, and the Head Chef will play a key role in shaping what it becomes.

You will lead the kitchen for a new all-day Oxford Road bar and social venue, developing a food offer that supports the rhythm of the site from morning coffee and lunch through to early evening, events, group bookings and pre-gig trade. This is not a fine-dining kitchen, but it is a serious commercial food operation with the chance to create something distinctive: food that is fast, consistent, high-quality, margin-aware and genuinely relevant to students, staff, gig-goers and the wider Oxford Road community.

Working closely with the General Manager, you will help open the kitchen, set its standards, build its routines and develop its newly recruited team. You will take ownership of food quality, kitchen organisation, food safety, allergens, stock control, waste management, gross profit and the day-to-day leadership of the kitchen team. Just as importantly, you will help create the dishes, standards and service style that give the venue its food identity and give customers a reason to come back.

The food offer will be central to the success of the venue. It needs to work hard commercially, support the bar, deliver value for students and be strong enough to compete on Oxford Road. That means balancing creativity with consistency, speed with quality, and affordability with margin.

Every commercial pound generated by the venue goes back into supporting students at the University of Manchester. That makes this a Head Chef role where food quality, financial control, team development and student impact all matter.

You will work as part of the wider Commercial team, alongside colleagues in Manchester Academy Venues, Bar 532 & Kitchen and Corridor Coffee, contributing to a growing Union hospitality operation with ambition beyond a single site. This is a rare opportunity for a hands-on, commercially minded Head Chef to help launch a new venue, build a kitchen culture from day one and create a food offer with real purpose behind it.

Key Result Areas

Responsible for	Contributor to
Kitchen mobilisation and launch. Preparing the kitchen for successful opening, including equipment readiness, prep systems, supplier routines, kitchen documentation, stock controls,	Wider project delivery across venue opening, operational readiness, supplier setup, menu launch, marketing and organisational preparation.

cleaning schedules, allergen processes, food safety records and team training.	
Food offer and menu delivery. Delivering the agreed menu offer to the required quality, speed, consistency and presentation standards.	Development of the wider Union food strategy across the Oxford Road venue, Bar 532 & Kitchen, Corridor Coffee and future commercial outlets.
Food gross profit and stock control. Managing ordering, portion control, wastage, stock rotation, supplier performance and food margin.	Wider Commercial Department income targets, financial sustainability and responsible use of Union resource
Kitchen operational standards. Maintaining daily kitchen standards across prep, service, cleanliness, close-down, equipment use, communication and food handover to the bar/floor team.	Wider Union standards for customer experience, safety, accessibility and professional service delivery.
Food safety, allergens and safety culture. Ensuring the kitchen operates safely and legally, with strong food hygiene, allergen management, HACCP controls, due diligence records and a culture where staff challenge unsafe practice.	Wider organisational risk management, compliance culture, safeguarding escalation and reputation management
People and kitchen team leadership. Recruiting, inducting, training, rota planning, coaching and developing the Sous Chef, kitchen colleagues and studying staff.	Wider Union people strategy, student employment offer, talent development, retention and succession planning.
Service delivery and venue collaboration. Working closely with the General Manager, Assistant Managers, bar and floor teams to deliver smooth service across peak trading, events, group bookings and pre-gig period	Wider venue programme, student group activity, Manchester Academy activity, University-linked activations and commercial campaigns.
Student impact and continuous improvement. Ensuring the food offer delivers value, quality and relevance for students while improving through sales data, customer feedback and operational learning.	The Union's charitable purpose, student-facing services, campus community impact, cross-site learning and future commercial development.

This is not an exhaustive list of responsibilities and you may be asked to carry out other duties appropriate to the role.

Organisational Stewardship & Leadership Responsibilities

- You'll guide the work of the team, participating in the development of annual operating plans to support the achievement of strategic aims, holding teams accountable for delivery against these plans
- You'll contribute to the development and delivery of risk mitigating strategies as they relate to departments area of work
- You'll ensure all team are assisting in key students' union events throughout the year such as Welcome week and elections and proactively identify opportunities to support the officers in delivering their plans

- You'll lead teams acting as an exemplar of the Union behaviours ensuring all staff are given appropriate support in line with the Union management framework and teams are consistently held accountable for delivering against expected performance standards (both role performance and behaviours)
- You'll be accountable for the financial performance of area of responsibility taking prompt action where financial targets are at risk. Contribute to the forecasting & budgeting exercises in line with the organisational framework
- You'll own the policy as it relates to departmental activity, have good working knowledge of the Union policy and procedure framework as it relates to the team's function and ensure that all teams activities are conducted in line with this framework
- You'll proactively contribute to maintaining the communal spaces and ensuring whole team share responsibility for managing team stores and keeping areas clean and tidy

Person Specification

Criteria	Assessed at:			
	Application Form	Interview	Interview Task	All
Education				
We accept candidates from any educational background.				
Skills				
Strong kitchen leadership skills, including the ability to organise service, set standards, train colleagues and maintain consistency during busy trading periods.	x	x	x	
Strong food quality and execution skills, with the ability to deliver a menu that is consistent, commercially viable and suitable for a high-volume venue.	x	x	x	
Commercial kitchen management skills, including food GP, ordering, stock control, portion control, waste reduction and supplier management.	x	x		
Ability to build and sustain a strong food safety culture, ensuring colleagues understand their responsibilities and consistently prioritise safe, legal and responsible kitchen practice.	x	x		

Strong communication skills, with the ability to work effectively with the General Manager, Assistant Managers, bar/floor teams, suppliers and wider Union colleagues.	x	x		
Planning, prioritisation and problem-solving skills, with the ability to launch and improve a new kitchen while staying calm under pressure.	x	x		
Experience/Knowledge				
Significant experience working in a busy commercial kitchen, ideally at Head Chef, Kitchen Manager or senior Sous Chef level.	x	x		
Experience managing food safety, allergens, HACCP, cleaning records, temperature controls and kitchen due diligence.	x	x		
Experience leading, coaching and developing kitchen colleagues, with supporting evidence of how you have developed young team in the kitchens.	x	x		
Experience leading kitchen service in a high-volume, fast-paced hospitality environment.	x	x		
Strong knowledge of safe kitchen working practices, including equipment use, manual handling, COSHH, fire safety awareness and accident/incident reporting.	x	x		
Experience managing food cost, ordering, stock rotation, portion control, wastage and supplier performance.	x	x		
Personal Attributes				
Hands-on and standards-led: visible in the kitchen, role models pace, cleanliness, organisation and quality.		x		
Commercially aware and action-oriented: understands how kitchen decisions affect margin, service, customer experience and the wider P&L.	x	x		

Resilient and calm under pressure, particularly during launch, events, busy services and periods of change.		x		
Inclusive and team-focused, with a commitment to developing colleagues and creating a respectful kitchen culture.	x	x		
Values & Behaviours				
Align with the SU's values and behaviours both personally and professionally				x
Insight driven – always looking for ways to collect data from a range of sources to measure the impact of your work on the student community or to inform your work				x
Collaborative – great at working collaboratively with team members, seeks ways to ensure all voices are heard, works with colleagues to problem solve				x
Active Bystander – continually seeks to dismantle barriers, ensures all working practises are accessible, seeks to ensure all voices are heard and factored in when making decisions				x

Please note that all of the above criteria are desirable unless marked with an asterisk (), which indicates essential requirements.*

Our Recruitment Process

The way that we recruit is designed to be fair, transparent, and inclusive as well as being an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. You should expect to receive great communication and a warm, welcoming experience.

Every member of staff is recruited exactly the same way, by submitting an application form and attending an interview. We use a recruitment platform called StaffSavvy where you'll submit your application and book interviews, if successful.

Our process allows you to show us your authentic self, gives you a platform to display your skills and knowledge in relaxed and welcoming setting. We'll never put you under any necessary pressure on you, ask you trick questions or interrogate you in an interview and we'll support you all the way through our process.

Top Tip: our roles can be quite competitive, so we recommend applying as soon as possible as we often close applications early!

If you'd like further information or support regarding our recruitment process, we recommend that you read our full recruitment guide for applicants [here](#).