

Profile

Role title:	Sous Chef
Salary:	£28,000 – £32,000 per annum
Full/Part Time:	Full-Time
Contract term:	Permanent
Accountable to:	Head Chef
Accountable for:	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 with 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 Sous Chef will play an important role in helping build the kitchen operation from day one.

You will support the Head Chef in launching and running the kitchen for a new all-day Oxford Road bar and social venue, delivering 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 where pace, quality, consistency, organisation and teamwork will really matter.

Working closely with the Head Chef, you will help set up the kitchen, build its routines, support food preparation and service, and help maintain the standards that make the venue successful. You will lead kitchen shifts, support junior colleagues and studying staff, and help make sure food quality, kitchen organisation, food safety, allergens, stock control, waste and service speed are consistently well managed.

This is a strong development opportunity for someone who wants to grow into a senior kitchen leadership role. You will gain experience of a new opening, commercial kitchen controls, team leadership, service delivery and the wider role food plays in a busy bar and social venue. Just as importantly, you will help create the kitchen culture from the start: organised, calm, safe, supportive and proud of the food being served.

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. As Sous Chef, you will help balance speed with quality, consistency with creativity, 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 Sous Chef role where good food, strong teamwork, safe working 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, ambitious Sous Chef to be part of a major new opening and help build a kitchen with real purpose behind it.

Result Areas

Responsible for	Contributor to
Kitchen launch and setup. Supporting the Head Chef with opening preparation, including prep systems, cleaning routines, stock controls, allergen records, kitchen organisation and team training.	Wider venue mobilisation, operational readiness and successful launch of the Oxford Road venue.
Service and prep delivery. Leading and supporting daily prep, service, close-down and kitchen handover to agreed standards.	Wider venue standards for service speed, product quality and customer experience.
Food quality and consistency. Ensuring dishes are prepared, cooked, presented and served consistently in line with the agreed offer.	Development of the wider Union food offer and reputation for reliable, high-quality hospitality.
Stock, waste and margin awareness. Supporting ordering, stock rotation, portion control, waste reduction and food GP delivery.	Wider Commercial Department financial performance and responsible use of resources.
Food safety and kitchen safety culture. Maintaining food hygiene, allergen controls, cleaning standards, due diligence records and safe ways of working.	Wider organisational compliance, risk management and safe trading culture.
Team support and coaching. Training and supporting Kitchen Assistants, casual kitchen staff and studying staff during prep and service.	Wider Union student employment, development and retention.
Cross-team working. Communicating effectively with the Head Chef, General Manager, Assistant Managers, bar team and floor team to support smooth service.	Wider venue programme, events, group bookings and student-facing activity.
Continuous improvement. Identifying practical improvements to prep, service, waste, quality, speed and kitchen organisation.	Cross-site learning and future commercial development across the Union's hospitality operation.

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 practical cooking and prep skills, with the ability to deliver consistent food quality during busy service.	x	x		
Ability to lead kitchen shifts, organise tasks, support colleagues and maintain standards when under pressure.	x	x		
Strong understanding of food safety, allergens, cleaning routines, temperature controls and safe kitchen practice.	x	x		
Ability to support a strong kitchen safety culture, ensuring colleagues work safely and feel confident to challenge unsafe practice.	x	x		
Good communication skills, with the ability to work effectively with kitchen, bar and floor colleagues.	x	x		
Good planning and problem-solving skills, with the ability to stay organised during prep, service and close-down.	x	x		
Experience/Knowledge				

Experience leading and working with teams in a busy commercial kitchen.	x	x		
Knowledge of kitchen planograms, order control, stock rotation, portion control, waste reduction and kitchen organisation.	x	x		
Experience training or supporting junior colleagues, casual staff or studying staff.	x	x		
Experience in a bar, casual dining, student, event, music venue or high-footfall hospitality environment.	x	x		
Strong knowledge of implementing safe kitchen working practices, including equipment use, manual handling, COSHH, fire safety awareness and accident/incident reporting.	x	x		
Experience supporting the management of food cost, ordering, stock rotation, portion control, wastage and supplier performance.	x	x		
Personal Attributes				
Hands-on and reliable: leads by example, works at pace and takes pride in kitchen standards.		x		
Calm and practical under pressure, particularly during busy services, events and changing priorities.	x	x		
Team-focused and supportive, with a positive approach to developing others.		x		
Commercially aware, with an understanding of how waste, portioning and consistency affect performance.	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
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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](#).