*This job description does not form part of the employee’s contract of employment but is provided for guidance. The precise duties and responsibilities of any job may be expected to change over time. Job holders should be consulted over any proposed changes to this job description before implementation.*

**Job title:** Executive Assistant – Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies

**Report to:** Executive Officer

**Grade:** NG5

**Purpose**

This is a key post, providing essential support to the implementation and development of the newly created Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies. The post holder will be responsible for:

* Establishing, developing and maintaining efficient and effective administration and communications systems and processes for the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies
* Ensuring the smooth operation of all administration activities related to the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies, and informing developments and policy in this area.
* Delivery of opportunities for the promotion of the activities of the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies
* Supporting governance activities a member of the wider professional support team within the Vice-Chancellor’s office.

**Principal Accountabilities**

1. Manage and deliver high quality administrative support for the establishment and subsequent development of the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies, including provision of professional support and advice to members of the Institute and production of relevant documentation. Establish efficient and effective systems and processes to deliver this support.
2. Provide professional support to the Director of the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies in the production, implementation and maintenance of research papers, other academic publications, suitable policy and governance documentation relating to the work of the Institute, including copy-editing and layout activities. This will also include undertaking research, information-gathering, analysis and preparation of briefing papers/documents as required by the Director.
3. Provide professional support for the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies Steering Group. This will include planning and managing the work of the Steering Group, designing and compiling action-based agendas; drafting papers and ensuring that follow-up action is taken; and any other tasks required by the Steering Group Chair.
4. Ensure effective internal and external communications with respect to the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies and promotion of its activities, with particular responsibility for developing an effective web presence for the Institute, making full use of a broad range of current and emerging on-line social media and, through close liaison with the University Web, Communications and Marketing teams, ensuring synergy with the University’s overall communications strategy and web presence.
5. Organise and manage the arrangements for a programme of events for the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies both internally and externally, including research seminars, academic workshops and conferences. Collaborate with relevant teams in the University as required, to ensure that such events are effectively publicised, supported and resourced.
6. Manage an efficient and effective information and advice service to, and play a coordinating role in supporting the international Visiting Research Fellows, liaising with colleagues in HR and Information Services as required. Develop and maintain expert knowledge of relevant policies, procedures, information, resources and sources of support within and about the University, and maintain a high degree of familiarity with the external Higher Education landscape, in order to inform this service.
7. Work collaboratively with the internal Research Development team and Faculty Registries to ensure integrated support mechanisms are in place to underpin the activities of the Research Fellows and other key academic staff involved in the Institute.

1. Coordinate the day to day operational support for the Institute, including organising travel and accommodation arrangements for senior members of the Institute and its Research Fellows and ensuring there is an adequate stock of stationery and other materials.
2. To manage, process and maintain an overview of the purchasing to ensure its accuracy and accountability and ensure that financial documents are properly coded and processed for authorisation by the relevant budget holders. Liaise with the relevant internal Financial Services and Procurement teams where required.
3. Prepare and collate documents and management information for internal reviews, initiatives and projects undertaken by relevant University bodies. Produce a range of written materials for external and internal use, including correspondence, speeches, presentations, articles, reports and internal guidance documents.
4. Provide effective reciprocal cover within the wider professional support team of the Vice-Chancellor’s Office (e.g. during holidays and other absences, peak workload times), which will require acquiring a working knowledge of the different roles, and their requirements. This will also require familiarity with and understanding of University policies and procedures (particularly but not exclusively with respect to research, knowledge exchange and governance).
5. Undertake any other tasks as appropriate to the post holder’s competence and the grade of the post, as required by the line manager.

**CONTEXT**

The University of Westminster Strategy 2020 and Faculty Strategic Plans have identified the need to grow and support cross-disciplinary research of an inter-, trans- and multi-disciplinary nature as a priority. Such a requirement is met by the establishment of the *Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies*.

The Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies(WIAS)is an academic space for independent critical thinking beyond borders. Its aim is to foster and disseminate advanced studies that generate insights into the complex realities and possibilities of the contemporary world. It is a space for the development, discussion and dissemination of critical, innovative and creative research that contributes to understanding the challenges and problems society, culture, nature, art and technology face today. One of its key features is the Research Fellowship Programme that attracts and brings together current and future academic leaders who engage in independent critical thinking beyond borders. The WIAS is also the home of PhD students that conduct research on its research focuses. Its research is organised in the form of research focuses. Critical Social Media is the Institute’s first research theme and focus.

Professor Christian Fuchs is the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies’ Director. Until its full inauguration and physical manifestation in 29 Marylebone Road, the Institute is housed in the Westminster School of Media, Arts & Design at the University of Westminster’s Harrow Campus.

The postholder will provide professional executive support, and will develop effective working relationships with immediate colleagues, with the University’s senior post holders and with key staff at all levels across the University’s Faculties and Corporate Services Departments, ensuring co-ordination of available resources to support the delivery of the work of the Institute, and the activities of the Institute’s members. They will need to utilise organisational and political acumen, maintaining confidentiality, and acting in keeping with the University’s values at all times.

The University operates seven days a week and some services are open in the evenings and weekends. The post-holder will be expected to be available during for key events. Occasional out of hours working will be required and all appointments are made on the understanding that staff will serve at any of the University sites, as required.

**Dimensions**

* The postholder does not have line management responsibility.
* Responsibility for the monitoring of non-pay budgets and/or associated financial records, from time to time.

**KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

Director of the Westminster Institute for Advanced Studies

PVC Research & Academic Enterprise

University Executive Board

Vice-Chancellor’s Office

WIAS Steering Group Members and Research Fellows

Human Resources

Information Services

Research Development

Corporate Services Directors

Graduate School

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Essential criteria** | **Desirable Criteria** |
| **Qualifications** | A relevant first degree or equivalent practical experience that demonstrates relevant levels of knowledge and skills | A relevant post-graduate qualification  Membership of a relevant professional body (e.g. AUA or ICSA) |
| **Training and Experience** | Significant experience of executive level administration preferably in a Higher Education and/or research environment  Demonstrable experience of establishing fit for purpose administrative systems and processes  Demonstrable experience of drafting and presenting complex and detailed documents and reports for a range of audiences and purposes  Demonstrable experience in building effective working relationships and exercising initiative, tact and discretion in dealing with confidential matters  Evidence of political acumen and ability to influence, negotiate with and inspire colleagues to achieve individual and shared objectives  Highly IT literate (primarily but not exclusively MS Office) with advanced knowledge and experience of creating and manipulating reports/data, and preparing, editing and formatting documents.  Demonstrable experience in web editing , content management and development of web materials  Experience in the professional use of social media for public relations activities in the Higher Education sector.  Experience of high-level committee work, support and follow-up  Experience in successfully end to end organisation of events (e.g. conferences, seminars, workshops)  Experience of managing a wide range of tasks in a busy environment, working independently and under own initiative, as well as contributing to a wider team  High standard of numeracy and literacy. | Knowledge of the current and emerging landscape of the HE sector  Experience of providing support for Research Fellowships |
| **Aptitude and abilities** | Excellent verbal, written and interpersonal communication skills, and the ability to communicate effectively at all levels across a complex organisation and to gain the confidence, respect and co-operation of senior figures  Ability to build and sustain effective working relationships across the University (with staff and students) and with external international partners and stakeholders  High level analytical abilities using numeric and text documents and ability to comprehend and communicate information effectively  Ability to write coherent, focused and concise reports, minutes and documents.  Ability to organise own workload, to work on own initiative and as part of a team, and consider the wider context and implications when problem solving  Ability to effectively deliver conflicting priorities and challenging workloads by maintaining focus on agreed objectives and deliverables whatever the circumstances and monitoring progress against targets.  Ability to work under pressure to tight deadlines while applying quality standards to all tasks and ensuring that nothing is overlooked.  Ability to work flexibly by taking account of new information or changed circumstances and modifying understanding of a problem or situation accordingly. |  |
| **Personal Attributes** | Commitment to excellent levels of service to internal and external customers and stakeholders  Self-motivated with a flexible positive attitude.  Ability to work well under pressure on own initiative and as part of a busy team.  Able to bring creative solutions to tasks, to see new opportunities and to propose and implement and manage new initiatives.  Comfortable with ambiguity and rapidly changing agendas  Patient and persistent  Self-confident  Efficient and reliable |  |
| **Other** | Willingness to work long hours on occasion  Occasional overnight stays and weekend working, as required. |  |