

JOB DESCRIPTION

Note: 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.

1. JOB TITLE: Governance Support Officer

2. GRADE: NG5

3. REPORTS TO: Clerk to the Court of Governors and Head of University Governance

4. PURPOSE: The post holder is responsible for supporting the University's Executive Board and the Clerk to the Court of Governors in the provision of effective governance and management of the institution and, working with senior managers across the institution to provide professional advice and support to contribute to proactive, impactful and integrated governance.

5. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Act as Secretary to the University Executive Board (UEB) and the University Planning Committee (UPC), working with the Vice-Chancellor, the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer and members to provide robust and effective governance in support of effective delivery of the University's Strategy. Provide authoritative advice and guidance, in particular on the application and interpretation of the committees' terms of reference, the proper exercise of powers, and on the alignment of the responsibilities of these committees with the University's governance framework.
2. Act as Secretary to sub-committees of the Court of Governors as allocated by the Clerk to the Court. Work with the Clerk to the Court, Committee Chairs and Governors to provide robust and effective governance in support of the University's vision, mission and operations. To support the Clerk to the Court, in providing authoritative advice and guidance to these committees on the application and interpretation of their terms of reference, the proper exercise of powers, and on the alignment of the responsibilities of these committees with the University's governance framework.
3. Deliver professional governance support for UEB, UPC and other senior committees and working groups as required. Produce an annual schedule of business in discussion with the relevant Chair and senior colleagues, prioritising strategic issues. Through effective working relationships across the organisation, ensure colleagues adhere to agreed deadlines, templates and governance processes. Ensure the timely preparation of agendas, papers, and minutes, publication of outcomes and execution of follow up actions.
4. Be the first point of contact to provide advice and written guidance as required on University governance practices and processes, alignment with appropriate regulatory frameworks and external offices and agencies that impact on University work and governance. Provide support to the Clerk to the Court of Governors and Head of University Governance in any aspect of internal governance, compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements, and in managing the relationships between the UEB and the Court of Governors.

5. Line manage the Governance, Compliance and Risk Administrator, directing their work and supporting their professional development, to ensure an effective and efficient administrative service to the team.
6. Provide overview reports and analysis when required, relating to key governance projects, UEB initiatives or Court of Governor's requirements. To coordinate and lead on small projects as directed by the Clerk to Court, aligned to UEB and Court of Governor's requirements. Ensure presentation of data suitable for a variety of audiences and in line with GDPR compliance.
7. Produce content for governance web pages and intranet sites as directed by the Clerk to the Court, including guidance on governance processes, publication of minutes, reports and other documents, and updates to the member profiles on the Court of Governors web page.
8. Foster and maintain good relationships with the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive to ensure effective collaboration in the delivery of governance processes and to enable open and trusted communication around strategic and highly confidential matters.
9. Develop and maintain a detailed knowledge of the UK Higher Education sector, and the wider external environment in which the University operates and reflect this knowledge in guidance and advice to committees, Chairs and colleagues as appropriate.
10. Proactively seek to inform colleagues of new developments in regulatory and governance frameworks for HE to achieve continuous improvement in governance processes. Manage the periodic effectiveness review of UEB (and its sub-committees, where relevant) and provide information to internal audit and the Clerk to the Court of Governors to support reviews and assurance reports on governance practice and compliance with regulation and policy.
11. Undertake such tasks as appropriate within the post holder's competence as required from time to time by the Line Manager.

6. CONTEXT

The University of Westminster has approximately 20,000 students across 5 Faculties spanning a wide range of disciplines. The consolidated turnover of the University and its subsidiary companies was approximately £202 million for the year ended 31 July 2015.

The University of Westminster has more than 20,000 students from 170 different nations across three Colleges spanning a wide range of disciplines. The consolidated turnover of the University and its subsidiary companies was approximately £211 million for the year ended 31 July 2020.

At the University of Westminster, diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity are at the core of how we engage with students, colleagues, applicants, visitors and all our stakeholders. We are fully committed to enabling a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

The Strategy, Planning and Performance Department produces integrated and forward-looking intelligence to support the University in the achievement of its core mission. The Department comprises four teams: Governance, Compliance and Risk; KPI Enhancement; Strategic Planning; and Business Analytics and Market Insight. The Department provides stakeholders with timely, accurate and relevant management information for driving efficiencies and effectiveness; it runs the annual strategic planning round with Colleges and Professional Service Departments; and it is responsible for the effective governance of the University.

The University requires all post holders to have an understanding of individual Health and Safety responsibilities and an awareness of the risks in the work environment, together with their potential impact on both individual work and that of others.

The Governance Support Officer reports directly to the Clerk to the Court of Governors and is responsible for the efficient running of the University Executive Board and the University Planning Committee. The post holder will contribute to the University's strategic planning processes (in particular processes relating to governance) and to the delivery of departmental objectives.

7. DIMENSIONS

- Line management responsibility for the Governance, Compliance and Risk Administrator
- The post holder will liaise with a wide range of stakeholders including governors, UEB and UPC members and Professional Service Directors

PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. QUALIFICATIONS

- First degree or equivalent relevant experience (E)

2. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

- Thorough knowledge of governance best practice (E)
- Proven understanding of the structure and governance of Universities (E)
- Experience of providing effective secretarial support at Executive level (E)
- Experience of providing support, advice and services to a wide range of customers (E)
- Experience of dealing with confidential data and an understanding of the implications of the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information (E)
- Experience of report production, including collation of information, analysis and presentation of content suitable for a variety of audiences.(E)
- Experience of providing support to working groups or committees.(E)
- Evidence of working independently to high professional standards, preferably in a multi-site environment and the implications of this on working practices. (E)
- Experience of building effective relationships with senior leaders/managers in order to achieve operational efficiencies (E)
- Experience of reviewing processes in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Researching, analysing and implementing alternative solutions to improve service delivery (E)
- A high level of literacy and numeracy (E)
- Excellent knowledge of MS Office tools and intranet systems (E)
- Experience of working in a busy multi-disciplinary department (E)
- Experience of providing professional advice on best practice governance (D)
- Previous experience working within Higher Education with associated experience of University governance (D)
- Web editing skills (D)

3. APTITUDES AND ABILITIES

- Ability to work to tight deadlines and organise workload with minimal supervision (E)
- Ability to operate with discretion and sensitivity due to the exposure to confidential governance and management information (E)
- Ability to operate with a high degree of autonomy or under the direction of the Clerk to the Court of Governors, the Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance or other senior colleagues as appropriate (E).
- Ability to carry out work accurately and with great attention to detail (E)
- Ability to establish good working relationships with staff at a variety of levels and with external agencies (E)
- Ability to work in an efficient and organised manner with the ability to prioritise and handle multiple tasks (E)
- A proactive approach to problem solving (E)
- A flexible attitude to changing workloads (E)

4. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Self-motivated with a positive and flexible attitude (E)
- Ability to work well under pressure on own initiative and as part of a busy team (E)
- Fully committed to the University's values (progressive, compassionate, responsible) and to contributing to an actively anti-racist, inclusive and safe environment (E)