

Job Description

Senior Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Officer

Salary:	Grade 7
Contract:	Full time, fixed term
Location:	Canterbury with expectation to work at Medway occasionally, if required
Responsible to:	Head of Appeals, Conduct and Complaints
Responsible for:	Supervisory responsibility of day-to-day work of team of ACCO officers
Job family:	Administrative, professional and managerial

Job purpose

The role holder will provide a highly efficient and responsive approach to the management of student appeals, conduct and complaints and conduct matters at the University of Kent. They will coordinate the investigation and response for all forms of student regulatory matters and casework at the University, balancing a sympathetic understanding of the student experience with consistent compliance with policy. They will ensure best-practice through the provision of advice, training and guidance to colleagues and stakeholders, in addition to handling their own caseload of complex cases.

Key accountabilities

The following are the main duties for the job. Other duties, commensurate with the grading of the job, may also be assigned from time to time.

- Undertake and advise on investigations into complex matters, sensitively and in line with best practice, ensuring that university policies, and regulatory requirements are upheld and that students and staff receive a clear, tactful and professional service.
- Be a point of escalation for investigations undertaken by Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Officers.
- Facilitate student disciplinary panels, including preparation of paperwork and advising panel chairs of appropriate procedures.
- Be responsible for casework supervision of appeals, complaints and conduct matters, overseeing the effective response to enquiries, triaging cases and ensuring timely resolution to high volumes of appeals, complaints and conduct matters.
- Prepare and check investigatory reports, assessing detailed information and evidence, communicating complexity in clear and concise recommendations and outcome letters.
- Assist the Head of Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office to prepare documentation for Final Review of complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- To provide advice, guidance and training to stakeholders, promoting best-practice in the handling of appeals, complaints and conduct matters.
- To engage with stakeholders in the Kent Students' Union, Directorate of Student Life, Academic Schools and other Professional Services on continual improvement to procedures and policies related to student conduct and complaint matters, developing and reviewing guidance for students engaging with these processes.
- The role-holder will also assist in developing new mechanisms in a bid to reduce appeals, instances of student misconduct and enhance student personal safety.

Key challenges and decisions

The following provide an overview of the most challenging or complex parts of the role and the degree of autonomy that exists.

- Provide authoritative advice to stakeholders, and solve complex queries, many of which are not covered by written rules and procedures, based on a strong understanding of the University's regulatory framework.
- Implement internal monitoring and reporting independently and to the highest of standards and within set timeframes and deadlines.
- Manage a caseload of appeals, complaints and conduct investigations and make a judgement on upholding or dismissing individual cases, whilst overseeing caseload of team.
- Make autonomous decisions based upon the likely level of risk to the University in relation to ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks, legislation and threat of damage to the institution's reputation.
- Design and deliver appropriate training relevant to area of specialism.

Facts & figures

The role holders will be working in a team of Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Officers with a Head of Appeals, Conduct and Complaints. The team handles cases relating to students across all academic Schools and works closely with key colleagues in across the Academic Schools and Professional Services Directorates.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Departments within the Directorates of Student Life and Governance, Assurance and Legal Services; Academic Schools; Campus Security; Accommodation Office; Kent Students' Union; Executive Group.

External: Representatives of individual students; Office of Independent Adjudicator; members of the public; external organisations; local authorities including the police

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

This job involves undertaking duties which include the following health, safety and wellbeing considerations:

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Working in isolation
- Conflict resolution
- Working under pressure and in stressful situations
- Ability to occasionally travel in a timely and efficient manner between campuses

Person specification

The person specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Applications will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in an application, or cover letter (where applicable), which back-up any assertions made in relation to each criterion.

Essential Criteria:

- Educated to degree level or equivalent experience (A)
- Experience in leading complex investigations, including conducting interviews, analysing information, preparing reports and making recommendations (I)
- Sound knowledge of data protection, with the ability to effectively assess risks related to confidentiality, liability and safeguarding (I)

- Ability to manage challenging situations with sensitivity and tact, effectively negotiating and mediating between parties. (I)
- Ability to work to a high level of accuracy with excellent attention to detail (I,A)
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to communicate effectively, clearly and concisely both verbally and in writing (I, T)
- Proficient in prioritising competing responsibilities, working under pressure and meeting conflicting deadlines and targets (I,A)
- A firm commitment to fostering a working and learning environment that is respectful, inclusive and values diversity, including diversity of thought, and which enables staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds to thrive (I)

Desirable Criteria:

- A sound knowledge and understanding of relevant procedures and regulatory frameworks in higher education (A, I)
- Experience in alternative dispute resolution and mediation; legal or justice fields; or prior work with ombudsman or regulatory body. (A,I)
- Experience of the design and delivery of training materials to a variety of audiences ranging from one-to-one to large, diverse group presentations (I)

Assessment stage: A - Application; I - Interview; T - Test/presentation at interview stage