Job Description

Governance Support Officer

Salary: Grade 5
Contract: Full time, fixed term
Location: Canterbury Campus with requirement to work across campuses
Responsible to: Governance Manager
Job family: Administrative, professional and managerial

Job purpose

The Governance Support Officer will be part of a team which delivers the day-to-day secretariat services required to support the University's academic and corporate governance committees.

This role is key to effective delivery of the University's governance secretariat function and will provide professional expertise and support to the Governance Manager in a range of areas, particularly focusing on those matters relating to providing professional secretariat services and project support for the governance structure of the Board of Governors, Academic Board, and their boards and subcommittees.

The role holder will research, draft and support the consultation process on policies, reports, and processes necessary to ensure the effective and legally compliant operation of all University governance operations. They will also manage the Directorate internal and external communications channels and will be first point of contact for a range of stakeholders.

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.

- Support a range of University committees to ensure that these have effective and efficient secretarial support and function in accordance with agreed internal and external standards and schedules, good practice and the correct legal framework(s).
- Assist in planning of the annual programme of work for each of the committees, drafting the overarching committee schedule and associated agenda planners.
- Assist the Deputy University Secretary and Governance Manager with recruitment or election, induction and ongoing support of committee members.
- Provide administrative support for projects and initiatives run within the Directorate e.g., support ad hoc working groups, and compile and present of a range of reports, statistics and information relevant to the work of same.
- Support the Deputy University Secretary and Governance Manager in the ongoing review and drafting of the University's governing documents to ensure they are fit for purpose and take account of relevant legal framework(s) (for example, Articles of Association; Terms of Reference and related policies, procedures and regulations).
- Provide support for Directorate communications across multiple channels. Ensure that the Directorates website, social media channels and external listings are effective, attractive, conform to legislative and accessibility requirements, are easy to navigate and that content is up to date.
- Act as first point of contact for all queries to the Directorate, resolving where possible and/or triaging for escalation as appropriate.

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.

- The role holder will, in the provision of day-to-day secretariat services, make decisions and recommendations and advise senior colleagues, board/committee Chairs and other stakeholders in regards the business of committees to ensure operation within the appropriate regulatory framework (Articles of Association and Regulations). In regards non-standard matters, they will consult and advise on the appropriate route forward and will know when it is appropriate and necessary to do so.
- They will be required to manage a workload with competing demands and deadlines. The role holder will agree objectives and overall priorities with their line manager but is expected to manage most unexpected/unplanned work within overall timeframes and to resolve day to day operational difficulties within team using own judgement and experience.
- The role holder should role model the Nolan principles of public life coaching and mentoring as appropriate.
- They will need to exercise consistent, positive and persuasive communications across the University to ensure appropriate structures, frameworks and methods for the oversight of University activities are in place. They will need to ensure they act within the law, sector guidance, and with integrity, meeting regulatory requirements.
- The role holder will remain aware of Higher Education policy changes surrounding corporate and academic governance to ensure that the University's policies and procedures align with good practice and do not put the University at risk.

Facts & figures

The Governance Support Officer is responsible for supporting the Governance Manager in all matters relating to corporate and academic governance, and their effective operation. Due to the committee cycle, this may at times mean dealing with a number of committees and boards at the same time, ensuring a high-quality and professional service is still delivered despite peaks in activity. This role may also involve a high-volume of other administrative activity to manage alongside the regular committee cycle (for example, responding to requests from the Office for Students, or to solicitors' letters).

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Board of Governors, Academic Board and their boards, subcommittees and groups, Executive Group and their committees, Heads of School, Professional Services Directors, Heads of sections in professional services areas, staff and students and the Student Union

External: Regulatory bodies e.g. Office for Students, professional and accreditation bodies, other universities and partners, lawyers and legal advisors, government bodies and departments.

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

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

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Repetitive limb movements
- Pressure to meet important deadlines such as might be inherent in high profile projects
- 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:

- Degree in a relevant field, or equivalent qualification or experience (A)
- Experience of working within the higher education (or related) sector (A,I)
- Proven experience of providing effective administrative support to senior management in a large and complex organisation (A,I)
- Demonstrable experience of servicing and supporting high-level committees (A,I)
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with proven ability to build credible relationships with a broad range of stakeholders, including senior executives and committee members (I)
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills; the ability to use initiative and effectively organise own workload to balance competing priorities, remaining calm under pressure and working to tight deadlines. Systematic in approach to tasks, with attention to detail (I,T)
- Good IT skills, particularly Microsoft Office packages (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) (I,T)
- An excellent standard of written English (A)
- Ability to produce clear and concise written materials, including minutes, as well as effective research skills, and to communicate same (A,I,T)
- Ability to work flexibly and consultatively around the governance cycle and committees (I)
- Ability to exercise discretion when required (I)
- Experience of working with multi-disciplinary teams across a department and an institution/company (I)
- 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:

- Experience of supporting University governing bodies and their subcommittees (A)
- An understanding and/or appreciation of the HE sector (A,I)
- Experience of designing and maintaining websites (A,I)

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