Job Description – Widening Access and Student Success Manager

About the role

The Widening Access and Student Success Manager will lead and manage an outcomes focused team while providing leadership and influence across The Open University in Scotland (OUiS), the wider OU and externally. You will develop and implement a range of strategic initiatives to enhance OUiS’ work to improve student success and build on the OUiS’ reputation as Scotland’s national widening access university.

The OU in Scotland has ambitious plans to ensure its innovative access policy is matched by exceptional levels of student success and satisfaction. You will play a key leadership role in this area focusing on widening access and success as well as student satisfaction for OUiS students. You will ensure that teaching and learning in The Open University reflects the needs of the Scottish policy context and learners in Scotland. You will co-ordinate and be responsible for OUiS’ engagement with QAA Scotland as well as developing an enhancement based approach within your team and more broadly across OUiS. You will ensure an ever stronger role for the student voice.

You will scan the policy and political environment and be well connected within the wider university in order to highlight and take advantage of opportunities while identifying and mitigating risks. You and your team will work in partnership with academic colleagues including associate lecturers, colleagues delivering a range of professional services, and students. You will lead a close working relationship between your team and Student Recruitment and Support Scotland and planning and data colleagues.

You will also lead on our evaluation work in this area, ensuring our activities, outcomes and impacts are based on a strong evidence base to support our reporting to the Scottish Funding Council.

Key Responsibilities

a) Lead and manage the widening access and student success Scotland team in line with University policies.

b) Lead on operational planning, implementation and co-ordination of The OU in Scotland’s widening access and student success agenda and ensure work is effectively communicated with OUiS, OU and externally. The focus will be on access and success for all including those with widening access and protected characteristics.

c) Contribute to the achievement of targets and outcomes associated with the OUiS Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council, OU strategic plan and other internal and external commitments. You will lead co-ordination of outcomes relating to widening access, student success and satisfaction and deliver directly on some of these.

d) Take responsibility for a portfolio of specific partner relationships and projects, and ensure appropriate processes including record keeping, reporting and generic project management are undertaken.
e) Working closely with colleagues in the Planning and Data team, assume the lead role on evaluation activity, data collection and analysis, report writing and other dissemination activity relating to your portfolio.

f) Manage budgets in your work area, including forecasting, monitoring and ensuring best value.

g) Work alongside colleagues to identify significant opportunities, securing support and funding to enable their delivery.

h) Analyse relevant data and write and produce reports for internal and external audiences.

i) Contribute to internal and external groups and committees as appropriate, taking a leadership role in these groups as appropriate.

j) Identify opportunities to promote, publicise and share your successes, those of your team and of The OU in Scotland.

The role holder may be required to undertake any other duties reasonably required within the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the role, subject to the proviso that normally any changes of a permanent nature shall be incorporated into the job description in specific terms.

All staff are expected:

- To comply with the University’s Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies in the performance of your duties.

- To take reasonable care of the health and safety of yourself and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work.

- To co-operate with The Open University in ensuring as far as is necessary, that Statutory Requirements, Codes of Practice, University Policies and Departmental Health and Safety arrangements are complied with.

- To demonstrate a strong commitment to the principles and practice of equality and diversity.

**Skills and Experience**

**Requirements  (E = Essential/ D = Desirable)**

**Education, qualifications and training**

**Essential**
- A degree or equivalent qualification.

**Desirable**
- A higher degree in a relevant subject.

**Knowledge, work and other relevant experience**

**Essential:**
- Previous experience of leading and managing an outcomes focused team.
- Experience of developing and delivering operational plans.
• A track record of building relationships with a range of colleagues, partners and stakeholders to support delivery of outcomes.
• Experience of project management, implementation and evaluation, including the dissemination of learning to other interest groups.
• Experience of an evidence-based approach.
• Confident working with complex data.
• Knowledge and experience of supporting widening access and success in the context of higher education.
• An understanding of current policy drivers in Scotland in relation to widening access and student success and one or more of student satisfaction; learning and teaching; and enhancement.
• Knowledge of the Further and Higher Education sectors in Scotland.
• Experience of budgetary management.
• Previous experience of working in a complex organisational environment.

Desirable:
• An understanding of the needs of part-time adult learners and the challenges facing students in a distance learning context.
• Experience of working in Higher Education.

Personal abilities and qualities

Essential:
• The ability to work on your own initiative, to make considered decisions and to work in an open and collegiate way.
• A collaborative mindset, when engaging with a wide range of stakeholders & colleagues.
• Excellent organisational abilities, particularly in relation to a diverse and demanding work portfolio.
• Well-developed interpersonal, influencing and communication skills.
• Excellent presentation skills e.g. presenting your work to internal colleagues and at external events.
• Excellent IT skills.
• A growth mind-set where you are open to ideas and possibilities and can respond positively to challenges and setbacks.
• Resilient and adaptable to change.
• A commitment to the ideals of The Open University, including access for all, equal opportunities and diversity issues.

Additional Requirements:
The role holder should be prepared to travel around Scotland and occasionally to other OU locations.