Job Description – Assistant Director, Student Policy and Casework

About the Role

Student Policy and Casework (SPC) is responsible for the maintenance of student policies and regulations, and the management of all student complaints, appeals and reviews on behalf of the University, and forms an integral part of Student Support.

The Assistant Director, Student Policy and Casework, holds an essential central leadership role that provides strategic oversight and support to protecting the University from financial and reputational risk, through the effective maintenance of student policies and regulations, and management of all student complaints, appeals and reviews on behalf of the University.

As well as working collaboratively with a number of student-facing policy and regulatory teams and units across the University, the Assistant Director, Student Policy and Casework plays an important role in ensuring the insight gained from students and staff about their engagement with policies, regulations and complaints, is used to enhance student satisfaction and deliver a seamless student experience.

On the day to day basis, the Assistant Director, Student Policy and Casework will provide strategic leadership and effective management to two teams (totalling ~20 staff):

- Student Casework Office (SCO), who oversee all aspects of student casework from complaints and appeals, to disciplinary hearings and fitness to study reviews.
- Student Policy and Regulations (SPR) who ensure the contractual terms and conditions for current and future students are compliant, fair and transparent.

Key Responsibilities

Staff Leadership

- Provide day to day leadership and line management support to senior members of Student Policy and Casework, and oversee the performance management of the wider Student Policy and Casework team.
- Support staff in the management of complex student cases and regulatory reviews, by offering leadership advice, helping with decision-making, and ensuring all recommended outcomes and actions are compliant with policies, regulations, and external regulatory expectations.
- Act as a mentor and coach, to motivate individuals and teams to achieve high levels of productivity and engagement.
• Embed a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration amongst Student Policy and Casework staff, to promote a clear understanding of shared values and responsibilities, and to ensure a collaborative team-based approach is employed to develop and implement enhancements in practice.

Leadership in policies, procedures and regulations

• Provide expert and authoritative advice and guidance to units across the University on current student policies, regulations and compliance, and lead on the revisions, development and implementation of any changes to policies and procedures, in line with internal and/or external regulatory requirements.

• Promote internal and external policy and regulatory changes across the University, and support other units to embed such changes to the curriculum (e.g. Recognition of Prior and Experiential Learning, RPEL).

• Ensure all student policies, procedures and operations relating to student casework comply with external regulators, independent organisations and review bodies.

• Provide regular reports to the University’s governance on student casework, policy amendments and reputational risks to the University.

Continual improvement and student experience

• Lead regular and systematic reviews to ensure effective operation of processes for managing student casework, including the setting of KPMs, KPIs and service level agreements.

• Identify and drive forward changes and improvements to policies, procedures and regulations to enhance the student experience.

• Work closely with senior leaders to make use of insight gained from upheld complaints and appeals, to review policies, procedures and actions taken across the University, as a means of improving the student experience, while also being cognisant of external regulatory body expectations.

• Establish and manage a series of robust processes and measures that demonstrate organisational learning is in place, and that continual improvements and policy changes are being implemented in a timely manner, when identified.

External regulatory awareness and responsibilities

• Work closely with colleagues across the University to understand the impact and implications of new statutory requirements and regulations across the four nations of the UK for the University.

• Ensure continued University compliance with external regulations and frameworks (including the Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework and Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA)), identifying, implementing and overseeing identified improvements in relevant policies and processes.

• Liaise directly with external agencies and authorities (including the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)) on behalf of the University, to develop and maintain effective operational and reputational relationships.

• Work with colleagues in other units, to develop and maintain effective relationships with insurers, solicitors and other relevant external bodies to ensure thorough.
understanding of the University and casework specifics to respond to legal challenges.

- Lead on the University’s response to the Prevent Counter-Terrorism Duty, working closely with the University’s Safeguarding Referrals Team, the Department for Education and the National Counter-Terrorism Unit.

Skills and Experience

1. Degree level education and/or equivalent experience in Higher Education or a related field, relevant to working with policies, regulations and complaints.

2. Understanding of the regulatory framework for Higher Education within the UK, how these differs across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

3. Experience of working with and responding to a changing regulatory and legislative environment, using this to ensure continuing compliance of policy and practise.

4. Substantial experience of overseeing and responding to complex and challenging complaints, and identifying the potential reputational and financial risks these may bring to the University.

5. Significant experience of managing staff, overseeing day to day priorities, providing performance management and supporting teams to work collaborative to embed good practice in policy expertise and casework management.

6. An open and transparent approach to working with others, with the ability to influence others with integrity while maintaining strict confidentiality in all areas of work.

7. Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to build, develop and maintain successful internal and external relationships and to use resources effectively to deliver towards university and unit objectives.

8. Excellent communication and presentation skills, including the ability to write clear and unambiguous reports and guidance materials for a range of internal and external audiences.

9. Effective comprehension and numeracy skills, with the ability to quickly and accurately assess and interpret large amounts of complex information, and to use this reach clear, definite and timely decisions.

10. Proven ability to organise and prioritise own workload, and work to competing deadlines while remaining effective under pressure, and to navigate through ambiguity and competing interests.

11. Strong commitment to the University’s mission and values, and to the integration and delivery of equality, diversity and inclusion principles.