SENIOR QUALITY AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER (Ireland)

1. Summary of duties

The Open University has seen significant growth in the volume of validation partnerships with Further Education (FE) Colleges in Northern Ireland in recent years and expects to see this continue in the future. Development of this partnership approach with the FE sector is a strategic priority for The Open University in Ireland and the post holder will play a critical role in both developing new, and maintaining existing, partnerships.

The post holder will provide support for the management, implementation and development of the University’s arrangements for assuring and enhancing the quality and standard of its validated provision in Northern Ireland, and in other locations as directed. The post holder will also lead on the OU’s support and guidance to a number of the University’s partner institutions and liaise with academic colleagues in this work. While the post holder will report to the Deputy Director, OU Validation Partnerships, they will be expected to work closely with the Open University in Ireland and play a full role as part of that team, working in partnership to meet University objectives in Ireland.

• Senior Quality and Partnerships Managers are expected to work as members of various project or functional teams. Examples include: the management and organisation of approval and review activity; working with colleagues in partner institutions or elsewhere in the University on quality enhancement led activities; leading and being responsible for the work of a project team;

• Senior Quality and Partnerships Managers are expected to organise a schedule of activities and visit institutions, attend meetings and conferences across and outside the University;

• Senior Quality and Partnerships Managers should expect to spend time away from home at a variety of events. This post involves extensive UK and international travel and including long-haul trips for up to a week at a time.

• Each Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager will work closely with administrative and support colleagues in OU Validation Partnerships; and with academic colleagues across the University.

Duties may vary, but the core activities will include:

• to be a nominated contact for a group of partner institutions, primarily in Northern Ireland, (but which will include overseas partners) and subject areas;

• to be responsible for the provision of authoritative advice, support and guidance to partner institutions, University colleagues and external peers on the University’s requirements and expectations in respect of the quality assurance of collaborative provision;

• to support and guide partner institutions in the development of their own arrangements for the management of quality and enhancement of the student experience;

• to participate in, and prepare University reports about, institutional and programme approval and review in conjunction, where appropriate, with other members of University staff;

• to evaluate, offer feedback, and report to the University on partners’ annual monitoring outcomes;

• to contribute to the University’s understanding and awareness of emerging strengths and weaknesses of its validated provision;

• to liaise with partner institutions, OU academics and other university staff in agreeing annual programmes of enhancement-led engagements for each institution;

• to foster and encourage academic dialogue between partner institutions and between the University and its partners;

• to service University committees or working groups that may from time to time be assigned, including the preparation of policy papers, agenda and minutes;

• to liaise with other OU Validation Partnership staff, working in a variety of OU Validation Partnership teams to support and deliver the Unit’s responsibilities;

• to supervise, as appropriate, the maintenance of records and correspondence provide accurate information and data in support of the Unit’s responsibilities;
• to represent the Director or Deputy Directors in external and internal activities and events, for example with employers, other institutions, professional or statutory bodies;
• to prepare any other papers and reports as required;
• to undertake line management of OUVP staff as required;
• to represent The Open University at meetings with the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland and Department of Education and Skills in the Republic of Ireland.
• to undertake such other duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Director or Deputy Director.

2. Person specification

Requirements  (E = Essential/ D = Desirable)

Education, qualifications and training

- A first degree, or equivalent higher education qualification or equivalent experience (E)
- Postgraduate Level in an appropriate discipline (D)

Knowledge, work and other relevant experience

Essential:
- Experience of work in an FE/HE environment with an awareness of issues relevant to the higher education sector in Northern Ireland, across the UK and internationally.
- Knowledge of FE/HE Quality Assurance and enhancement systems.
- Substantial experience of report writing and critical analysis.
- Stakeholder management experience
- Partner relationship management experience

Desirable:
- Line management experience

Personal abilities and qualities

Essential:
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to interpret policy and disseminate information effectively.
- Friendly and approachable, with a patient and facilitative manner.
- Excellent inter-personal and negotiating skills, with the ability and confidence to influence, advise and support others over whom there is no formal authority, including senior academic staff
- Flexibility and the ability to work co-operatively and responsively in a variety of team settings,
- Ability to work on own initiative
• Ability to prioritise and remain effective under pressure
• An understanding of and commitment to Equal Opportunity and Respect for Diversity policies in the OU and partner institutions
• Ability to travel and spend time in national and international locations, often at short notice and long-haul trips of up to a week at a time.

Desirable: N/A

Location: The Open University in Ireland, Belfast

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND

The Open University in Ireland is responsible for the delivery of core services to enquirers and students throughout Ireland. It serves approximately 6000 students and 200 Associate Lecturers, and offers tutorial and examination facilities at locations across Ireland.

The Belfast office is the base for 63 members of staff including the Director, Ireland, two Assistant Directors and a range of academic, academic-related and support staff. There is also an Enquiry and Advice Centre in Dublin, which is the permanent base for a small number of staff and also provides a facility for other University staff as required. The Director, Ireland is the Vice Chancellor’s delegate in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. He is responsible for the strategic leadership and development of the University in both jurisdictions, ensuring that the Open University in Ireland operates within the framework of University policies and procedures.

The Open University is committed to sustaining and growing its presence in Ireland working effectively with governments and elected representatives in both jurisdictions to promote the development of innovative higher education, with a focus on supported, part time distance learning and open media options.

The Open University is funded in Northern Ireland by the Department of the Economy and works closely with departmental staff to contribute to the Higher Education and Widening Access Strategies. Through delivery of an outstanding enquirer and student experience, public, governmental and academic engagement, strong partnerships and excellent staff and resources, we empower people in Northern Ireland to achieve their potential and in so doing contribute to society and the economy. There is no government funding in the Republic of Ireland but the University provides excellent higher education opportunities which enable ordinary people to achieve extraordinary things. Our student recruitment and support staff, working in partnership with colleagues in other areas of the University, aim to provide a high quality, seamless experience for enquirers and students from the start of their Open University experience to the point where they achieve their study goal, whatever that may be.

Staff are involved in planning and organising large scale operations, using new technology to produce materials and information and, effective management of resources to provide and deliver all services on schedule. All staff are concerned with the maintenance and improvement of our high standards of support to individual enquirers and students and have a strong customer service ethos.

The Open University in Belfast is located at 110 Victoria Street, Belfast, just a short walk from Central Station and close to all city centre amenities. The Dublin office is located in Holles Street, Dublin and is also within easy reach of public transport.

Further information on The Open University in Ireland may be found on our websites: www.open.ac.uk/northern-ireland and www.open.ac.uk/republic-of-ireland