Job Related Information

This document includes information about the role for which you are applying and the information you will need to provide with your application.

1. Role Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy reference:</th>
<th>15008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Senior Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>Manager, Student Support (Operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions:</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>£22,659 to £25,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of post:</td>
<td>Temporary contract till 5 August 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours:</td>
<td>37 per week (full time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>The OU in Scotland (based in Edinburgh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing date:</td>
<td>5pm 15 September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of application form accepted:</td>
<td>Full version only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referees required:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit recruitment contact:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Scotland-Staffing-Coordinator@open.ac.uk">Scotland-Staffing-Coordinator@open.ac.uk</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 2. Summary of duties

The role holder will work as part of a wider team based within the office of The Open University in Scotland and will help students and prospective students make choices about their studies that meet their needs and support retention, progression and customer satisfaction. The key duties are:

1. To provide proactive support across all areas of the curriculum, through provision of complex advice to students and prospective students on a wide range of queries to maximize student success. To also act as a point of contact for reactive queries and requests for advice and support received via a variety of channels.

2. Where necessary to refer on to other staff with specialist expertise, as part of the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) model; making interactions with The Open University as effortless and seamless as possible.

3. To concentrate on the delivery of a specific area of work/areas of work, such as work with students in secure environments, disability support, proactive study campaigns, retention and progression activities (the list is not exhaustive), whilst also making a significant contribution to the core service.

### Main Responsibilities:

1. To provide complex and/or curriculum related advice to support students and prospective students in registration and study with The Open University, through both proactive and reactive contact via a number of channels including inbound and outbound phone calls, emails, letters, online webchat, online forums and social media, and face to face:
   - Act as the first point of referral, including via hot transfers and pre-booked appointments, for students and prospective students requiring complex advice and information, using judgement and expertise to assess queries and ensure that advice needs are identified and addressed, referring on where appropriate.
   - Act as the first point of referral for students who may present with challenging issues and/or behaviour, e.g.: where a student is distressed because they have missed a deadline critical to their studies.
   - Advice provision across all areas of the curriculum using judgement and expertise as well as reference to standard operating procedures and policies, informed by use of a knowledge management system as well as briefings, training events, use of databases and printed material to access accurate and up to date information and advice.
   - This will cover a range of matters across the student lifecycle from choice of qualification, career based enquiries, change of study intention to TMA (tutor marked assignment) extensions and tutor referrals.

2. To undertake associated administrative and operational processes to action student requests:
   - Accurately record and maintain student and prospective student details on university systems and databases.
   - Ensure all work is carried out to required standards.
   - Ensure that complex guidance needs and issues are identified and met, referring/transferring calls appropriately and effectively to other specialist staff as part of an IAG model.
   - Where appropriate or necessary, book follow up appointments for those specialist.

3. To work as part of a flexible operation to provide support and answer queries from students, prospective students and Associate Lecturers within agreed timescales. To work to a rota to ensure that all activity is dealt with promptly and effectively and within agreed Service Levels:
   - Participate actively in the achievement of agreed service standards
   - Contribute to the regular monitoring and review of these standards
   - Exercise judgement in dealing with complex issues, interpreting and applying guidelines with initiative whilst operating within defined boundaries.
4. To assist proactively in the development and continuous improvement of good internal and inter team working and service provision:
   • Attending and actively participating in team meetings and developmental activities.
   • Contributing to business improvement ideas and initiatives, making recommendations to Managers as appropriate.
   • Showing initiative in helping the team to run smoothly and working with and supporting other teams as required.
   • Engage actively in the support and development of new team members.
   • Contribute to the development of effective team delivery relating to IAG.
   • Undertaking other activities as directed by the Manager, Student Support (Operations).

5. To continually develop skills and knowledge to maintain and improve personal performance in the spirit of continuous improvement and to adopt correct and evolving business practices and procedures:
   • Undertaking all duties in accordance with internal policy and external legislation.
   • Working with the Learner Support Manager to understand personal performance and areas for development.
   • Providing feedback to contribute to colleagues performance development.
   • Accepting feedback from colleagues to improve personal skills and knowledge.
   • Ability to work under pressure and maintain service standards through peak periods.

6. Delivery and/or coordination of a specific area of work/areas of work, such as work with students in secure environments, disability work, proactive study campaigns, retention and progression activities (the list is not exhaustive).
   • Liaison with central colleagues/staff in other areas of the University and/or external organisations.
   • Act as local knowledge expert facilitating briefings/training and/or coaching and mentoring colleagues.
   • Ensuring any issues are reported appropriately.
   • Gathering and reporting feedback on procedures, briefing materials etc.

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.

3. Person specification

Requirements  (E = Essential/ D = Desirable)

**Education, qualifications and training**

**Essential**
- Standard Grade Maths and English at Grade C or above, or equivalent.

**Desirable**
- Relevant VQ to Level 2 or above (e.g. Customer Services or Information, Advice and Guidance, Customer Care).
- Some familiarity with administration.
Knowledge, work and other relevant experience

Essential:
- Experience of answering and actioning complex and diverse queries, using a wide range of information sources.
- Experience of providing information and advice and the ability to transfer this experience to a higher education context.
- Ability to maintain own knowledge bank in a coherent and systematic way and carry out research as necessary.
- Ability to identify deficiencies in information sources and take proactive measures to improve and enhance clarity and accuracy for the service as a whole.

Desirable:
- Experience of inbound and outbound calling in a complex customer services environment.
- Experience of working to personal, team and organisational targets.

Personal abilities and qualities

Essential:
- Good communication skills: both oral and written, with effective telephone techniques and the ability to explain policies and processes in plain English as well as to write clearly, succinctly and correctly in plain English.
- Good interpersonal skills: including active listening skills and the ability to respond to identified needs through the use of varied questioning techniques.
- Flexibility: including adaptability to changing circumstances, duties, work practices and systems and a commitment to ongoing development with the ability to demonstrate a rapid understanding of newly presented information.
- Good planning and organisational skills: including the ability to cope with heavy workloads and to meet deadlines, working productively and accurately in a high pressure environment.
- Good negotiating skills.
- An ability to deal with and follow complex information and procedures: using initiative and judgement in problem-solving, whilst recognising boundaries.
- Strong IT skills: including use of standard Microsoft Office packages, and the ability to learn to use a range of in-house and commercial systems.
- An understanding of team working and the ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- An understanding of Equal Opportunities (EO) issues and a commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.
- Commitment to excellent customer service and continuous improvement.
- Commitment to and role model for the University's values.

Desirable:
- Ability to adapt interpersonal styles to suit different people or situations.
- Evidence of understanding the roles that individuals play as part of a team.
- Evidence of applying EO policy in a previous role.
- Ability to use management information systems.
- Ability to use customer relationship management systems.

4. Role specific requirements e.g. Shift working

Essential
- Role holder may be required to attend meetings/events at various venues across the UK for business, training and evaluation purposes.
- Appropriate office equipment will be provided to facilitate effective working on the telephone and for Skype/Lync conferencing.
5. About the unit/department

**ACADEMIC SERVICES**

The most crucial interactions and relationships with registered students are managed through Academic Services, working in collaboration with colleagues in the University, and in particular those in central academic units. More than 900 staff are employed by the unit at or through:

Four central sub-units based at Walton Hall, Milton Keynes

- Access, Careers and Teaching Support
- Assessment, Credit and Qualifications
- Student Support
- Office of the Director, Academic Services

- Three Nation Offices in Scotland (Edinburgh), Wales (Cardiff) and Ireland (Belfast).
- Four Student Recruitment and Support Centres

Academic Services is led by the Director of Academic Services who reports to the University Secretary.

**Access, Careers and Teaching Support (ACTS)**

Access, Careers and Teaching Support sub-unit is led by David Knight, Director and compromises the following teams:-

- Associate Lecturer Services
- Associate Lecturer Support and Professional Development
- Careers and Employability Services
- Widening Access and Success Services

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND**

With nearly 15,000 students, The Open University (OU) is Scotland’s leading provider of part-time higher education. Some 40% of Scotland’s students studying part-time at undergraduate level with a higher education institution study with the OU.

The cornerstone of the OU’s mission to be open to all and our open entry system allows us to offer the opportunity for study to people from all backgrounds and sections of the community. For example, more than one third of our undergraduate students had qualifications below standard university entrance level when they joined the OU. We are also Scotland’s main provider for students with disabilities, teaching 10% of all disabled students in higher education.

Our reach is nationwide, and Open University students can be found in virtually every postcode district and community in Scotland. Hundreds of Scotland’s blue chip employers such as Scottish Power, Standard Life and Royal Bank of Scotland sponsor their staff to study with us. Through our courses and qualifications in areas such as health and social care, education, and business and management, the OU is playing a major role in the training and professional development of Scotland’s workforce across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Today e-learning is an integral part of the OU’s course delivery and our student support services; from online discussion groups and conferencing, to electronic assignment handling and dedicated course websites. By being online, even those living in the most isolated areas of the country are able to participate in a truly interactive learning environment.
The OU is an integral part of the Scottish higher education community and actively involved in the development of HE policy alongside all other higher education institutions in Scotland. Since 1 April 2000, the teaching of OU students living in Scotland has been funded by the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education.

The 130 academic, administrative and secretarial and clerical staff at the OU’s office in Edinburgh offer an extensive range of support and specialist advice services to students in Scotland. The core function of the office is to manage the University’s business in Scotland. This includes managing relationships with government and other external bodies, the research and development of learning and the recruitment and retention of students in Scotland, as well as the employment, support and staff development of the 500 Associate Lecturers who deliver the University’s teaching programmes. The office also provides advice, guidance and learning support to prospective and existing students including a programme of outreach events; administers examinations; organises an annual graduation ceremonies and promotes the University and its courses within Scotland. We have been voted as the top university in Scotland for student satisfaction for nine years.

More information can be obtained from the OU web site at www.open.ac.uk/scotland.

6. How to obtain more information about the role or application process

If you would like to discuss the particulars of this role before making an application please contact Carla Anderson on 0131 549 7137 or email: Carla.Anderson@open.ac.uk.

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email: Scotland-Staffing-Coordinator@open.ac.uk

7. The application process and where to send completed applications

As well as a completed application form, you should provide a covering letter which clearly identifies how you meet the criteria in the person specification. Please ensure that you provide relevant examples as evidence to support your statements. The selection panel will consider how well the information you provide demonstrates that you meet the criteria identified in the person specification.

Please ensure that your application reaches the University by: 5pm on 15 September 2018

E-mail your application (and covering letter) to: Scotland-Recruitment@open.ac.uk

8. Selection process and date of interview

The interview panel will be chaired by: Carla Anderson, Manager, Student Support (Operations)

The other members of the interview panel will be: Viki Soper, Manager, Student Support (Operations)

The interviews will take place on: Week beginning 1 October 2018

The selection process for this post will include: Formal interview and desk exercise

We will let you know as soon as possible after the closing date whether you have been shortlisted for interview. Further details on the selection process will also be sent to shortlisted candidates.

Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.