Job Related Information

This document includes information about the role for which you are applying and the information you will need to provide with the application. It also includes details of the application and selection process.

1. Role details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy reference:</th>
<th>11336</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Operations Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>Head of Operations; via the Team Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>£22,214 to £24,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions:</td>
<td>OU Students Association Support Staff (akin to OU Support Staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of post:</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours:</td>
<td>37 hours per week, plus some occasional evenings and weekends in line with the nature of the role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>OU Students Association Office, OU Walton Hall Campus, Milton Keynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing date:</td>
<td>12pm (midday) Monday 25th June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of application form accepted:</td>
<td>OU Students Association Application Form (no CVs or OU forms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referees required:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment contact:</td>
<td>Magda Hadrys, Head of Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date:</td>
<td>13th July 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The Open University Students Association

The Open University Students Association was established by the University Charter and is a registered charity. Its current membership is around 170,000 students spread across the UK, Europe and beyond. The overwhelming majority of our students study part time and at a distance. We are the recognised, credible voice of OU students and we seek to develop a vibrant student community for all.

Generally the Association is an organisation of students, run by students, operating through a democratic structure. It is headed by our President who chairs our Board of Trustees and our Central Executive Committee.

As a registered charity, ultimate authority and responsibility for all of the Association’s activities is vested in the Board of Trustees, which currently comprises 8 elected student positions and a further two external trustees.

The Chief Executive is a permanent member of staff appointed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for advising the President, Board of Trustees and the Central Executive Committee. The Chief Executive is also responsible for managing the Association’s staff team and services.

3. The OU Students Association Office

We are based on the University’s campus in Milton Keynes. Our staff team works closely with our elected student representatives and is responsible for delivering the wide range of services, activities and functions undertaken by the Association.

Currently we have seven specialised teams and a short (but far from comprehensive overview) is provided below:

The Student Voice team focus on our work in the areas of education policy, including the recruitment and support of our team of Central Representatives, student consultation, representation and research.

The Student Community team undertake projects to engage students in their Association and University community which includes supporting student societies and groups and the planning and delivery of online events such as Freshers.

The Digital Communications team manage our website, branding, social media platforms, radio and magazine in addition to improving the Association’s ability to adopt and utilise new technology and digital tools.

The Student Volunteering team is dedicated to supporting current student volunteers and creating new opportunities to volunteer and get involved with the Students Association.

The Student Support team works to ensure that all OU students get access to the appropriate support services and that there is a level playing field available to all students regardless of the different challenges they face. The Students Association also provide many of its own support services for students.

The Operations team provide the first point of contact for students and manage our grant-giving educational trust (the OU Students Educational Trust) and our OU Students Shop, including our web store and our marketing presence at events such as degree ceremonies. They also manage our suite of online forums.
4. **OUSA (Services) Ltd**

The OU Students Association has a private, Limited Company that is wholly owned by the Association. The Board of Directors is made up of members of the Central Executive Committee plus the General Manager, who also acts as Company Secretary.

The Company markets various study aids, memorabilia, gifts etc. and a range of past examination papers. It operates via the online shop but these are supplemented by important opportunities to market goods at events such as Degree Ceremonies and Residential Schools – which take place all over the UK and sometimes beyond.

The Association uses its Company to achieve one of its key objectives in fostering a corporate identity for students of the University; to promote the existence of the Association to students and encourage their active participation; and to raise funds for OUSET.

5. **Open University Students Educational Trust**

The Open University Students Educational Trust (OUSET) is currently a separate registered charity established by the OU Students Association to help students of the University in financial need. Its Board of Trustees is made up of Officers of the Association, the General Manager, a Trustee nominated by the University’s Vice Chancellor and up to 2 co-opted members.

The Association both raises the funds on behalf of this charity, primarily from its own members, and administers the Trust on behalf of the Trustees.

6. **The Role**

**Purpose of the Operations Assistant role:**

The Operations Assistant will play a crucial role within the busy Operations Team that forms the backbone of support for the unique range of activities carried out by our organisation. This will involve a variety of tasks on a daily basis including delivering high quality customer service by telephone and email and providing effective administration support across a diverse array of work.

The Operations Team forms the core of our organisation, it is the engine room for all that we deliver to our students and customers and hence this role is important to our future success. The team is a busy hub handling four main areas of our work:

- Processing applications for support through our student charity, OUSET;
- Customer services and day-to-day administration of OUSA (Services) Ltd.
- Controlling content and access permissions to OUSA Online Forums’ Service
- General customer service and answering student enquiries to the office.

A person specification is provided on pages 5-6, but in essence we are looking for a motivated, hard-working and highly efficient administrator with meticulous attention to detail. You should relish the challenge of working in a small but busy team and must be able to demonstrate previous experience of delivering quality
work to tight deadlines in a customer service environment. If you’re looking for a challenging and varied role with lots to get your teeth into, then this is the role for you. It would particularly suit someone looking to develop a career in customer services, or in dealing with students.

Main Responsibilities:

- To support the processing of applications for support through OUSET (or any replacement OU Student Association fund), to include: providing relevant application forms and criteria to potential applicants; receiving and checking applications; recording applications on the monitoring spreadsheet; liaising with relevant Student Support Teams for letters of support; answering queries; chasing up missing information and producing the case summary. Preparing letters or other documentation including sponsorship agreements as required.

- To support the work of OUSA Services Ltd (OSL) in providing exam papers to students. This includes monitoring orders received via the webshop; dealing with queries specific to orders; ensuring that the exam paper offering is up to date and uploading them to the webshop;

- To support the work of OUSA Services Ltd (OSL) in providing merchandise to customers. This includes monitoring orders daily, passing to the Resources Team for processing; following up on new product ideas by obtaining quotes from a range of suppliers; re-evaluating new and existing products; creating new product entries, updating the webstore with products including images and accurate descriptions; liaising with the Digital Communication Team to promote services to the wider student body

- To support the work of degree ceremony and residential school representatives, including preparation of required documentation; preparing individual admin boxes; preparing load lists and display boxes for degree ceremonies; to accurately record from the return documentation the items sold to pass to the Resources Team for reconciliation.

- To process applications for residential school volunteers, degree ceremony volunteers, central representatives and any other similar roles. This will include following the processes as indicated by the Team Supervisor/Head of Operations including providing application documentation; receiving and recording applications; following up any queries or missing information; passing applications to Team Supervisor for final checking before they are passed on to relevant team.

- To provide the customer service hub for anyone contacting the OU Students Association. This includes being the first point of contact by phone and email. To maintain and respond to email inboxes and phone calls. To provide a consistent, high-quality and efficient level of customer service that reflects well on the Association as a whole, following set scripts for student support enquiries where applicable and following standard customer service procedures as specified by line manager/supervisor.

- To perform the OUSA Controller role on the online forums which includes managing the mailbox; providing first line support to student moderators;
supporting the moderator recruitment process; providing permissions to relevant forums including business forums; processing forum requests; liaising with Learning & Teaching Innovation (LTI) as required; identifying issues to be raised with line manager.

- To adhere to all processes and procedures specified for the team’s work by the Head of Operations and Team Supervisor, supporting them with processes and implementation and training.
- To assist with the preparation of any documentation as required by the Head of Operations or Team Supervisor, including the production of Board papers.
- To liaise with the Resources Team in the event of any refunds or payment queries, investigating the query.
- To undertake any training deemed relevant for the role, including in-house and external training. To implement the key learning from training.
- To maintain the database for electoral register and opt-outs as necessary.
- To work with colleagues to support conference operations/processing as required, including attending conference and working as required.
- To undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post as directed by line manager.

7. The Person

**Note:** Applicants who have not clearly demonstrated in their application that they possess the **essential** elements will not be short-listed. **Desirable** elements are those that it would be useful for the post holder to possess, and will be used to assist the short-listing process where we receive a high volume of good applications. In your personal statement, it is important that you draw on **examples** to provide evidence of how you meet the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education, qualifications and training</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated to GCSE/'O'-level standard, including English and Maths at Grade C or above.</td>
<td>Training in Customer Service or Administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge, work and other relevant experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in an office administration or general clerical role.</td>
<td>Experience of working in a multi-functional environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of working in a busy customer service role.</td>
<td>Experience of dealing with people from a range of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backgrounds and needs</td>
<td>Experience of dealing with students.</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of developing and maintaining effective office systems and procedures.</td>
<td>Experience of using databases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding of confidentiality and data protection.</td>
<td>Knowledge of the work of the Open University.</td>
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**Skills, capabilities and qualities**

- **Excellent IT skills (Microsoft Office: Word, Outlook, Excel, Internet Explorer/Web Search).**
  - Able to quickly read, analyse and summarise the key points of a written document.

- Excellent interpersonal skills, with a customer service focus.
  - Experience of using online forums.

- Positive, flexible and adaptable approach to work.
  - Experience of updating web content.

- Team player.
  - Experience of using social media.

- Good standard of written English. Good level of numeracy.

- Accurate, with meticulous attention to detail.

- Able to work on own initiative.

- Able to plan and organise work, prioritising tasks as necessary.

- Displays a ‘can do’ approach to problem solving.

**Additional requirements and special working conditions**

- Able and willing to work the OU Students Association biennial Conferences, including June 2020.

- Commitment to equality and diversity.

- Commitment to own professional development.
8. Current Staff Chart

We have enclosed the staff structure chart at the back of this pack.

9. General Information

Terms and Conditions
The terms and conditions which apply are similar to those applying to Support Staff of the Open University. More detail will be provided to short-listed candidates prior to interview.

Hours of Work
This appointment is a full-time, permanent position. The working week is 37 hours with some flexibility on start and finish times around the needs of the role and the organisation. Some occasional weekend/evening working is required and is recompensed by appropriate payments and/or time off in lieu.

All Association staff are required to work at the biennial OU Students Association Conferences, which are usually held over a 3 day weekend in June.

Probation
The appointment will be subject to a probationary period of six months prior to confirmation of permanent appointment.

Salary
The appointment will be made at a suitable point on the Grade 5 salary scale £22,214 – £24,983 pa. It is usually our intention to appoint at the lowest point of the scale to enable progression, but we will consider the circumstances and current salary of the successful candidate when making an offer. We are unable to provide any re-location payments for this role.

Holiday
The appointment will carry an annual leave entitlement of 30 working days in addition to Bank and other public holidays and days on which the Open University is closed at Christmas.

Development Opportunities
The OU Students Association is committed to developing its staff and provides appropriate training opportunities. In addition to any training that is required for this post, Association staff are currently able to study OU modules of their choice at no cost.

10. How to Obtain More Information about the Role or Application Process

The details provided here are intended to be a comprehensive overview of the role and our organisation.

There is also a considerable amount of information about OU Students Association on our website: www.oustudents.com
If you have a specific question that is not covered here and you wish to ask it before making an application then please contact Joel McBrearty, Team Supervisor on 01908 655524.

11. The Application Process and Where to Send Completed Applications

| Applications will only be accepted on the OU Students Association application form. No CVs or applications on other forms will be accepted. |
| Please ensure that your application reaches us by: 12pm (midday) on 25th June 2018 |
| Please e-mail your application form to: recruitment.hrl@rsmuk.com, with the job title included in the subject line. |
| Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted. |

12. Selection Process and Date of Interview

| We are anticipating a very high volume of applications for this important role. The selection process has two stages, as detailed below: |
| **Stage one:** Candidates should use the descriptions above of the Role and the Person Specification to complete and submit the OU Students Association Application form via email to recruitment.hrl@rsmuk.com |
| You will receive a response to acknowledge receipt of your application. All applications will be reviewed following receipt and candidates will be short-listed if they have effectively demonstrated that they meet or exceed our criteria. We are unable to offer feedback to applicants who are not short-listed. |
| **Stage two:** We will invite short-listed candidates to panel interviews at our office in Milton Keynes on Friday 13th July 2018. The interviews will include a practical exercise and further details of these will be sent to short-listed candidates. Applicants should note this date in their diaries and keep it available, as we will not be in a position to offer alternative dates. |

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS AN APPOINTMENT TO THE OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION AND NOT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY.
Organisation Chart

Association Staff

Chief Executive
Rob Avann

Executive Assistant
Leanne Quainton

Support Coordinator,
OU Redesign
Sue Maccabe

Deputy Chief Executive
Wendy Burrell

Conference Project Manager
Amy Ferguson

Head of Student Voice
Sam Harding

Education Policy Officer
Helen Jones

Research & Information Officer
Pooja Sinha

Representation Officer
Philippa Costello

Administration Assistant
James Phillips

Head of Digital Communications
Kate Dungate

Digital Communications Officer
Heather Bloomer

Projects Officer (Student Community)
Jodie Denton

Projects Officer (Student Community)
Vacant

Student Community Assistant
Sandra Carter

Head of Student Community
Peter Turner

Head of Student Support
Verity Robinson

Student Support Officer
Sammi Wright

Administration Assistant
Tracey Bates

Head of Student Volunteering
Beth Metcalfe

Student Volunteering Officer
Nicola Powell

Team Supervisor
Joel McBrearty

Operations Assistant
Amanda Turner

Operations Assistant (Technical)
Paul Severn

Head of Operations
Magda Hadrys

Head of Resources
Sally Kitchingman

Resources Officer
Tazneem Gardner

Resources Assistant
Luke Nazarko

Operations Assistant
Vacant

Operations Assistant
Keith Minter

June 2018
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