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>14391</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Information Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>Senior Information Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>£32,548 to £38,833 depending on knowledge and experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions:</td>
<td>Academic-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of post:</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours:</td>
<td>Full Time (37 hours per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Walton Hall, Milton Keynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing date:</td>
<td>Midday 23 February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of application form accepted:</td>
<td>Full version and covering letter detailing how you meet the person specification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referees required:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit recruitment contact:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Strategy-Info-Recruitment@open.ac.uk">Strategy-Info-Recruitment@open.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Summary of duties

The Planning, Forecasting & Modelling team is part of the Data and Insight function within the Strategy & Information Office and is responsible for the production of several institutional student number forecasts. These forecasts inform the University’s financial and operational capacity planning processes, as well as contributing to the University’s statement of expected business performance.

Working closely with other members of the team and colleagues across the University, the post-holder will prepare the monthly student number forecast using established statistical models, communicate forecast outputs to our stakeholders, and ensure that our forecasts are produced to acceptable tolerances for accuracy and timeliness. The post holder will also be expected to maintain the systems, data and business integrity of the models, and support other business processes that are dependent on forecast outputs.

The post holder will also support the broader preparation, analysis and communication of management information and develop business insight that will help to make data a source of competitive advantage for the University within a robust data governance framework.

Student Number Forecasting

• Generate the monthly institutional student recruitment and student withdrawal forecasts for the current academic year within agreed timescales and accuracy levels.

• Ensure that the forecast models continue to fully and appropriately represent the directly taught student population as business drivers change (e.g., in light of changes to student funding initiatives or internal student registration processes).

• Produce and develop reporting solutions that efficiently communicate the forecasting outputs to stakeholders across the University (e.g., utilising data visualisation software and techniques).

• Provide appropriate expertise, advice and guidance in supporting stakeholders across the University reliant on forecast outputs for their business processes.

• Proactively identify and communicate key business insights from the forecasting outputs and process.

• Conduct statistical analyses to evaluate the performance of the forecasting models, making recommendations for their maintenance and redevelopment as and when required.

• Creation and ownership of forecasting timetables.

• Responsibility for ensuring all forecast outputs are appropriately tested and signed-off before use.

• Respond to general requests for analytical support related to the use of the forecasting models.

• Provide user guidance documentation in a clear, intuitive format that improves user understanding of the models.

• Support the annual student number planning process (that sets student number targets for future years) as is required.
Support development of the models

- Identify and exploit opportunities for improving forecast accuracy, business insight, and process efficiency.
- Work with the team’s statisticians to determine and implement the most appropriate statistical methodologies and tools for the forecasting of student numbers.
- Test model updates and developments, providing supporting analytics to prove upgraded models are ‘fit-for-purpose’.

Develop and maintain data and reporting infrastructure

- Build and maintain strong working relationships with analytic and data teams across the University.
- Ensure the forecasting models are underpinned by a robust data infrastructure that complies with the University’s data governance obligations and best practice.
- Compile and maintain datasets using SAS/SAS EG, and contribute to the design of new datasets for use in future model developments.

General Support

- Act as a point of contact for staff needing information in relation to the models and other activities within the team.
- Together with other analysts across the Data & Insight function, provide analytical support to the Ad-Hoc Query process.
- Present analysis as required to stakeholders, with consideration given to audience, technical ability, information needs, etc..
- Be flexible and adaptable to meet the changing demands of the project and the University.

3. Person specification

Requirements  (E = Essential/ D = Desirable)

Education, qualifications and training

**Essential:** Undergraduate degree or equivalent, or work experience at a comparable level, in a subject with a strong maths or statistics element.

**Desirable:** SAS Certification
### Knowledge, work and other relevant experience

**Essential:**
1. Proven experience of data manipulation using SAS, SAS EG or SQL to prepare and analyse large datasets
2. Proven experience of data analysis and presenting results to both technical and management audiences
3. Sound understanding of general statistical best practice and methods
4. Evidence of using statistical methodologies and outputs to directly inform and influence business outcomes
5. Experience of translating complex business specifications into executable analytical processes and robust data set and reporting outputs.

**Desirable:**
1. Experience of using time-series forecasting techniques to inform and influence business outcomes
2. Using data visualisation software (e.g., Tableau, Power BI) to communicate statistical outputs and business insight.
3. Re-engineering of business processes to improve efficiency, accuracy etc.

### Personal abilities and qualities

**Essential:**
1. Skilled in managing, interpreting and evaluating activities using qualitative and quantitative data
2. Ability to work independently as part of a team, and collaboratively across different teams
3. Experience in developing and maintaining effective working relationships across units, projects and development initiatives and with academic, technical, administrative and external colleagues
4. Excellent attention to detail in both language and data
5. Excellent communication and presentation skills, both oral and written, contributing to information, formal discussions and presentations
6. Excellent IT skills generally and the ability to use software packages, particularly Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook email and PowerPoint and the aptitude to learn and use new ICT tools
7. Excellent organisational skills, including the capacity to prioritise competing demands and to manage a range of duties, often delivering to tight deadlines
8. Ability to work under pressure, to organise and manage priorities and deal with unforeseen issues
9. Enthusiasm, willingness and proven ability and capacity to embrace new ideas, develop
new skills and adapt to changing situations and requirements

10. A sound understanding of, as well as commitment to, Equal Opportunities practice

Desirable:

1. Experience of providing support to formal project groups
2. An interest in education in general and higher education in particular

4. Role specific requirements e.g. Shift working

None.

5. About the unit/department

The Strategy and Information Office is led by the Director of Strategy who is a member of the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive and reports to the University Secretary. The Strategy and Information Office plays a critical role in enabling others to be successful in supporting The Open University and its students by:

- Having a fit-for-purpose strategy that is understood and supported by the organisation;
- Improving The Open University’s ability to make the right change, and make the change right; and
- Making data and insight a source of competitive advantage for the University, for the benefit of students.

The Data and Insight function within the Strategy and Information Office currently provides information and analysis to all parts of the University, and also to our external stakeholders. Information is regularly provided on student recruitment, module and qualification completion and retention, and institutional performance. We also prepare and submit the University’s statutory returns for student, staff and student-related research data and play a key role in the University’s financial and operational planning through the generation of student recruitment projections and targets. We are also using predictive analytics to identify students at risk so that they may be targeted for support interventions, an area of work that is key to achieving one of our strategic objectives that will see ‘More Students Qualifying’.

Much of our work is concerned with the cycle of strategic and operational planning and in supporting business development within the University:

- A five-year student recruitment forecast and the setting of annual student number plans for a range of internal purposes including income and expenditure modelling and operational planning;
- Monitoring student numbers (at registration and at completion) against funding requirements for each nation;
- Reports of actual students numbers and a one-year student number forecast, updated monthly, to support financial and operational management;
- New analytical tools to help improve the experience of enquirers and students;
- Supporting operational colleagues to target interventions through predictive analytics.
- Preparing and submitting the annual individual student and staff records to HESA and the range of student-related returns made to funding agencies;
- Supporting the National Student Survey and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey;
Providing authoritative information on student numbers for a range of internal reporting and monitoring purposes, including information for publicity purposes and for institutional dashboards.

We also use our skills in managing data and in SAS and statistical techniques to provide a general analytical service, including:

- A web facility to enable users to produce statistical summaries of student data;
- A service responding to queries from around the University for statistical information and analysis;
- Reports and analysis in specific areas; for instance on Widening Participation.
- Advice, access to datasets and support for other users wanting to undertake analysis;
- Development of new tools to improve the use of management information, with current projects concerned with the further development of a data warehouse approach to data management and the adoption of SAS VA as a visualisation tool.

There are currently approximately 40 staff in the Strategy and Information Office, divided between the unit’s core functions of Strategy, Change and Data and Insight.

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 Harvey Moore on 01908 652988 or email: Harvey.Moore@open.ac.uk.

If you have any questions regarding the application process please contact Sheila Mace on 01908 655088 or email: Strategy-Info-Recruitment@open.ac.uk.

7. The application process and where to send completed applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please ensure that your application reaches the University by:</th>
<th>Midday 23 February 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post it to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name/Job title:</td>
<td>Sheila Mace, Recruitment Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department/Unit:</td>
<td>Strategy and Information Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Wilson B block, 3rd floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Open University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walton Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Code:</td>
<td>MK7 6AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or e-mail your application to:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Strategy-Info-Recruitment@open.ac.uk">Strategy-Info-Recruitment@open.ac.uk</a></td>
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### 8. Selection process and date of interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The interview panel will be chaired by:</th>
<th>Harvey Moore (Senior Information Manager)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The other members of the interview panel will be:</td>
<td>Lucy Taylor (Strategy Manager, Strategy &amp; Information Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paul Chapman (Senior Management Accountant, Finance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The interviews will take place on:</td>
<td>2 March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The selection process for this post will include</td>
<td>An interview and a task to be completed on the day of the interview.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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.