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>15634</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Research Degrees Student Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>Manager PGR Student Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>£27,025 to £32,236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions:</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>G6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of post:</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours:</td>
<td>37 hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Walton Hall, Milton Keynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing date:</td>
<td>Noon on 04 March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of application form accepted:</td>
<td>Short application form, CV and covering letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referees required:</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit recruitment contact:</td>
<td>Diane Latimer, Resourcing Assistant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Summary of duties

The role holder works within a team, led by the Manager PGR Student Operations, that provides administrative support and advice to the Faculties/Schools/Institutes/ARCs in relation to research degree provision. The role sits within the Graduate School Office but involves close collaboration with colleagues in all units across the University that support research students.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list of duties or a restrictive definition of the post but rather should read as a guide to the main priorities and typical areas of activity of the post-holder. These activities are subject to amendment over time as priorities and requirements evolve and, as such, it may be amended at any time by the line manager following discussion with the post holder.

**Main responsibilities**

1. **Maintaining Business Networks**
   - Act as the primary contact for a Faculty/School/Institute/ARC on matters relating to research degree provision
   - Provides excellent customer service to all stakeholders.
   - Ensures that the student is provided with the best possible advice and guidance from the point of enquiry to graduation, seeking guidance from management and/or the appropriate authority as required.
   - Uphold the student registry function of the Research Degrees Office ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of, and adhere to, the regulatory frameworks.
   - Works collaboratively with all colleagues to ensure efficient and effective service to all stakeholders.

2. **Quality Assurance**
   - Develops and maintains a knowledge and thorough understanding of the structure and delivery of each of the research awards, the associated regulations, policy and procedures and relevant approval authorities.
   - Develops and maintains an understanding of the QAA Codes of Practice for Quality and Standards in relation to Research Degrees and Collaborative Provision, in particular chapters B10 and B11 in the Higher Education Quality Code.
   - Maintains consistent and accurate student records, providing a complete and readily accessible audit trail for internal and external audits.

3. **Data Management**
   - Supports existing and new IT systems. Ensures that all student records are appropriately stored, regularly updated and accurately maintained using relevant University systems.
   - Runs routine CIRCE reports for a wide range of requirements to extract required management information, as requested by Research Degrees Management in line with agreed work schedules.
   - Ensures that the records relating to visa compliance are up to date, complete and accurate.

4. **Student Support and Wellbeing**
   - Provides advice to students and supervisors on the support and wellbeing services available to students.
   - Liaises with students, Planning and Resources, OUSBA and other staff to process financial assistance and dependents fund applications.

5. **Complaints and Appeals**
   - Provide guidance on the University’s Complaints and Appeals process to all relevant stakeholders.
   - Ensure that all complaints and appeals are accurately recorded on VOICE and brought to the attention of the relevant decision makers.
   - Compiling, under the direction of management, a complaints/appeals file.
6.  Enquiries, Recruitment, and Admissions

- Works with the Faculty/School/Institute/ARC to ensure that applications, studentship offers/rejections, admissions, registrations and supervisor appointments are dealt with in accordance with the relevant regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures.
- Ensures that supervisors are appointed in line with the regulations. Providing guidance and advice to the Faculty/School/Institute/ARC. Working with the Manager, Staffing, Unit Finance and IT Coordination to ensure that external supervisors are appointed in accordance with right to work legislation and the Open University’s overseas engagement policy.

7.  Registration

- Work with the other research advisors and the Research Management Team to ensure that the registration of students on to the research degree programme of their choice is done in accordance with the regulations, policies and procedures. Every effort should be made to ensure that all of the students are supported and guided through the process.
- Provide information to students and supervisors on University policy with regard to OU policies around UKVI compliance.
- Provide assistance to the Research Career Development Team in organising the induction for the new students.
- Ensure that all students are re-registered annually in accordance with the regulations, policies and procedures, including annual check of visa documentation.
- Ensure that all requests for suspension, change of mode of study or extension are done in accordance with the regulations, policies and procedures and that all of the associated documentation is complete and accurate.

8.  Probation and Progress Monitoring

- Works with the Faculty/School/Institute/ARC to ensure that the probation and progress monitoring of students are carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations, policies and procedures.
- Provides clear guidance and advice to students and supervisors about the regulations, policies and procedures relating to the probation and progress monitoring processes and the procedures for dealing with lack of academic progress.
- Ensures that the documentation pertaining to the probation and progress monitoring processes are accurate, complete and demonstrate adherence to regulations, policies and procedures.

9.  Examinations and Completion of Awards

- Works with the Faculty/School/Institute/ARC to ensure that the examination of students is carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations, policies and procedures.
- Provides clear guidance and advice to students and supervisors about the regulations, policies and procedures relating to the examination process.
- Ensures examination panels are appointed in line with the regulations. Providing guidance and advice to the Faculty/School/Institute/ARC. Working with the Manager, Staffing, Unit Finance and IT Coordination to ensure that external examiners are appointed in accordance with right to work legislation and the Open University’s overseas engagement policy.
- Ensures that the documentation pertaining to the entire examination process are accurate, complete and demonstrate adherence to regulations, policies and procedures

10. Secretarial Support Work

- Provides support to the committees and the working groups in their substructure as required; includes support for the arrangement of meetings, preparation and circulation of agendas, minutes and papers and follow-up of actions agreed in the meeting.

11. General Duties

- Contributes to the development and implementation of research degree regulations, policy, procedures and operational planning.
• Contributes to the training and support of new and current team members as appropriate to ensure adequate cover at all times and to cascade new procedures, processes and policies.
• Contributes to the implementation and integration of equal opportunities policies in the Research Degrees Office and the research degree programmes.
• Ensures a healthy and safe working environment in accordance with University policy.
• Complying with data protection legislation at all times. Ensuring Data retention schedules are adhered to and data is deleted as appropriate.

12. Exceptional and Deputising Duties
• Undertakes other appropriate duties as requested from time to time by Research Degrees Management.
• Provides cover for other members of the Research Degrees Team when required.

3. Person specification

Requirements  (E = Essential/ D = Desirable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education, qualifications and training</th>
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| **Essential:** | • Good standard of literacy, numeracy and general education to at least to GCSE level (including Mathematics and English Grade C or above)  
• Accurate keyboard skills  
• ECDL/RSA or equivalent experience. |
| **Desirable** | • A degree or equivalent experience |

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<tr>
<th>Knowledge, work and other relevant experience</th>
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| **Essential:** | • Previous experience in a complex customer service environment, with proven experience of dealing with customers by telephone, email and letter.  
• Dealing with sensitive situations sympathetically and confidentially.  
• Demonstrated ability to offer a customer centred approach to queries and requests for advice and guidance.  
• Previous experience using databases to access information and amend records.  
• Experience of working with confidential information and an awareness of the Data Protection and Freedom of Information issues. |
| **Desirable:** | • Experience of working in a higher education sector environment  
• Experience of supporting post graduate/research students in a higher education institution |
# Skills, capabilities and qualities

## Essential:
- Ability to work independently and autonomously.
- Working collaboratively, cooperatively, respectfully and supportively within the team and with wider University colleagues.
- Attitude which welcomes new challenges within a constantly changing environment.
- Good attention to detail with the capability of producing work of a high level of accuracy.
- Demonstrate effective telephone techniques.
- Ability to understand and convey complex information in a straightforward manner.
- Excellent communication skills, including: questioning, listening and interpreting, with a wide range of academic, administrative, professional and secretarial staff.
- Effective written and oral communication skills; with proven ability to write clearly, succinctly and correctly in plain English.
- Able to make appropriate judgements on a daily basis in relation to minor student and staff queries and ability to differentiate between those and more serious queries that need referral to a higher authority.
- Excellent ICT skills; with proven experience of Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel (or similar) and other office IT and web-based systems, databases.

## Desirable:
- Familiar with OU systems such as CIRCE, VOICE and Camel.
- Able to generate bespoke/non-routine CIRCE MI queries
- Ability to take minutes to a committee level standard

## Personal Qualities

## Essential:
- A professional outlook with an ability to deal calmly and appropriately with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Attitude which welcomes new challenges within a constantly changing environment.
- Excellent time management skills and the ability to prioritise while working to pressured deadlines and to respond with appropriate urgency and flexibility to situations and events that require a quick turnaround
- Flexibility and willingness to learn new skills, ability to think quickly, logically and concisely
- Knowledge of data protection laws
- Understanding of need to ensure confidentiality of information related to members of academic staff and individual research students at all times
Additional Requirements

Essential:

- A leave embargo is in place for members of the Research Degrees Office during the last week of September and first weeks of October each year for student registrations, and restricted leave allowances during the first week in February.

4. Role specific requirements e.g. Shift working

The successful applicant may be subject to pre-employment checks.

5. About the unit/department

The Research, Enterprise and Scholarship Unit (RES) provides professional support services to Faculties, Institutes and Schools in connection with the University’s research, enterprise and knowledge exchange, and academic strategy activities. We work across the portfolio of the PVC (Research, Enterprise and Scholarship) Professor Kevin Hetherington and through close collaboration with other services. The Unit is made up of 4 offices:

- Research, Strategy and Governance Office
- RES Planning and Resources Office
- Research and Enterprise Office
- Graduate School

The Research Degrees Office is responsible for the OU’s research degree student registry and implementing the quality assurance framework for Open University research degrees as determined through its governance and management structures.

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 Claire Brownlow by email claire.brownlow@open.ac.uk

If you have any questions regarding the application process please contact the Resourcing Hub on 01908 655444 or by email resourcing-hub@open.ac.uk.

7. The application process and where to send completed applications

Your application should contain:

- Short application form
- CV
- A covering letter of up to 2 sides of A4 describing why you are applying for this post and detailing how you fit the criteria in the person specification.

NB: It is important that candidates complete all sections of the application form in full.
Please ensure that your application reaches the University by: 12 noon on 04 March 2019

E-mail your application to: Resourcing-hub@open.ac.uk

8. Selection process and date of interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The interview panel will be chaired by:</th>
<th>Richard Magee, Senior Manager, Research Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The other members of the interview panel are:</td>
<td>Claire Brownlow, Manager PGR Student Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interviews will take place:</td>
<td>11 March 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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.