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>15715</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Executive Assistant to the Commercial Director (CD) and Director Corporate Sales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>Business Planning and Resources Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>£33,000 to £36,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions:</td>
<td>OUW</td>
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<td>Grade:</td>
<td>OUW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration of post:</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours:</td>
<td>Full time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Location:         | Walton Hall  
|                   | Milton Keynes |
| Closing date:     | 12:00 noon on 28 February 2019 |
| Type of application form accepted: | OU short application form plus CV.  
All applications should be accompanied by a covering letter detailing how candidates fit the criteria in the person specification. |
| Number of referees required: | Three |
| Unit recruitment contact: | Resourcing-Hub@open.ac.uk |
2. Summary of duties

Purpose Statement

The Business Development Unit (BDU) consists of circa 90 members of staff, with a Senior Leadership Team of 10. As a £30 million business with a current business plan to grow to a £50 million business in the next 3 years, as Executive Assistant, you will be pivotal to the Commercial Director (CD) in providing dedicated, proactive, efficient, adaptable and professional support to the (BDU) and will be responsible for the execution of a wide range of duties, as is required to enable the CD to maximise their capacity as a key leader within the BDU and the Open University.

This is a position of trust, providing the highest level of support. You are key to the management of the CD’s schedule and controlling the flow of information, requiring a high level of initiative and personal judgement, to handle highly confidential and sensitive materials.

You will be required to maintain an understanding of the CD’s strategic priorities and those of the University and apply this awareness to support the CD. The role requires preparedness at all times, as well as attention to detail, sound judgement, excellent personal organisation, flexibility and the ability to work to absolute deadlines.

The role requires excellent interpersonal skills, requiring negotiation and influencing across senior staff (internal and external stakeholders) and an understanding of leadership challenges and approaches within a complex environment.

The role works within a wider team supporting the CD and his Executive team including senior managers and a range of support staff. The role holder will be required to work closely across this team sharing appropriate information and seeking advice and support when required.

Main Responsibilities

1. Administration

- To manage all administrative aspects of the CD and Director Corporate Sales role in an efficient, effective and professional manner;
- To work without supervision, be self-motivated and be able to prioritise issues, activities and problems on behalf of the Directorate, ensuring that urgent, critical information and documentation is always brought to their attention promptly, whilst also recognising when to seek advice on other urgent, difficult or sensitive issues from the appropriate senior staff;
- To manage and coordinate the collation of all relevant documentation, to ensure timely provision to the Directorate. To identify gaps or shortfalls in information and search for sources to fill them and to brief the Directorate prior to attendance at meetings;
- To summarise key information and identify connections between and across activities and the flow of business over time to ensure the briefings provided to the Directorate are appropriate and complete.
- To provide a proactive identification of activity that needs to be managed and progressed on behalf of the Directorate, ensuring that issues are properly progressed through appropriate routes and staff, following up and ensuring the Directorate has complete and relevant information;
- To provide a courteous, professional and knowledgeable point of contact, promoting the positive image of the Open University at all times.

2. Correspondence

- To deal with incoming mail and email, both independently and on behalf of the Directorate, assessing its significance and ensuring that Directors are engaged only with items that require their attention/response;
• To work closely with the Business Support Team within BDU to ensure information flow and informed responses are provided; and draft correspondence on behalf of the CD.

3. Diary Management

• To thoroughly understand and support the Director’s working style and priorities and ensure their calendar is always practicable and deliverable/achievable;
• To maintain a keen overview of the CD and Director Corporate Sales diary commitments, to ensure that all agreed appointments/meetings can be accomplished successfully and to be able to react to and accommodate unexpected last-minute changes in the schedule and redirect the Directors accordingly;
• To proactively manage the Directors time efficiently and to an agreed plan, using initiative and judgement to ensure that they are as effective as possible at all times.
• To be able to work in an agile and fluid way, the CDs role requires extensive travel both within the UK and Internationally; diary changes at short notice are frequent and the ability to work in responsive way is paramount.

4. Relationship management

• To develop and build a strong network of key contacts around the University, including our relationships with large corporations, government, the public sector and the media
• To develop an understanding of the leadership role of the CD in a fast paced commercially focussed environment and develop the necessary influencing and negotiating skills required to support the CD in the development and delivery of agreed priorities.

5. Meetings

• To proactively plan meetings, bringing to the attention of the Directorate any items that may need to be brought to the agenda for meetings;
• To request suitable briefings from appropriate sources and ensure their availability to the Directorate in a timely fashion;
• To support the development of papers for meetings, including requesting information, drafting outlines and content, collating responses, following up previous activity etc.;
• To circulate any pre-reading, take minutes and log actions where required; To follow up outstanding actions as appropriate or to understand changing circumstances. To keep excellent records of key meetings and decision-making processes as appropriate;
• To be responsible for taking the minutes at the CD’s Executive team meetings or other meetings as and when required;
• To support the CD with required HR processes.

6. Travel Planning and Management

• To work with colleagues to prepare the trip’s agendas, full briefing documentation, including itemised time schedule, overview of each meeting, full details of people to be met, relevant addresses, currency etc. and provide to Directorate in a timely manner;
• To liaise with the Travel and Resources Coordinator to identify and make all travel arrangements well in advance, with all visa requirements, hotels, connecting travel arrangements etc. taken care of;
• To ensure the electronic calendar is kept up-to-date with full meeting information: venue addresses, phone numbers, attendees etc. Knowledge of scheduling diverse individuals across multiple time zones and an appreciation of global working is essential.
7. Line Management
   - Line management and associated duties for secretarial and clerical staff, as required

8. Other duties
   - To undertake specific project work, as identified by the CD and/or Business Planning and Resources Manager;
   - Any other duties appropriate to the grade and as required by the CD and/or Business Planning and Resources Manager.

3. Person specification

   **Education, qualifications and training**
   - Range of good A-Levels or equivalent, or relevant experience;
   - GCSE Grade C equivalent or above in at least English Language and Mathematics.

   **Knowledge, work and other relevant experience**

   **Essential:**
   - Experience of:
     - Working at Executive level both internally and externally in a large organisation;
     - Ability to lead and motivate others;
     - Assimilating, analysing and interpreting complex information;
     - Implementing and maintaining efficient office systems and procedures;
     - Working effectively and collaboratively as part of a team;
     - Drafting correspondence and responding on behalf of senior management;
     - At least intermediate level skills in Word, Excel and PowerPoint;
     - Advanced Outlook skills;
     - Strong IT skills;
     - Understanding of and commitment to Equal Opportunities and diversity issues.

   **Desirable:**
   - Demonstrable knowledge of, and interest in:
     - Experience in an academic institution;
     - Experience of Line Management;
     - Current issues and developments in the UK higher education sector;
     - OU strategies, policies and procedures;
- Advanced skills in Word, Excel and PowerPoint;
- Experience of remote working, skype, online meetings etc.

### Personal abilities and qualities

#### Essential:
- Professionalism, confidence and diplomacy in communicating effectively with a wide range of people, including those at an executive level in governmental and other external bodies;
- Advanced organisational ability, with excellent planning and prioritising capabilities, and able to cope with multiple demands effectively;
- Ability to preserve confidentiality;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, in particular the ability to work with and influence a wide range of people;
- Proactive service driven approach, working independently to develop understanding and provide excellent support;
- Accurate, grammatical and error-free writing skills;
- Proven ability to work with minimum supervision and to use initiative and flexibility;
- Calm and composed in role, presenting a professional image both internally and externally at all times;
- Exceptional time management skills and the ability to work to pressured deadlines, and to respond with appropriate urgency and flexibility to situations and events that require a quick turnaround;
- Commitment to team working and the ability to work harmoniously and cooperatively with colleagues;
- Adaptable and responsible to changing duties and working practices in a fast-paced environment.

### 4. Role specific requirements e.g. Shift working

The successful applicant will be subject to relevant pre-employment checks.
5. About the unit/department

**Open University Worldwide**

It is essential that The Open University (OU) continues to become less dependent on government funding. To do this, the University needs to grow and diversify alternative income streams which contribute to the financial sustainability and supports core teaching, learning and research activities.

Competition for students, staff and funding is intense and global, and students’ expectations have risen sharply as learners increasingly view themselves as ‘consumers’ of education. The demand for top class facilities and services is growing, as are expectations for flexible learning patterns and qualifications that will really make a difference to careers.

The Open University has developed ambitious plans to grow associated revenues through its commercial entity, Open University Worldwide (OUW). OUW is a part of the Business Development Unit (BDU).

This is an exciting time to join the OU in a dynamic team within a commercially focused Unit, and to contribute to the University’s commercial success.

**The Business Development Unit**

The aim of the Business Development Unit is to support the Open University’s income diversification strategy. The Unit is committed to the delivery of innovative and profitable learning solutions, for students, businesses and partners in the UK and global markets.

The BDU is working to construct and implement the overall business development strategy for the OU both in the UK and internationally. This activity includes improved partnerships and business development efforts in faculties and in the nations and regions.

The Unit has two core activity streams:
- To deliver sustainable net revenue streams for the OU through developing existing partnerships and through developing business in new markets.
- To be a customer-focused business, generating significant growth of revenue. The rate of growth will be governed by the BDU’s Unit Plan, which will set achievable targets for increasing both income and profitability.

The Open University is an employer committed to the ongoing development of staff both through its own award-winning distance teaching and industry standard training programmes. As an organisation it promotes a healthy work life balance with a generous leave allowance, a Christmas closure period and flexible working where appropriate. Free parking is available to staff.

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 Lisa Widdows, Business Planning & Resources Manager by email lisa.widdows@open.ac.uk

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact Resourcing-Hub@open.ac.uk.
7. The application process and where to send completed applications

| Please ensure that your application reaches the University by: | 12:00 noon on 28 February 2019 |
| Post it to: | Diane Latimer |
| Name/Job title: | Resourcing Assistant |
| Department/Unit: | Resourcing Hub |
| Address: | People Services  
The Open University  
Berrill Level 1 South  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire |
| Post Code: | MK7 6AA |
| Or e-mail your application to: | Resourcing-Hub@open.ac.uk |

8. Selection process and date of interview

| The interview panel will be chaired by: | Lisa Widdows, Business Planning and Resources Manager |
| The other members of the interview panel will be: | David Willett, Commercial Director  
Viren Patel, Director Corporate Sales |
| The interviews will take place on: | 11 March 2019 |
| The selection process for this post will include | Interview and Short Test |

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.