Job Description – Lecturer of Space Governance, Astrobiology Research Group

1 FTE  
Permanent  
AC3  
Walton Hall, Milton Keynes-based, with some travel

The Role
The post-holder will be welcomed into an interdisciplinary research group investigating the feasibility of life beyond the Earth, and the associated social, legal and economic implications. Their research will have a primary focus on the legal, ethical and governance implications of astrobiology-related space missions. As part of the role, they will engage with stakeholders and produce education material for the space sector regarding law and policy. For the initial three years the post will be 100% research focused (funded by the OU Astrobiology Research Group) with an increasing teaching load after that period.

Key responsibilities

- To engage in world leading research on issues of space governance as broadly conceived but with a focus on law, regulation and policy implications of astrobiology space missions;
- To engage with the wider space community both nationally and internationally and facilitate cross-disciplinary discussion on space governance;
- To write papers on the results and publish them in peer review journals;
- To present results at national and international conferences and workshops;
- To be an active member of the OU Astrobiology Research Group, attending regular research group meetings and share knowledge with members of the team;
- To contribute expertise and ideas to research projects, methodologies and teaching areas, as appropriate;
- Where appropriate, to engage in the teaching of Space Law, Policy and governance issues to groups/individuals with both legal and non-legal backgrounds;
- To liaise closely with their Line Manager and academic Group Lead;
- To attract grant and/or industrial income;
- To contribute to the undergraduate degree by working on the development and presentation of undergraduate and postgraduate law modules;
- To have a strong commitment to the principles and practice of equality and diversity;
- To maintain and generate collaborations within and outside the academic community;
- To undertake other duties that are reasonable for the position, as directed by the Line Manager.
Person Specification

Skills and experience

**Essential:**
- A Law degree or a degree in a cognate area providing there is evidence of expertise in Space Law;
- Experience in an area of law that is relevant to space governance;
- A demonstrable track record of communicating research results through peer reviewed publications and conference presentations (as fitting career stage);
- Ability to plan and prioritise own workload and work to agreed deadlines;
- Demonstration of taking full responsibility and accountability for tasks while making effective use of available resources;
- Experience of analysing problems and working creatively to develop innovative and workable solutions;
- Good oral and written communication in a variety of contexts, including the ability to offer and receive constructive criticism.

**Desirable:**
- A Masters in Law;
- A PhD in Law;
- Experience of working across discipline boundaries or in interdisciplinary teams;
- Experience of space governance and working with national/international institutions of space governance;
- A professional qualification (e.g. solicitor, barrister).
About the Astrobiology Research Group

Research England has recently awarded the Open University Astrobiology Research Group an Expanding Excellence in England grant worth £6.7 million. This will allow the Group to expand to bring together expertise in technology, international development and governance to address the scientific and governance challenges associated with the advancement of astrobiology and related space exploration missions. This will result in a multi-disciplinary research environment with members spanning three Faculties: The Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, the Faculty of Business and Law, and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The primary aims of this multi-disciplinary group will be as follows:
1. furthering the understanding of the limits of life and potentially habitable environments in the Solar System;
2. identifying chemical and geochemical signatures that could be used as evidence of life;
3. investigating the survivability of microorganisms and their biosignatures;
4. educating and engage with the space sector, policymakers and the public in the UK and ODA countries;
5. examining critically the governance and ethical implications of astrobiology-related space missions to develop and enhance governance frameworks.

The OU Astrobiology Research Group is committed to building an inclusive research environment. The Group supports flexible working arrangements, within the limits of the post, and particularly welcomes applications from groups traditionally under-represented in STEM.
About the Unit

Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
The Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is comprised:

- School of Computing & Communications
- School of Environment, Earth & Ecosystem Sciences
- School of Engineering & Innovation
- School of Life, Health & Chemical Sciences
- School of Mathematics & Statistics
- School of Physical Sciences
- Knowledge Media Institute
- Deanery including teams supporting Curriculum, Research and Enterprise, Laboratory Infrastructure and Faculty Administration

“We aspire to be world leaders in inclusive, innovative and high impact STEM teaching and research, equipping learners, employers and society with the capabilities to meet tomorrow’s challenges”

The Faculty of STEM consists of 2500 staff including 1,800 Associate Lecturers. The Faculty delivers over 185 modules across undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum, supporting nearly 19,000 students (full time equivalents) which is 29% of the OU total.

The Faculty generates more research income (circa £17M) than any other Faculty in the University, supported by a comprehensive laboratory infrastructure.

We are proud of our distinctive values and capabilities underpinning our aspiration:

We are inclusive:
- We transform people’s lives, ensuring STEM education is openly accessible to many thousands of students from diverse backgrounds – our students express high satisfaction with their study experience.
- We engage the public in exciting citizen science and engineering, including through free open educational resources, multi-platform broadcasting, outreach to inspire the next generation and with programmes to encourage more women into STEM.

We are highly innovative:
- We are at the forefront of innovative developments in teaching practical science and engineering at a distance, through simulated and remote access laboratories and practical experimentation.
- Our high-quality teaching and curriculum are informed by world-leading research, strong links with professional bodies and communities of practitioners, as well as by scholarship focused on continuously improving our STEM pedagogy.

We deliver significant social and economic impact:
- We provide STEM higher education at a scale and reach unsurpassed in the UK, with a sizeable international reach and further growth potential.
- We inject transferable STEM skills and knowledge direct into the workplace for immediate employee and employer benefit, as students combine study while working.
• The employability value of our courses is underpinned by accreditation from leading STEM Professional Bodies and Learned Societies, as well as partnerships and sponsorship with leading employers.
• Our high quality, applied and academically relevant teaching and research addresses real-world issues, delivering impact for industry and society, including addressing pressing STEM skill-shortages across the UK.

Faculty of Business and Law

The Faculty of Business and Law is one of the four faculties of The Open University. It brings together two Schools – The Open University Business School and The Open University Law School – and has a strong reputation as a high-quality and innovative provider of management and legal education. Our courses and qualifications are studied by a wide range of people from all backgrounds – we are proud to promote opportunity and social justice by making higher education open to those unable to attend a more traditional campus-based university.

Student satisfaction is a high priority and we are determined to deliver the best outcomes for everyone studying with us.

Around 35,000 students are currently enrolled on our business, management and law programmes; about quarter of them are based outside the UK in 80 countries. The majority of our students are employed and study part-time with us.

The Faculty employs around 130 academic staff, most of whom are based at The Open University’s Milton Keynes campus. The academic staff comprise Central Academics who write the courses, the assessments and the marking guides and Student Experience Managers who are responsible for the Faculty’s 700 Associate Lecturers. Around 80 academic-related and administrative members of staff support the Faculty.

We are committed to developing our staff to achieve their full potential and offer a range of formal and informal training and development opportunities to support individual and Faculty objectives.

The Open University Law School

Law teaching began at the Open University in 1998, since then more than 60,000 students have studied law with us. With around 7,000 students in the UK, the Law School continues to lead the sector in part-time distance learning. Our Bachelor of Laws with Honours (LLB) is the most popular undergraduate law programme in the UK. The School also offers a graduate entry LLB, and jointly offers a BA (Hons) in Criminology and Law. At postgraduate level the School offers a Masters in Law (LLM) and provides modules which contribute to the Masters in Business Administration and the Postgraduate Certificate in Human Rights and Development Management. The School attracts doctoral students and is currently looking to develop an LLM by research.

Our Law School, which is based in Milton Keynes, has 22 central academic staff and is led by Paul Catley and Anne Wesemann. Research within the Law School is led by Professor Simon Lee. Students are supported by the Law Student Support Team. This team is led by a Head of Student Experience and a Student Services lead and support is provided on a curriculum basis. The Head of Student Experience manages a team of 7 Student Experience Manager who are responsible for managing approximately 250 Associate Lecturers who provide individual support to our students. The Law
School is currently focused on developing its undergraduate law programme, creating a new LLM by research and increasing its research profile.

Our law academics publish and broadcast on a wide range of legal themes. The fields of expertise in which our academics write, broadcast, and act as consultants include: asylum law, criminal law and procedure, criminal responsibility, critical legal theory, equity, ethics, European Union law, human rights, international law, law and neuroscience, law and religion, law, technology and blockchains, legal biography, legal education, legal history, legal theory, property law, sports law, and trusts.

The Law School is also engaged in several outreach activities to increase the public understanding of law related issues and access to knowledge about law matters. Examples of these can be found on OpenLearn.

Further information about The Open University Law School can be found at: http://www.open.ac.uk/law/main/