Postgraduate Research Manager, WELS

About the Role

The Postgraduate Research (PGR) team in the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) is responsible for the effective and efficient development and delivery of the postgraduate research provision in the Faculty. This encompasses the PhD programme and two Professional Doctorates: the Doctorate in Education and the Doctorate in Health and Social Care.

The post holder will lead the administrative functions of the Postgraduate Research team and be the principal point of contact on all operational aspects of the Faculty’s postgraduate research provision

Key Responsibilities

The role holder will be the primary point of contact within WELS on all operational issues relating to the management of post-graduate research students. In addition to this, the role holder will;

- Act as administrative lead for PGR matters in the Faculty, managing and securing good relationships between the Faculty and the Research Degrees Office (RDO) /Schools/Institutes/Affiliated Research Centres/Doctoral Training Pathways, ensuring excellent performance, customer service and data quality, including line management of an administrative assistant
- Be responsible for the provision of authoritative advice, support and guidance to Faculty colleagues, students and external stakeholders as required on the operation of The Open University’s research student policies and procedures and research degree regulations
- Lead administrative support in the implementation of processes relating to QA, UKVI, student recruitment, progress monitoring, student assessment reporting and examination processes. Ensuring that all operational and business procedures are consistently and effectively utilized by research degree supervisors and the PGR office team
- Act as a working secretary to relevant committees, including the professional doctorate award boards, and contributing to the governance and management of the PGR programmes in the Faculty, including preparing papers as necessary
- Proactively participating in the regular, ongoing review of PGR activity and contributing to the continuous improvement of business processes and procedures, liaising with the PGR Director, professional doctorate leads, supervisors, PhD convenors, professional doctorate area leads, and other stakeholders as appropriate
- Liaise with Faculty colleagues and central university departments, including Finance and the Research Degrees Office, to ensure coordination of operational activities across the directly supported research degree programmes, Affiliated Research Centre programmes, doctoral training partnerships and other forms of collaborative provision
• Contribute to the management of complex student cases, particularly in relation to complaints and appeals
• Manage the Faculty processes for academic oversight and approval of key stages in the student journey and coordination of such activities with external partners as required e.g. enquiry management, offer and registration, probation, progress reporting and examinations, supervisor and examiner appointments and UKVI compliance
• Ensure data quality for internal and external reporting purposes. Ensuring all student records are complete, accurate and readily accessible to those with a legitimate need to see them. Ensure compliance with data protection policies
• Support University and Faculty events relating to the delivery of the research degree programmes including induction, conferences and residential weekends
• Liaise with relevant stakeholders to ensure online content is maintained, including prospectuses and the Virtual Learning Environment
• Management of PGR budgets in line with University processes, including liaising with Finance and other relevant departments
• To undertake other relevant duties as may from time to time be assigned by your line manager

Skills and Experience

Essential

• First degree or equivalent, or work experience at a comparable level
• Relevant experience of work in the Higher Education sector
• Appropriate level of directly relevant administrative/management experience including knowledge and understanding of the academic environment
• Understanding of the importance of confidentiality, Data Protection legislation and how it relates to students
• Experience of supervising staff delivering complex administrative processes, whilst maintaining excellent customer service standards and meeting performance targets
• Understanding of financial information relating to fee and other types of invoicing
• Ability to take ownership of and resolve complex problems, understanding when it is appropriate to refer issues to senior management
• Highly effective oral and written communication skills, with the ability to interpret policy and procedure and disseminate information for different audiences effectively, including producing website copy
• ICT competency commensurate with the requirements of the role, including Excel, Word, SharePoint, web content management systems
• High level of numeracy with the ability to analyse and interpret financial and statistical data, including experience of budget management
• Proven ability to adapt to change and different ways of working.
• Able to deal sensitively with people of other cultures
• Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to interact appropriately with a range of internal and external stakeholders, maintaining a high level of customer focus at all times
• The ability to work independently and also as a member of a team
• A strong commitment to excellence in working with a diverse student population
Desirable

- An understanding of contractual agreements associated with external funding for research degree students
- Experience of postgraduate research degree administration
- An understanding of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Experience of report writing for a range of audiences such as students and committees