Job Description – Staff Tutor

About the role

For this post the successful candidate will be expected to support Associate Lecturers (ALs) and students across a range of our undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum. The role is advertised in the Schools of (i) Computing & Communications (ii) Life, Health and Chemical Sciences (iii) Mathematics & Statistics (iv) Environment, Earth and Ecosystem Sciences. The successful candidate will be allocated to one of the schools listed.

A significant and distinctive part of the academic role of Staff Tutor is to manage a large number of part-time Associate Lecturers (OU tutors) who in turn directly support OU students through the means of correspondence tuition, email, telephone and face-to-face sessions and increasingly, other mechanisms such as online tutorials and conferencing. Managerial responsibilities include the appointment, induction and staff development of Associate Lecturers, conducting Associate Lecturer Career Development and Staff Appraisals (CDSA), overseeing their professional development and assuring the quality of their work and addressing any performance issues.

The Staff Tutor role also extends to helping the largely non-subject specialist advisory and study support staff in the Student Support Team to understand the needs of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics students, and in conveying the Faculty’s curriculum developments and student support strategies to student services colleagues. A Staff Tutor may also be involved in designing and implementing local strategies to widen participation, promote employer engagement, and enhance more broadly the external work of the University.

The post-holder will spend at least half of their time managing ALs and providing specialised academic advice and guidance to students (as part of a wider Student Support Team). The nature of the Staff Tutor role means that they must be able to work well in multifunction distributed teams, as well as independently. Many of the duties of a Staff Tutor involve the need to perform administrative tasks and undertake the recruitment of new ALs, tutorials programmes and work closely with colleagues in AL services to arrange the allocation of students to tutors. The management and quality assurance aspects of the role require an ability to deal sensitively with a wide range of people. The post holder will also need to apply academic judgment to ensure standards are maintained in delivery of learning and support to students. To deliver this, a sound understanding of the issues and external contexts affecting higher education across the UK is important.

The post holder will spend the remainder of their time on academic activities such as teaching, research and scholarship. They may also be expected to contribute to the production and presentation of the School’s modules and potentially to other modules across STEM.

Some travel will also be necessary, for example to our Student Support Teams based in Manchester and to our campus in Milton Keynes. Such journeys will be reimbursed according to the University scheme. Some aspects of the role will require working in the evenings and at weekends and as such Staff Tutors are expected to be flexible in their working hours.
Key responsibilities

The post holder is expected to:

1. Administration and Management
   a) lead on the selection and appointment of Associate Lecturers to the School’s modules, including designing the recruitment pack, shortlisting, interviewing and managing Associate Lecturer appointments in line with student numbers and appropriate student-tutor group sizes.
   b) carry out Associate Lecturer induction and ongoing development. (The post holder may additionally be responsible for the management of Associate Lecturers working in other areas of the STEM curriculum);
   c) manage, supervise and support Associate Lecturers in their role. (This includes: provision of academic advice on the delivery of module content and appropriate online and distance teaching methods; monitoring teaching activities undertaken by Associate Lecturers; organisation of staff development events and the conduct of staff appraisals);
   d) be involved in the planning and organisation of online and face-to-face tutorials and day-schools, where appropriate.
   e) investigating and responding to TMA appeals and complaints.

2. Teaching
   a) advise students studying School modules and provide a link between students, their Associate Lecturers, the Student Support Team, the School and the Faculty;
   b) work as part of a distributed team with educational advisors and other academic and learner support staff in handling referred queries where specialist knowledge of Faculty modules is required;
   c) ensure effective implementation of University policy in relation to Associate Lecturers, students and enquirers;
   d) contribute to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching within the School, in line with University standards;
   e) contribute to the development, planning and implementation of high quality and successful curriculum at undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels in the School where appropriate;
   f) work with Staff Tutors, other academic and academic-related colleagues in the support of School and Faculty objectives
   g) work with Module Teams to develop and design tuition programmes

3. Scholarship, research and enterprise
   a) undertake a self-directed programme of individual or collaborative scholarship or research in a field that will contribute to the School and Faculty strategic objectives;
   b) undertake subject research or scholarship in teaching and learning that leads to publications in line with School and Faculty objectives;
   c) undertake professional development as an academic educator and researcher.

4. Outreach and public engagement
   a) promote the study of School modules and qualifications, particularly in respect of under-represented groups;
   b) contribute to the STEM outreach activities of the Faculty where appropriate;
   c) where appropriate, collaborate with professional bodies or learned societies;
   d) where appropriate, work with employers, policy makers and other stakeholders.

5. Other responsibilities
   a) comply with the University’s Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies in the performance of their duties;
   b) co-operate with the Open University in ensuring as far as necessary, that Statutory Requirements, Codes of Practice, University Policies, and Departmental Health and Safety arrangements are complied with;
   c) have a strong commitment to the principles and practice of equality and diversity.
### Skills and experience

#### Education, qualifications and training

**Essential:**
- A good honours degree (or equivalent) in a relevant area

**Desirable:**
- Postgraduate qualification in a relevant area or a relevant education postgraduate degree

#### Knowledge, work and other relevant experience

**Essential:**
- Demonstrable knowledge of the skills and experience required to support undergraduate and/or postgraduate taught students and the staff that tutor them
- Some experience of teaching at further or higher education levels in the School area
- Some experience of adult learning within an online and/or distance learning environment
- Ability to work collaboratively with others for teaching or research
- An understanding and experience of dealing with issues of access and retention in the context of higher education
- Experience of staff selection and management
- Experience of delivering staff development
- Experience in the use of ICT in an educational context

**Desirable:**
- Higher Education Academy professional accreditation or equivalent qualification
- Enthusiasm for the application of new technologies for teaching and supporting students at a distance
- Experience of working with and influencing policy makers, governmental and/or non-governmental institutions
- Ability to develop new collaborations within the University and with external organisations
- Experience of performance management

#### Personal abilities and qualities

**Essential:**
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to communicate ideas clearly, and to offer and receive constructive criticism
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with a range of staff (academic, administrative, clerical and secretarial)
- Good team working skills and the ability to work adaptively and responsively with a variety of colleagues in multidisciplinary teams; particularly when the team is geographically dispersed
- Ability to plan and organise work to agreed deadlines
- Ability to prioritise demands against personal, external sector or institutional objectives when subject to conflicting pressures
- Ability to work flexibly (including some evenings and weekends) and independently
- Knowledge of, and commitment to, equal opportunities principles and practice
- Commitment to the aims, ethos and values of the Open University

**Desirable:**

- The ability to write on issues outside of immediate area of expertise but in a related topic, in an informed and coherent manner

**Role specific requirements**

The successful candidate will be appointed to the School and will be a member of the Staff Tutor Group in the Faculty. There will be opportunities to work in conjunction with Staff Tutors located across the UK at regular meetings held via online conferencing and at the University campus in Milton Keynes.

This will be a homeworking or office based post. The successful candidate may be required to undertake evening and weekend commitments and to travel in the UK, to Milton Keynes, Manchester, and to other locations as necessary.