Job Description – Head of People Business Partnering

About the Role

As part of the People Services Leadership Team (PSLT), reporting to the People Services Transition Director, the Head of People Business Partnering is responsible for leading and developing the People Business Partnering (PBP) team who are aligned to specific business units across The Open University (OU).

The role will drive an efficient and professional, customer focused service that facilitates and leads on strategic change through trusted partnerships. It offers a blend of contributing to the wider People Services strategy, team leadership, and interaction at a senior stakeholder level, as well as being hands-on with its own stakeholder portfolio.

Key Responsibilities

• Proactive member of the PSLT to drive forward People Services strategies, achievements of goals and promotion of initiatives to deliver against the strategic agenda
• Effectively lead, develop, motivate and performance manage a team of HR professionals to deliver a consistent and valued service encompassing the employee lifecycle
• Deliver a consistent business-wide people plan through a team of PBPs that provides PSLT and Vice Chancellor Exec (VCE) with a holistic view of talent/potential to support the succession planning process, workforce planning and organisational design
• Responsible for ensuring PBPs represent People Services on project boards/people workstreams of OU-wide strategic projects e.g. Success Factors and AL Contract Programme, to ensure the people agenda is considered and planned for appropriately
• Provide oversight, governance and approval in collaboration with PSLT to proceed with organisational development (OD) projects that relate to people impacted by proposed changes. In addition, provide guidance to PBPs to ensure appropriate considerations are used to achieve fit-for-purpose organisational structure and design, ensuring that the OU’s Design Principles are consistently applied
• Lead the focus on talent management in collaboration with the Talent & Development team utilising talent processes including resource and succession planning, working with relevant Areas of Expertise and Hubs to deliver appropriate solutions and activities. Facilitate a periodic review advising and supporting on appropriate interventions to ensure there is adequate depth of capability for the future development of the unit/faculty
• Act as a performance coach and sounding board to the senior leadership portfolio to improve people planning, performance and capability, supporting our leaders to identify future potential, drive engagement, manage change effectively and enable them to make balanced and informed decisions about people
• Act as senior point of escalation and provide advice on high risk/complex employee relations matters, utilizing available expertise from Areas of Expertise and People Hub
to ensure the PBPs are compliant in employment law to confirm relevant action taken mitigates risk

- Sponsor the development of key People Services strategic initiatives to be rolled out across the OU
- Develop a positive and productive relationship with Trade Unions that encourages openness and transparency, effective communication and collaborative working
- Develop meaningful data insights drawn out of dashboard MI reports produced by Reward & Insights colleagues for PBPs to conduct focused, value-add conversations with their units/faculties
- Manage the annual reward & recognition programme within budget in conjunction with Reward & Insights colleagues
- Partner with the Resourcing Hub to ensure the right people are hired who demonstrate required skills and core values and that the candidate experience is exemplary

Skills

- Inspires through effective leadership, creating an engaged one-team philosophy
- Effective influencing and negotiation skills, able to share information and build openness and commitment with colleagues and stakeholders
- Driven/resilient with the ability to thrive under challenging situations where priorities can shift
- Effectively deal with ambiguity and fluid situations
- Ability to identify and translate business requirements into tangible HR outcomes/initiatives
- Effective communicator, delivering to a varied audience, from formal presentations through to 1:1 meetings
- Coaching skills and style demonstrating strong listening capabilities
- Consulting techniques for effective collaborative delivery
- Strategic and creative thinker particularly around problem solving/solutions
- Proactive, flexible and pragmatic with the ability to react appropriately and effectively
- Appetite to challenge the status quo and operate as an effective change agent
- Ability to balance short term operational delivery with medium and long term strategic thinking and planning

Experience

- Significant generalist human resources experience in a complex unionised environment at senior business partner level (preferably in the higher education sector)
- Experience of leading, developing and performance managing a team of HR professionals
- Broad understanding of all HR processes and disciplines, including employee relations, organisation development, talent management, leadership capability building
- Proven success with proactive stakeholder management at varying levels
- Extensive working knowledge of UK employment law
- Business degree or equivalent work related experience
- Fellow or Chartered member of CIPD membership