Job Description – School Assistant (Academic Support)

About the role

To provide flexible and timely administrative support for the academics working in the schools within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) to ensure that all colleagues have the support required to fulfil their roles. You will also work with other members of the academic support team, university services and other staff in the Faculty as necessary to ensure that the full range of support can be provided.

Key responsibilities

1. To provide proactive administrative and secretarial support to the Head of Discipline and academics within the school, as appropriate, working in conjunction with other members of the Academic Support Team.

Activities include but are not limited to:

- General administrative support and daily operational guidance.
- Providing effective diary management.
- Maintaining filing systems in line with data protection (GDPR), retention and other policies.
- Drafting, preparing, and circulating a wide range of documents as required, including material of a highly confidential nature, and providing support with the production of academic CVs as required.
- Taking minutes at meetings
- Providing support with meeting arrangements and administration.
- Arranging travel with itineraries and with visitor arrangements, checking logistics and ensuring suitable venues or accommodation has been booked as required and if necessary, greeting visitors on site.
- Assist the Coordinator with inductions for new staff in the school
- Updating website content and email distribution lists as and when required, working in conjunction with colleagues in other Faculty and University teams.
- Providing support across the three school support teams as directed by the Coordinator or Senior Manager.

2. Work with colleagues across the Academic Support Team and Research Team to support research activities which are devolved to the School. Activities include, but are not limited to, supporting tasks around the efficient organisation of PhD students, the preparations of the REF to ensure that documentation is prepared and supporting evidence is available.

3. Supporting the organisation and delivery of conferences organised within the School, including venues, travel, accommodation, schedules, and other support as required.

4. Providing support to the Coordinator within the School in the management of budgets, including maintaining up to date records, reconciling the budget management spreadsheet, contributing to quarterly forecasts, drafting budgets in support of conferences/projects and arranging for the
payment of invoices using appropriate finance systems (training provided if necessary), working with colleagues in the University as appropriate.

5. Work collaboratively with colleagues in the Team and undertake other such duties as may be reasonably required by the Senior Manager (Academic Support) or the Co-ordinator (Academic Support).

Person Specification

**Essential**

- Good level of general education (GCSE/O-level equivalent)
- Experience of working effectively in a team, taking a positive approach to change and challenges, and having the drive to ensure that a high-quality service is provided, and sharing knowledge appropriately.
- Experience of planning and organising one’s own work and dealing with conflicting priorities. Using initiative and discretion to action items requiring immediate attention, referring matters on to others as appropriate.
- Good oral and written communication skills, including writing minutes and experience of using a variety of communication methods.
- Ability to solve problems, using information from a variety of sources to aid analysis and make timely decisions.
- Experience of working with spreadsheets, database entry and manipulation, including an excellent understanding of financial procedures/processes.
- Excellent IT skills along with a good working knowledge of Microsoft Office, particularly Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.
- Trust and professionalism, with the ability to use absolute discretion, initiative, and personal judgement for dealing with the sensitive and confidential matters.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work collaboratively, build good relationships and influence others, using initiative and judgment in problem-solving
- Demonstrable evidence of good practice in relation to equal opportunities and diversity.
- A commitment to ongoing professional development.
- Ability to work with detailed procedures and a proven ability to be methodical and accurate in their work
- A responsible, flexible, and reliable approach to work coupled with a motivated and proactive attitude, helping, supporting and where appropriate guiding colleagues.
- Ability to work effectively either alone or in a team, and comfortable with working under pressure and switching between tasks, often at short notice.
- Ability to maintain electronic diaries of a team and experience of co-ordinating meetings, both internal and external.
Desirable

- NVQ Level 2 Administration or Customer Service
- Possess a working knowledge of the Open University and its objectives
- Experience of higher education either as a student or through employment.