University of Edinburgh

1. Job Details

Job title: Receptionist/Secretary

Support Department: Disability Office

Line manager: Assistant Director

2. Job Purpose

Working part time as part of a team of 3 Administrative Secretarial staff the post holder will assist in the day to day organisation and smooth running of the Disability Office, specifically in dealing with enquiries, receiving visitors/clients to the office, keeping information up to date and providing reception cover over an extended lunch period so that there is constant access to the Disability Office.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. Dealing with telephone, email and personal enquiries promptly, and passing these on to appropriate members of staff. Liaising with people at all levels both within and outwith the University the post holder will be required to know when it is appropriate to have the caller wait or to make an appointment in a staff member’s electronic diary. 35
2. As the first point of contact receiving visitors to the office, making sure they feel comfortable and welcomed to the Service 25
3. Filing – keeping over 900 student files in order and up to date to ensure that information can be retrieved immediately by Advisors and other professional staff 15
4. Word processing, general filing, photocopying documents and other related support tasks for Advisors, the Director and Assistant Director 10
5. Booking meeting rooms, organising refreshments, arranging IT or other equipment taking into account specific requirements of participants in order to make sure that meetings run smoothly and are accessible 5
6. Ordering and distributing office supplies and stationary to ensure supplies are available at all times on 3 office sites 5
7. Opening and distributing incoming mail as appropriate in order to facilitate other staff to handle specific enquiries 2
8. Converting information into alternative formats such as large print, Braille on request 2
9. Compiling information packs for students and staff, staff development materials 1
10. Other duties as defined from time to time by the Assistant Director

4. Planning and Organising

- There will be a weekly planning meeting of all Administrative Secretarial staff with the Assistant Director.
- Daily opening and distributing mail, receiving visitors and responding to enquiries.
- Weekly booking meeting rooms, arranging equipment and organising refreshments.
• Daily filing, photocopying and other administrative tasks for Advisors, Assistant Director and Director.
• Monthly planning with the Administrative team and Assistant Director to organise tasks and cope with the busiest times such as first semester when students drop in and are waiting to see Advisors.
• Track and plan stock levels to cope with peaks throughout the year, making sure the amount ordered complies with budget allocation
• On a yearly and continuing basis contribute to the overall review of service provision and procedural development of the Disability Office

5. Problem Solving
• In some cases calming anxious or upset callers before passing them on to the appropriate member of staff
• Helping a student decide which Advisor (Specific Learning Difficulties Advisor or Disability Advisor) is most appropriate to see for an initial interview
• Giving a caller appropriate information to sign post them to another service if the Disability Office is not appropriate
• Keeping a calm front of house atmosphere at peak times when 12 or more students may be waiting to see Advisors

6. Decision Making
• Knowing when an immediate response to an enquirer or caller is required, or if an appointment can be made with a member of staff at a later date
• Referring upset or angry callers to the appropriate member of staff
• Taking initiative to keep information properly filed and up to date in over 900 student files
• Monitoring office supplies and stationary and recommending to Administrative team when to order more.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
The Disability Office is a very busy office receiving over 10,000 enquiries from prospective and current students, parents, staff, external organisations each year by telephone, email, and people coming to the office. Some enquirers can be very anxious or upset. Others will demand instant information. Responding appropriately to the volume and type of enquiry is key to providing a first class service and maintaining the reputation of the Department and the University.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
• Interest in and understanding of disability issues
• Good communication skills and a friendly and efficient manner in dealing with enquirers
• Ability to deal sensitively and confidentially with enquiries
• Some secretarial or clerical experience
• Experience of Microsoft Office packages, email and internet
• Excellent organisational skills
• Strong attention to detail
• Good time management and attention to detail is essential in supporting up to 9 members of staff
• Ability to work to more than 1 person and within a team context
• Flexible and adaptable worker
• Able to work under pressure
• Experience of keying information into databases

• Some knowledge or experience of working in Higher Education would be desirable
9. Dimensions
The post holder works within a Secretarial team of three people and provides backup secretarial support to seven other professional staff. S/he potentially can have dealings with over 1400 students, several hundred members of staff across the whole University and local, national and international external enquirers.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
The job exists within a changing environment where the University is expected to demonstrate its compliance with the QAA Code of Practice on Students with Disabilities, the Disability Discrimination Act, Part IV and other emerging legislation such as DDA 2005. Other key factors that impact on the job are the widening access agenda, growing numbers of international students, students with more complex support needs, higher expectations from students, their parents and University staff, emerging technological innovations and research on enabling teaching and learning environments. The activities of the department have institution-wide, legal, political and reputational implications for the University.