University of Edinburgh

1. Job Details
Job title: Administrative Officer
School/Support Department: CHSS Postgraduate Office
Line manager: Head of PG Office

2. Job Purpose
To work as a full member of the administrative team, to ensure that all areas of postgraduate recruitment, selection, induction and on-course support are properly, professionally and efficiently managed. To provide expertise and advice, and play a key part in supporting one School in the College. To manage some administrative matters that are cross-School, developing services to meet external standards and “customer” needs. This is a new part-time post.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. Manage the admissions to 1 of the College’s 10 Schools (as the post is new the selection of the school has yet to be made): check the applications for compliance with minimum entry requirements, which requires a full understanding of, and the ability to interpret, the University and College admissions policy; produce and monitor statistics on offers and acceptances for this school to ensure intake targets are met; provide applicants with advice and information about study at Edinburgh and the College; handle non-standard queries; deal with requests for feedback, reconsideration, complaints and appeals according to Office procedures. Liaise closely with PG Director and staff in the School, providing guidance and advice on policy and student matters; Quality Assurance of standards and performance, and facilitating coherence of PG administration across the College. 30%

2. Act as the College’s point of contact with the ESRC and the AHRC, providing guidance to College staff and ensuring deadlines are met. Managing the flow of information between ESRC and the schools (not just in CHSS) about funded students and their progress. Facilitating and improving our relationship with these 2 Councils. 25%

3. Service, and manage all the ensuing work of, the 2 sub-committees of the College Postgraduate Studies Committee: the Exam Committee and the Concessions Sub-Committees. Involves setting annual timetable for monthly meetings in liaison with the 10 Schools; writing agendas, papers and minutes; checking the Schools’ submissions for accuracy and completeness; recording, and undertaking all correspondence after each meeting. 20%

4. Assist the Head of the PG Office with work relating to the annual cycle of scholarships and studentships: advertising; managing nearly 300 applications; checking; arranging prioritisation by Schools; managing the College selection meeting; handling correspondence with applicants and liaison with Finance Dept and Scholarships and Awards Office; reallocating awards as applicants decline offers/fail to obtain visas etc. Maintaining robust records. 20%

5. Other Duties as directed by Head of Section or Deputy College Registrar 5%

4. Planning and Organising
• Planning on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis in accordance with pressures of admissions and exam cycle for internal work, and reflecting timetable for the Research Councils for externally-oriented work.
• Prioritising competing demands within time constraints, building in flexibility to allow for the unexpected.

5. Problem Solving
• Check admissions decisions through interpretation and analysis of admissions policy and use of personal judgement, in order to achieve target figures.
• Find ways to improve relations with the Research Councils, and to improve College support for Research Council funded PGR students, and their completion rates.
• Find solutions and alter procedures in response to a frequently changing working environment; the need to speed up turnaround of applications; the need from less burdensome procedures pending arrival of the new Student record.
• Handle non-standard enquiries from academic and admin staff in School and from applicants.

6. Decision Making
• Know when to consult with Head of PG Office and colleagues on non-standard applications.
• Prioritise own work; balance the various tasks by deadlines, ensuring that College goals are met.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
• PG Directors and staff in the CHSS Schools; PG Administrative staff in other Colleges; Deputy College Registrar, Dean (Postgraduate), Executive Dean (Resources).
• ESRC and AHRC.
• SRA & International Office, Policy and Planning, MIS, Registry, Scholarships Office, Finance.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
• A degree plus a minimum of two years’ experience of directly managing staff and other resources.
• Well-developed skills in planning work; prioritisation, allocation and delegation of work appropriately, effective use of people, equipment and materials.
• Ability to manage staff and relationships; to establish and maintain trust and support; to adapt personal style to suit the situation; to motivate team members.
• Ability to work without supervision and use initiative.
• Collate, analyse, report on and use information (textual and numerical) in a structured way; ability to make effective presentations orally or in writing.
• Competent user of database, word-processing and spreadsheet software.

9. Dimensions
• One of 4 Administrative Officers and head of PG Office who, with 4 clerical support teams and support staff, handle 6,000+ applications and associated enquiries and appeals in each admissions cycle, plus support 3,000+ on-programme postgraduates.
• Increasing the number and proportion of PG students in the College is one of CHSS’ key strategic aims; this post directly contributes to meeting this objective.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
• Postgraduate administration operates in the context of rapidly changing applicant behaviour in response to local, national and international developments. An ability to work with resilience, persistence and attention to detail and accuracy is required. Flexibility is crucial.