University of Edinburgh

Job Description

1. Job Details

Job title: Data Librarian
Planning Unit: EDINA / University Data Library
Unit (if applicable): University Data Library
Line manager: Director of EDINA

2. Job Purpose

Leadership and functional management of the University’s Data Library service, delivered as world-class service to this University’s staff and students; coordinating EDINA’s contributions to Digital Curation Centre; identifying and securing (externally-funded) opportunities to support development of data services; supporting the Director of EDINA in meeting strategic goals of Information Services (IS) and the University.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. Service Manager. Functional team management of the University’s Data Library, including staff management, recruitment, development and budgetary control; securing appropriate resources including software tools and expertise; bringing to the attention of the Director and Management Team that which is strategic or otherwise significant.

2. As Data Librarian, directs, using professional expertise in numeric data and librarianship, the operation and maintenance of both the on-line library of data holdings and the access points for service delivery for many external services to which the University has licence. Liaison and relationship-building within the University, with senior staff in Schools and professional peers in IS units, to achieve synergy and presentation of and leverage from this specialist service, and inter/nationally with specialist data library community.

3. DCC Workgroup Leader. The post-holder has special responsibility for ensuring that EDINA is an effective partner in the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), a high profile activity based in the University; as central point of contact for the contribution of EDINA, and co-ordination of staff input to specialist advisory function, web server and intranet development, and Helpdesk, to the success of the DCC.

4. a) Technical Expert and b) Project Manager: An important responsibility is use of technical expertise and project management skills to a) provide professional advice and b) secure and undertake externally-funded project activity to further the development of data services. Coordination, preparation and submission of proposals to funding organisations, working cooperatively as required with other senior staff, other institutions in partner consortia. Identify, assess, and pursue funding opportunities within strategic framework. Lead projects to successful outcomes.

5. Contributes to leadership, overall success, strategic development and management of EDINA and IS; member of EDINA Management Team, contributes to EDINA Business Development; member of IS committees such as Liaison and Help & Support.

4. Planning and Organising

Medium and long-term for the development of the Data Library and of university-based data services, proposing strategy, within which decisions about day-to-day operations are made. The post-holder must work on own initiative in ways that meet the interests of several parties. Strategic planning is on a yearly basis in consultation with the Director, and by semester within the team.

As the DCC Workgroup Leader, the post-holder guides the work of staff working for the DCC in various roles – web/intranet design and technical development, Helpdesk, and two DCC advisors with specialities in digital preservation and geo-spatial data. This requires communication with the
5. Problem Solving

The post holder must plan and communicate with both academic-related staff within Information Services and academic staff within Schools to identify emerging needs for services, training, and holdings, always seeking opportunities for collaboration toward shared goals. A flexible attitude toward change is necessary. The post holder must be able to keep up with the latest technologies and trends in the field, and support staff within the Data Library and EDINA DCC workgroup to do the same, and to communicate effectively with the various user communities.

6. Decision Making

High level, bringing to the attention of the Director and Management Team that which is strategic or otherwise significant; ranges from overview of day-to-day to executive; having access to advice from specialist technical staff, decisions have to be taken independently and with authority and timing with respect to operation of services, service roll-out, project outcome, overall strategy.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships

As functional and resource manager, this post-holder works closely with equivalent colleagues within EDINA, particularly business development team; other senior managers and the Director. Liaison with UoE academic staff, with other Information Services staff, as well as with national agencies are all significant part of the post. There is also contact with Undergraduate and postgraduate students via personal enquiries or classroom instruction. Contact is by email/phone and face-to-face meetings, with senior managers and directors.

Relationships are geared towards either the delivery of new services, including securing access to new datasets, or forging potential collaborations on projects to further that end. The post-holder participates in national and international events and sits on external committees: DISC-UK (Data Information Specialists Committee) meets regularly to discuss and share common problems in supporting data collections and data use; active part in IASSIST, the international membership organisation for data librarians and archivists. Also encouraged is professional memberships of bodies such as the Social Research Association, the British Society for Population Studies, Radical Statistics Group, BURISA, and the Association of Survey Computing. Engagement with academics about research activity at conferences and on discussion lists.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job

The skills set required is specialist, combining understanding of research data and library/information science. It ranges from technical computing competence, ability to communicate well at all levels within the organisation and proficiency at organising and planning, through to a thorough grasp of Internet-based delivery. As important are the skills of leadership, with evident customer-focus and service-orientation, and having the ability to manage relationships effectively.

Significant relevant practical experience is required, with a postgraduate degree in library/information science or academic discipline regarded as 'near essential'. The post-holder should have 5-10 years experience of working in the field and detailed knowledge of the generation, character and use of research data in multiple disciplines. An appreciation of scholarly communication and data sharing trends, nationally and internationally, are important, as is knowledge and understanding of the purposes and practices in higher education. Experience of project management and of leading project teams which include external organisations is valued.

9. Dimensions

The post-holder oversees and guides the work of the Assistant Data Librarian and the Documentation Assistant. The post-holder normally acts as the University 'local' liaison for EDINA in an operational role, supporting the Director. As the DCC Workgroup Leader, the post-holder guides the work of five persons working for the DCC in various roles.

Significant national and international dimensions, through engagement with formal partners or collaboration with other organisations, presentations at conferences, occasional papers and publications. Represent EDINA and DCC on various national and international committees.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
The primary role is provider of data for use in research and teaching and its support. Users are highly task driven, requiring attention to discovery, licence terms and tools for their use.