University of Edinburgh

Job Description

1. Job Details
   Job title: Senior Computer Officer
   Support Department: Computing Services
   Unit (if applicable): Information Services
   Line manager: Desktop Services Team Manager

2. Job Purpose
   To analyse, develop and maintain systems and processes that will underpin and support the infrastructure of the Supported Desktops used by all staff and students in the University.

3. Main Responsibilities

   1. One of two developers creating distributable computer applications that will allow the remote installation and configuration of software on managed personal computers without manual intervention.
   2. To configure and distribute Windows based web browser applications and mail clients for use by all users of the Supported Desktop.
   3. To analyse, configure and test processes that will allow applications, security and configuration settings to be applied to all PCs within the Supported Windows XP Desktop.
   4. To lead the technical project that will investigate and develop remote help systems for all student users of the facilities managed computer systems.
   5. To provide expert in-depth technical support for the facilities managed computers in both computing services and school computing laboratories to resolve, or assist in the resolution of complex support problems.
   6. To investigate and develop new and innovative technologies that will enhance existing and future services delivered to all users of the supported desktops in the university.
   7. To provide specialist support for assistive technology products used by disabled staff and students.

4. Planning and Organising
   Much of the work is generated by events, e.g. fault finding, which may be urgent and require immediate attention and the post holder is expected to prioritise event driven work without consultation. On future planning there is often considerable technical investigation over many months or years with consultations with colleagues around the University and wider afield.

5. Problem Solving
   A high level of ability in analysis and support skills appropriate to computer systems problem solving is required. Typically problems arise through the complex interaction between servers, the services they provide and the desktop computers accessing them. The challenge is being able to identify where the problem actually lies and take the appropriate course of action, even if the problem area is not within the direct responsibility of the post holder. For example, a desktop computer can be functioning correctly but a server or network component malfunction may give the impression that it is unavailable. The post holder needs to confirm the status of the service, and rule out any possible issues prior to alerting those responsible for either the server or network for a resolution. While there may be standard check lists for simple problems the nature of the work requires considerable experience and expertise to be applied.
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Where issues cannot be resolved out with their specialist field, the post holder will consult with an appropriate member of the team.

6. Decision Making
The maintenance and development of new services requires decisions in respect of changes which will affect all users of these services. These include upgrading software to the next version, security fixes and upgrading hardware to improve performance. The timing and risk to service of these changes have to be determined. The majority of the day to day decisions, e.g. on how to fix faults, does not require to be referred upwards with respect to it being implemented but nevertheless must be made available for scrutiny and justification. There is an expectation to take decisions unaided and make recommendations with a view to improving existing services and be trusted to implement these successfully after appropriate consultation.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
There are two main contact groups, first within the University primarily with computing officers within other parts of the computing services, support groups and schools for the purposes of fault finding, service review and consultation over future developments. Secondly external contacts with the technical support desks of our major hardware and software suppliers for the purposes of fault resolution or keeping informed of new systems.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
The job is of a very technical nature normally requiring graduate level education; Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer; Specialist knowledge of application repackaging technologies; a high level of hands on skill as an administrator of Microsoft Active directory ; In-depth knowledge of Web based technologies; Good knowledge of networking technologies and assistive technologies for disabled staff or students; Good communication, presentational and diplomatic skills; Good knowledge of UoE IT policy, facilities and services; Ability to keep up-to-date with, adapt and transfer skills to new and emerging technologies in order to inform decisions on how best to exploit these innovations; At least five years experience of providing expert technical support; At least three years experience in application repackaging.

9. Dimensions
The service infrastructure directly affects all staff and students at the University of Edinburgh who use computer based applications from personal computers. This currently extends to over 9000 computer systems providing services to over 7000 staff and 22000 students. The post-holder directs the work of 1 other team member on specific technical development projects for the entire University population.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
This is a role which requires significant expertise in a specialised area of rapidly changing technology, along with a detailed awareness of the systems being implemented in other parts of the University. The post-holder is an expert in application repackaging technologies, a skill which is in high demand. The job is technically complex and challenging, as issues arising have often not been experienced before. As Operating Systems are constantly evolving, considerable effort is required to maintain a strong, up to date working knowledge.