University of Edinburgh

1. Job Details

Job title: Assistant Director Business Development & Occupancy

School/Support Department: Accommodation Services

Unit (if applicable): 

Line manager: Director of Accommodation Services

2. Job Purpose

- Direct and manage the activities of the student allocations function and all AS (including Edinburgh First) commercial functions
- Ensure occupancy, revenue and expenditure targets are achieved across all product areas and in all relevant markets
- Drive a customer-focused service culture, so as to enhance the reputation of AS and the University
- Support the Director of Accommodation Services, as required, on matters relevant to the management and development of AS services generally

3. Main Responsibilities

(Normally between 4 and 10. Percentages should total at least 95% (and no more than 100%))

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1. Develop and deliver strategies and tactics to ensure the maximised and profitable occupancy of all AS and other relevant University properties and venues, whether by students or commercial customers
2. Deliver budgets and plans in line with Corporate requirements so as to better focus managers and staff on key business objectives
3. Develop and support the planning processes necessary to meet the needs, both current and future, of the University for student accommodation
4. Whether organically or via new product development, grow the commercial business across the full range of accommodation, conference, event and related product areas
5. Manage the effectiveness and development of staff and system resources to better deliver key performance indicators
6. Develop and communicate effective marketing and sales strategies and tactics in order to increase sales volumes
7. Devise and promulgate effective customer service cultures in order to enhance reputation, increase repeat business and reduce complaint levels
8. Manage the consistent and effective use of qualitative and quantitative research, from both internal and external sources, to ensure business profiles and operating standards are at appropriate levels
9. Direct the appropriate development and integration of all staff, products and services in order to better consolidate sales and delivery across the different customer markets i.e. student and commercial
10. Deliver Festivals related programmes which maximise revenues and, as importantly, enhance the profile and reputation of the University within Edinburgh and beyond
4. Planning and Organising

- Devise marketing, sales and operations strategies and plans, working on anything from 1 month to 3+ years ahead
- Reconcile operating budgets and forecasts on a monthly basis
- Devise price schedules covering all product areas on, usually, an annual basis
- Co-ordinating operating and delivery plans and schedules relevant to many key activities and major events throughout the year and involving other AS departments and functions

5. Problem Solving

- Ultimately responsible for all and any issues that arise within the department (whether staff, customer or service related) and for many, mostly customer related, problems that arise as a result of failings in the operational delivery cycle, usually out with the department’s control
- A major example, already evidenced, includes the requirement to react, usually with very little notice, when planned (by the University) student intakes exceed the accommodation supply and do so in a constructive manner and at least cost in terms of revenue and reputation.

6. Decision Making

- Decides on recruitment plans and resource allocation matters
- Decides on the control of budgets and plans to achieve business objectives
- Formulates core policies on marketing and sales and, in conjunction with senior colleagues, on key operational delivery requirements

7. Key Contacts/Relationships

- Internally, within the University, with senior academics and academic administrators so as to support the effective planning and delivery of student accommodation and to increase the utilisation of commercial products by this internal market
- Internally, with senior managers within the University’s corporate service and support functions to, where possible, consolidate services and products so as to increase sales and/or improve delivery of commercial products
- Externally, with other HEI’s, to ensure appropriate and consistent standards are developed and maintained
- Externally, with major accounts, industry partners and key trade/standards bodies

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- A minimum of 5 years senior management experience in a complex, high transaction and service business, ideally in the hospitality/tourism sector
- Very strong communication and influencing skills, especially in marketing products and services and in co-ordinating internal process and resource
- Very strong experience in managing customer service led businesses, including the ability to establish appropriate standards and practices
- Good experience in developing, implementing and managing complex system processes, including IT solutions
- Strong financial knowledge relevant to the creation and management of budgets and operational accounts
- The ability to understand and, as necessary, support the core operating services within AS
9. Dimensions

- Manage circa 26 permanent and up to 40 seasonal staff across 7 core functional areas, each headed by an academic grade Manager, consisting of …
- Student Allocations, Reception Centre (for both Student and Commercial customers), Sales & Marketing, Commercial Accommodation, Conference & Events, Festivals Office, Research (for both AS business and other University departments)
- Manage a revenue budget of circa £30m across core accommodation, catering and functions businesses, and expenditure of circa £1.2m.
- Deliver services to over 5500 student residents each year and commercial accommodation and event services to over 40k customers each year

10. Job Context and any other relevant information

- A consistent requirement is to manage the potential issues among University staff caused by perceived conflicts between student business and AS commercial activities and, where possible, enhance the profile of AS
- Management of the business is compromised because, across all core functions, there are common periods of peak operating and delivery activity
- Involved in other non-AS activities such as the University’s Marketing Strategy Group