Assistant Secretary (Academic Administration)  
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine  
University of Edinburgh

1. Job Details

Job title: CMVM Assistant Secretary (Academic Administration)  
School/Support Department: College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine  
Unit (if applicable): CMVM Academic Administration  
Line manager: CMVM College Registrar

2. Job Purpose

The jobholder has overall management and leadership responsibility for CMVM Academic Administration - this encompasses three Directorates – Undergraduate Learning and Teaching, Postgraduate Studies and International Affairs and Quality Assurance. The jobholder is empowered to pursue and shape College objectives for these Directorates in conjunction with the three academic directors. In managing College teaching and learning needs the jobholder is responsible for ensuring the infrastructure within the College to support Learning and Teaching is fit for purpose, provision of strategic advice and guidance to senior academic colleagues and make a major contribution to the direction and development of strategic policy as it relates to Learning and Teaching.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. The jobholder will understand the strategic issues (both internal and external) affecting learning and teaching within the College together with University policies and the position of CMVM in the wider university and within the national and international context and ensure the effective implementation of these policies at local level. The jobholder has responsibility for the development and review of the CMVM Learning and Teaching strategy in line with the direction outlined in both the University strategy and the College plan, provision of strategic advice to academic colleagues and responsibility for ensuring the strategy is operationalised within Academic Administration.  

Approx. % of time  
15%

2. Responsibility for advising on effective governance machinery within CMVM Academic Administration informing configuration, terms of reference, agenda and modus operandi, membership of key committees and attendance at others as required (most often when specialist advice is needed).  

15%

3. Keeping the direction, functions, processes and procedures of CMVM Academic Administration under review, to ensure that new developments are appropriately supported and processes and procedures are constantly evolving to reflect best practice. This may entail the initiation of joint administrative/academic reviews of areas such as assessment or initiation of projects such as MIDAS (Medical School Information Database and Administrative System). The jobholder is responsible for initiating, planning and managing change to policy and/or procedures.  

15%

4. Management of salary and non-salary budgets within Academic Administration. The salary budget is approx £1152k pa and non salary budgets are currently £630k pa. Budgetary planning, taking decisions about budget allocation and negotiating within and, on occasion, across College and at institutional level, regarding resource issues and allocation.  

15%
5. Representing the academic interests of the College at institutional level through membership of relevant committees, working groups and review groups. This includes, for example, EUCLID Project Board, ELIR Working Group, TPR Review Group, International Committee. This activity together with the development of effective relationships with senior officers from the other Colleges and from central university enables the jobholder to influence and contribute to the development of policy at both College and institutional level and also ensures the jobholder can take forward new policy from MVM which requires a change to university procedures. 20%

6. Management and leadership of staff within CMVM Academic Administration (7 administrative and 15 clerical members of staff) including recruitment, staff development, appraisal, ensuring that the staffing profile is appropriate. Motivating staff ensuring they are equipped to perform to the best of their ability and that they are deployed to efficiently meet the requirements of academic administration. 15%

7. Representing the College at national level – Annual meeting of Secretaries to UK Medical Schools, Member of the Advisory Group and Management Group for the SFC funded widening participation project, Working in Health Access Programme, participation in national discussions regarding Additional Costs of Teaching monies (resource allocated to the NHS in recognition of additional cost incurred by teaching medical students – in SE Scotland this amounts to £23 million). Secretary to the Scottish Medical Deans Fitness to Practise Working Group. 5%

4. Planning and Organising

Academic Administration encompasses a number of functions requiring complex planning for which the job holder is responsible. The ability to plan in the short, medium (up to 6 months to one year) and long term (up to 18 months – 2 years in advance and occasionally longer) is essential. Factors affecting planning include the university and college planning cycles, external imperatives, university and college strategic policy and resource issues (both staff and financial). The jobholder is responsible for strategic, resource and task/project planning and organisation for CMVM Academic Administration as well as contingency planning and prioritises his/her own work and that of others ensuring that planning goals are met.

5. Problem Solving

Problems that are the responsibility of the jobholder to deal with are those concerned with resource (space, financial or HR) and complex, difficult or sensitive problems arising within academic administration or within the University which affect academic management in MVM. This can range from a difficulty with an individual student or member of staff to a resource problem (space, financial, people) to a regulatory issue (either requiring action to be taken outside the regulations or a change in regulation to be initiated) to a need to determine a course of action requiring change or addition to procedure in response to an unexpected external or internal imperative. Problems will also be referred to the jobholder from other members of staff within Academic Administration in instances where they have a difficulty in resolving them or require advice and/or guidance. The jobholder will, in most cases be expected to resolve the issues but will take advice from the College Registrar if required.

6. Decision Making

The jobholder works autonomously with delegated authority from the College Registrar to take decisions relating to academic administration. These decisions require a high level of knowledge, expertise and professional judgement. They include decisions relating to budgets, staff deployment, initiation and implementation of change in College and/or University procedures, situations requiring independent action outwith the University’s normal
procedures, decisions on behalf of the College or University with regard to external national initiatives.

8. Key Contacts/Relationships

Key contacts internally to the College are College Registrar, senior support staff (Finance, HR, Buildings, Capital Projects, Research), senior academic colleagues, Postgraduate Deanery, colleagues within academic administration, students. Key contacts within the university include senior academic officers from the other colleges (academic and administrative), Student and Academic Services Group, Corporate Services Group. External relationships are with NHS, QAA, Scottish Medical Deans Group, Scottish Executive, General Medical Council, Council of Heads of Medical Schools, colleagues from other University Medical Schools in the UK, admissions and widening participation bodies nationally and locally.

Contact with all of the above is made on a regular basis.

9. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job

- Good first degree and substantive professional development thereafter
- 10 years of administrative/management experience ideally in HE or the NHS
- Detailed understanding of the core business and the internal and external factors affecting it
- Management, leadership, organisational and planning skills in respect of both people and resources
- Excellent written/oral communication skills with the ability to influence and persuade and to build internal and external networks
- Ability to resolve problems appropriately and creatively
- Good analytical skills with the ability to understand, develop and communicate complex policy concepts
- Understanding of wider HE issues both in Scotland and the rest of the UK

10. Dimensions

The College offers 2 professional undergraduate programmes with a new BSc in Medical Sciences due to start in September 2006, 17 intercalated honours programmes, PhD provision, 9 Masters by Research programmes and, as of September 2006, 16 taught masters programmes. There are in the region of 1800 undergraduate and 950 postgraduate students. There are in excess of 1000 members of academic teaching staff (including NHS staff holding honorary contracts).

Management of 7 administrative and 15 clerical members of staff and is responsible for a salary budget of approx £1152k and a non salary budget of £630k

17 College Committees
Currently 6 University Committees (plus a varying number of ad hoc groups looking at specific issues)
3 National Committees

11. Job Context and any other relevant information

The job is carried out not only within the context of the College and of the University but in the context of the requirements of professional organisations such as the General Medical Council or the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and requirements of government with respect to, for example, medical manpower planning. The environment is therefore a rapidly changing one and the jobholder must be aware of and understand all factors and to anticipate and respond to changes and new requirements.