University of Edinburgh

Job Description

1. Job Details
   Job title: Head of Operations
   School/Support Department: Student and Academic Services Group
   Unit (if applicable): Registry
   Line manager: Director of Registry

2. Job Purpose
   To provide leadership, oversight and effective management of the Registry during the 90% secondment of the Director of Registry to the EUCLID project. Deputise for the Director in all operational matters and in the representation of the Registry within SASG, the wider University and on various University committees.

3. Main Responsibilities
   Approx. % of time

   1. Delegated responsibility for the management of the Registry’s budget and effective management and delivery of high profile University activities such as Matriculation, Examinations and Graduation and Scholarship Awards Ceremonies. In conjunction with the Director of Registry responsible for strategic operational planning to ensure development and delivery of high quality fair, fast, friendly, customer focussed services to a range of customers across the University. 40

   2. Developing and managing the Registry staff resources – in particular improving the skill sets of the current staff to fulfil the requirements of their roles following restructuring of the Registry in 2004/05 30

   3. Developing solid working partnerships with all areas of the University. A large element of this is influencing other business owners to encourage them to review and change their business processes. 20

   4. Contributing to and influencing institutional policy development through membership of influential committees. This includes proposing academic policy and/or administrative change in consultation with senior academics and administrators, in response to change in legislation or business needs. 10

4. Planning and Organising
   • Responsible for both major business process re-engineering and for planning and organising major/complex ongoing operational activity.

   Major business process re-engineering tends to be planned on 12-24 month timeframes because of both the nature of academic processes and the need to engage with and gain agreement from others to changing their processes which feed to/feed from Registry activity.

   Strategic planning includes new business processes and policies driven by changes in legislation and University policies/projects: Planning for these, staff development and training and the activities of the operational areas, takes place over a period of between of 3-12 months in advance and is focussed on the objectives of the SASG Strategic Plan.

   • The postholder line manages staff who are themselves responsible for planning significant operational processes and who themselves project manage major Registry projects. This involves the postholder in the coordination of change and policy development across three business areas whose work impacts across the University.
• Responsible for the Registry’s organisational structure, for leading the major restructuring of the Registry in 2005 and its ongoing review, to ensure the delivery of a high quality service and to reflect well on the University as a leading higher education institution.

5. Problem Solving
• Pro-actively analysing the performance indicators for all Registry activities, identifying where enhancements are possible through new business practices or process re-engineering and leading innovative change to ensure improvement to, and quality of, service.
• Identifying through skills assessment the training and staff development levels required and through the development of an HR Strategy that includes regular appraisals, staff development and training opportunities, motivating staff to achieve the skills required to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
• Taking appropriate action on staff performance issues to secure appropriate outcomes in the interests of the department and the individuals concerned.
• Managing a diverse range of inter-university relationships and expectations of service delivery, through consultation and the development of partnership across the University.
• Using judgement in finding flexible ‘out of the box’ solutions to student problems, especially where IT systems or administrative processes appear to hinder the provision of appropriate academic or personal support.

6. Decision Making
• In conjunction with the Director decides on policy and formulates plans for the Registry.
• Takes devolved responsibility for the allocation and management of all Registry resources. This includes making financial decisions to ensure that the budget is adhered to, for developing cases for supplementary funding, forecasting future expenditure, and approving or halting internal expenditure where required.
• Influences instructional policy through deciding on the content of input to/advice on policy formulation for consideration by senior management or senior committees, as appropriate.
• Devising strategies for the recruitment, replacement, management and allocation of staff resources within Registry.
• Identifying and recommending to the Director of Registry candidates for promotion, discretionary award and accelerated progression.
• In conjunction with the Heads of Sections deciding what the operational priorities will be for the next year and what changes and business process re-engineering projects will be recommended to the Director of Registry, setting targets for achievement and monitoring progress.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
• The postholder’s primary contacts are with the Director of Registry and the Academic Registrar in developing policy and goal setting for Registry in keeping with the support group objectives. The evolving partnering relationship with the Deputy College Registrars in relation to process change is essential to the fulfilment of the postholder’s responsibilities.
• Other important relationships in exercising duties and responsibilities are with senior administrative officers of the University e.g. University Secretary, the Director of Planning and Heads of Services within SASG, and Heads of Service e.g. HR, with the Principal and some of the Vice-Principals in relation to Graduations, Honorary Degrees, special projects, student reviews and committee work.
A wide range of academic and administrative staff contacts in the Colleges and Schools in relation to policy development and the Registry Change Programme is essential, as are contacts in other institutions with the aim to establish best practice and sound working relationships, e.g. academics and administrators in the Scottish Agricultural College and the Edinburgh College of Art in relation to the management of the administration arrangements for collaborative degrees.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
• Good honours degree or equivalent demonstrable knowledge/experience.
• At least seven years in an Higher Education environment with substantial relevant management experience including management of staff and budgets.
• Leadership – ability to lead and drive change.
• Negotiation – ability to manage complex relationships, establish and maintain trust through
an adaptable personal style to suit diverse situations.

- Communication – ability to present complex information effectively through a variety of media.
- Sound judgement, good organisational skills and the ability to prioritise work under pressure.
- Self-confidence, resilience and energy.

9. Dimensions
Registry has a staff of 40 people and a resource budget including salaries of circa £1.4M. The department delivers:

- The development, management and delivery of student administrative support to 22,500 students throughout their student lifecycle i.e. from matriculation to graduation.
- Assessment and payment of scholarships and bursaries (£6.3M), revenue recovery for the University/College/School (£60M)
- Management of all statistical returns.
- 15 Graduations ceremonies involving 6,500 students, their families and guests. As part of these ceremonies Registry manages the conferring of circa 21 Honorary Degrees and 4 Benefactors. These are an integral part of the University’s PR and Development and Alumni Strategy.
- Registry Systems provides development and user support to the academic and administrative staff of the University. There are nearly 1700 staff users of whom 1600 are WISARD users.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information