

JOB DESCRIPTION

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| Job Title: | General Counsel | Grade: | SG10 |
| Department: | Vice-Chancellor's Office | Date of Job Evaluation: | January 2019 |
| Role reports to: | University Secretary | | |
| Direct Reports | N/A | | |
| Indirect Reports: | N/A | | |
| Other Key contacts: | Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Finance, Director of HR; other professional service directors; other senior staff throughout the University; external commercial partners; external law firms; University's insurers | | |
| This role profile is non-contractual and provided for guidance. It will be updated and amended from time to time in accordance with the changing needs of the University and the requirements of the job. | | | |

PURPOSE OF ROLE:

This is a busy and varied role in which a qualified solicitor will provide specialist legal services, professional advice, guidance and support to the University's executive and senior staff on a wide range of legal matters relating to the University of Greenwich and its subsidiaries, including commercial matters, student issues, employment matters, litigation, academic partnerships and compliance with legislation and regulations.

Duties will include reviewing and drafting legal contracts and agreements; providing day to day advice on a wide range of legal and compliance matters; managing complex student and staff casework (e.g. complaints, appeals); managing litigation by or against the University; working with a wide range of internal colleagues; and representing the University's interests through pro-active engagement with external stakeholders. The General Counsel will act as the main contact and liaison point with the external law firms on matters referred to external lawyers and will manage and oversee the relationships with external law firms to ensure that the University obtains high quality and timely advice on a cost-effective basis.

The General Counsel will manage specific compliance areas delegated by the University Secretary to ensure that the University meets legal and regulatory requirements, including (but not limited to) the Modern Slavery Act, the Competition and Markets Authority's guidance for universities on consumer protection law, and the Companies Act. As the University's Insurance Officer, the post holder will manage the relationships with the University's insurers to ensure that value for money is achieved and will work closely with the Senior Executive Officer (University Governing Body) to provide advice and assistance to colleagues on insurance matters.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:**Legal**

1. To take responsibility for making independent decisions on a day to day basis on legal matters which could affect the University's reputation and could lead to claims/legal proceedings against the University if not managed appropriately;
2. To provide high quality legal advice to the University and lead on legal matters on behalf of the University on specific projects as required;
3. To make decisions about information requirements, undertake research and present data/information appropriately including report writing, policy documentation and producing high quality advice and guidance in oral and written form in a timely manner;
4. To review contracts and agreements offered to the University to ensure that they secure fair terms for the University; to draft contracts and agreements as may be required for discussion with potential partners; to support the work of other departments (e.g. Greenwich Research and Enterprise, Estates and Facilities and the International Office) with respect to the review and drafting of contracts and agreements, providing advice and guidance. Where required, to negotiate terms on behalf of the University in relation to contracts and agreements;
5. To review and develop standard terms and conditions and template agreements for use by University departments, and advise on their use;
6. To develop and maintain an electronic repository for the University's legal contracts and agreements using appropriate software tools;
7. To manage complex student and staff casework (e.g. complaints, appeals) referred to the University Secretary's Office, and to support the work of other departments (e.g. Student and Academic Services, Human Resources) with advice on student and staff casework;
8. To advise on employment matters as required by the University's Human Resources Directorate;
9. To advise the University in relation to disputes and litigation including the provision of tactical advice, entering into negotiations and the drafting of letters and settlement documentation;
10. To pro-actively identify areas for improvement in the University's systems that affect legal matters and put in place new arrangements as necessary in liaison with senior staff and any other staff who need to support the new arrangements;
11. To advise on legal developments affecting the University and to contribute to the development of institutional strategy and policies accordingly;
12. To manage the relationships with external legal firms which provide specialist legal advice to the University, ensuring that the University obtains high quality and timely advice on a cost-effective basis, and that targets for reducing expenditure on external

legal services are met. To advise on the appropriate procurement of legal advice and support the periodic review and competitive market-testing of the provision of legal services to the University. To take responsibility, acting on behalf of the University Secretary, for briefing legal professionals who may be representing the University in any legal matters;

13. To maintain registered solicitor status (to be supported by the University) and represent the University at legal networks. The General Counsel will be expected to actively engage with the Association of University Legal Practitioners (AULP) network of 'in-house' professional legal advisers that exists to facilitate sharing of best practice among UK HEIs;

Compliance

14. To manage specific compliance areas delegated by the University Secretary to ensure the University meets legal and regulatory requirements, including (but not limited to) the Modern Slavery Act, the Competition and Markets Authority's guidance for universities on consumer protection law, and the Companies Act;
15. To undertake policy/regulations audits and reviews in delegated compliance areas to ensure that the University is complying with the requirements of the legislation and, where necessary, develop policy documents to address areas where compliance could be improved;

Insurance

16. To update the University's insurers in respect of legal cases and to notify insurers of any new or threatened legal proceedings;
17. To arrange commercial insurance to cover all interests and activities of the University, ensuring that the University achieves best value for money;
18. Liaise between the insurers and members of University staff on all insurance related matters, overseeing the work of the Senior Executive Officer (University Governing Body) in this area.

Core Requirements:

1. Adhere to and promote the University's policies on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Information Security;
2. Ensure compliance with Health & Safety and Data Protection Legislation;
3. Support and promote the University's Sustainability policies, including the Carbon Management Plan, and carry out duties in a resource efficient way, recognising the shared responsibility of minimising the university's negative environmental impacts wherever possible.

Additional Requirements:

Undertake any other duties as requested by the University Secretary or their line manager, commensurate with the grade.

This is a professional, demanding role within a complex organisation with an ambitious strategic plan and agenda for change. The role holder will be expected to show flexibility in working arrangements, including working hours, to ensure that the Vice-Chancellor's Office delivers the required level of service.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

1. Timely, proactive and accurate provision of legal advice and drafting/review of contracts and agreements;
2. Management of student and staff casework to agreed timescales while maintaining high quality standards;
3. Effective management of litigation, ensuring all requirements are met to achieve successful outcomes;
4. Achieve targets for reducing spend on external legal services while ensuring high quality in externally commissioned advice;
5. Ensure the University meets all legal and regulatory requirements in delegated compliance areas;
6. Ensure that the University maintains appropriate levels of insurance cover and achieve best value for money in its insurance arrangements.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS (Internal & External):**Internal:**

Regular ongoing liaison with the University Secretary, Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Finance, Director of HR, other professional service directors and other senior staff throughout the University.

External:

Regular ongoing liaison with external law firms providing advice to the University; the University's insurers; and commercial partners (in the course of negotiations over contracts/agreements). The General Counsel is expected to actively engage with the Association of University Legal Practitioners (AULP) network of 'in-house' professional legal advisers and other relevant legal networks.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

| Essential | Desirable |
|--|---|
| <p data-bbox="156 315 331 349">Experience</p> <ul data-bbox="156 389 804 1283" style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven ability to successfully negotiate complex and sensitive matters for, and on behalf of a range of individual and/or corporate clients or organisations; • Experience of effectively leading and delivering new projects; • Experience of providing clear, timely and practical legal advice to a wide range of stakeholders including senior colleagues, board members or equivalent; • Experience of working with other professional colleagues to resolve complex legal issues by reaching a consensus on the best strategy to resolve the matter; • Experience of employment matters; • Experience of commercial and contract matters; • Experience of, or a willingness to engage with, HE regulatory matters and student matters; • Evidence of engaging in on-going professional development to ensure knowledge of the law remains current. <p data-bbox="156 1323 244 1357">Skills</p> <ul data-bbox="156 1397 794 2029" style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent oral and written communication skills with high level of attention to detail; • Excellent analytical skills, with the ability to extract key points and write in a clear style; • Excellent drafting skills and proven track record of working with complex or varied contracts; • Proven ability to interact with and influence senior managers; • Proven ability to work on own initiative without close supervision; • Well organised and methodical with the ability to prioritise and plan ahead; • Good IT skills including Word, Excel and Outlook; • Experience of using legal software, for | <p data-bbox="829 315 1005 349">Experience</p> <ul data-bbox="829 389 1477 909" style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in a similar in-house role in a Higher Education or equivalent environment; • Experience of working with other external legal firms or in-house legal teams working for other organisations; • Experience of implementing and maintaining a contract management system; • Experience of data protection and freedom of information compliance; • A proven interest in education and a willingness to engage proactively with HE professional networks. |

example, to research points of law or to obtain precedent or template legal documents;

Qualifications

- UK qualified solicitor as recognised by the Law Society with a broad range of proven success and practical experience in legal practice;
- Current practising certificate issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority;

Personal attributes

- Understanding of the importance of maintaining confidentiality at all times;
- Ability to work on own initiative and contribute effectively to the small team of staff engaged in other aspects of the work of the Vice-Chancellor's Office;
- Ability to work professionally and discretely with senior figures within and outside the University;
- Ability to work flexibly as required to ensure that unexpected urgent matters can be managed effectively;
- We are looking for people who can help us deliver the [values](#) of the University of Greenwich: Excellence, Determination, Inclusivity, Ambition and Creativity