



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Job Description

Job Title:	Head of USG Planning and Operations
Department / School:	University Secretary's Group
Reports To:	Vice-Principal and University Secretary

Grade: UE09

2. Job Purpose

A key member of the Professional Services Group management team accountable to the University Secretary for planning of financial and operational activities within USG. Organises and prioritises issues across the Group to facilitate efficient decision making and delivery of published plans. Initiates and leads change projects and programmes; providing oversight and guidance to multiple projects and where necessary prioritising between them.

This role requires a dynamic and highly experienced senior manager with strong business and commercial acumen who is able to quickly gain a thorough understanding of the people, objectives and projects and with a track record for quality and delivery.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. Define and develop strategy and policy with the University Secretary and the USG Management Team. Development of and updating of the Group 5 year rolling plan ensuring alignment to University strategy and financial parameters. Preparation of the Group submissions to other University planning cycles, e.g. IS Applications, Estates. **Approx. % of time** 20%
2. Monitors overall Group performance against plan and where there is movement from the agreed plans agrees appropriate actions with functional managers to deliver plans within budget 20%
3. Initiate and manage change processes and projects and contribute to development of new initiatives to secure improvements to the efficient and effective operation of the Group and University. This will involve acting as a sponsor for multiple concurrent projects or programmes and where necessary prioritising between them 20%

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| 4. Support good governance and decision making within USG ensuring that the function operates within an effective governance framework that is aligned to University requirements. This includes: responsibility for ensuring that appropriate and high quality information is provided to USG and relevant University Committees to enable the fulfilment of their remits; managing the flow of information between USG, and University Committees as appropriate; overseeing risk management in USG working with USG Directors and Internal Audit to ensure timely reporting on risks and audit actions; ensuring timely progress and completion of actions; | 15% |
| 5. Representing the Group across various university committees, groups and project boards. In doing this, contribute to policy development across the University | 10% |
| 6. Management of the USG Business Unit, including support to the Secretary's Office, the Principal's Office and the Provost's Office, to ensure excellent support is provided to these areas. Manage, mentor and direct activities of members of the USG Business Unit team. Provide advice on complex issues and be accountable for professionalism of approach and quality and timeliness of delivery. Ensure balanced workload across the team, undertake annual reviews and identify opportunities for professional development | 10% |
| 7. Undertake other activities as agreed with the University Secretary | 5% |

4. Planning and Organising

The post holder is expected to plan and organise their own work, taking into account internal University deadlines and external demands.

Responsible for long-term (3-5 years) resource planning and forecasting, particularly staffing plans, space planning and financial projections, working with and providing advice to USG Directorates to support them in operating as efficiently and effectively as possible, whilst maximising opportunities for continuous improvement.

The post holder monitors all budgets within the Group and will forward plan expenditure, over a 5 year period to input to the University planning round.

Coordinates the strategic planning and executes delivery to the strategic planning and delivery of change initiatives; these vary in scale and impact from departmental initiatives to major University change initiatives, with consequent timescales of a few months to several years (3-5 years).

The post holder will be expected to have an interest in and understanding of external developments which may impact across the Group and, where appropriate, recommend revisions to current plans to mitigate risks or exploit opportunities arising from external developments. Horizon scanning and a forward view are key to plan development.

The post holder will also have oversight of the planning and organisation of the workload of direct reports.

5. Problem Solving

High level professional judgement, diplomacy and political awareness are required, as is the ability to anticipate problems and provide innovative solutions.

The post holder is expected to manage large-scale change involving complex interactions between different areas of the University - Colleges, other Professional Services Groups and services within those Groups, with substantial, long-term impact on University business, e.g. implementation of changes arising from University wide strategic initiatives, such as system replacements, major process change and ways of working.

The post holder will respond to requests for funding for a wide variety of reasons, will prioritise between these and will propose alternative methods of funding if USG funding is not available.

Capable of working with senior staff, recognising tensions between competing institutional priorities whilst ensuring that programmes and projects remain on schedule

Capable of developing robust high level financial analysis

Take the lead in tackling difficult and complex issues that impact on the University's strategic objectives.

Highly developed interpersonal, networking, advocacy, strategic influencing and presentation skills.

Excellent stakeholder management capability with the ability to anticipate and respond to changing circumstances and new opportunities.

6. Decision Making

The post holder acts autonomously on their own initiative and must therefore be self-motivated and confident in setting priorities, and prepared to take the responsibility for decisions and actions.

The post holder works with the University Secretary, USG Management Team and Heads of service in defining, constructing, implementing and co-ordinating multiple factors – staffing, resources, systems and procedures - and relating them to best practice. Independent and collaborative decision-making is likely to have a long term considerable impact.

The post holder is expected to have an excellent knowledge of University policies and procedures to inform decision-making. However, there are occasions where decisions may be taken out-with these policies and procedures, and the post holder would be expected to exercise appropriate judgement when making these decisions, and be accountable for them.

The post holder will exercise delegated responsibility as necessary and appropriate on behalf of the University Secretary.

The post holder will contribute as a member of the USG Management Team to all strategic decision-making in the Group.

The post holder will contribute at University level to decision making on cross-disciplinary initiatives and/or projects.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships

The post holder must provide regular and reliable support to the University Secretary and it will be critical to maintain a strong, professional relationship with the University Secretary and members of the USG Management Team.

The post holder will have a wide range of internal contacts across the University Secretary's Group and more broadly across the University. They will have key relationships with those in cross-USG dedicated support roles such as the HR partner, Finance partner and the Head of IT for USG. The role will frequently involve working in multi-disciplinary project teams with members from different areas of the University.

The range of external contacts will include suppliers of various goods and services procured.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job

Essential

- Professionally qualified/relevant degree or equivalent, plus extensive experience in management roles.
- Proven skills in business and financial management.
- Experience of developing innovative solutions and implementing these to align with strategic goals.
- Previous experience of senior operational leadership and management including; strategy, budget, infrastructure, people process, and working with different professional specialisms.
- Excellent analytical, written and oral communication skills, supported by good IT skills.
- Extremely good interpersonal, motivational, networking and negotiation/influencing skills. Proven ability to establish and maintain a network of personal working relationships with senior decision makers within a large, complex organisation.
- Has a flexible approach and is willing to perform varying duties dependent on the shifting needs of the Group and the University as a whole.
- Proven ability to manage multiple and competing priorities.

Desirable

- Experience of working at a senior level in an HE environment.
- Understanding of wider HE issues and legal and regulatory context
- Knowledge of University of Edinburgh processes and systems.

9. Dimensions

- The University Secretary's Group is one of three Professional Services Groups in the University and provides a wide range of high-quality services in support of the University's academic mission. The Group employs over 1,000 people, c. 700 FTE, and has a revenue spend in excess of £70m p.a. across 10 organisational units.
- Direct line management of 2 direct reports and 3 staff in total.
- Management oversight in relation to business services provided to USG from other areas of the University.

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