

## Job Description – Senior Advisor

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**Unit:** Open University in Scotland

**Salary:** £26,642 to £29,659

**Location:** Edinburgh

**Please quote reference:** 480 / 481

**Terms:** Support Staff

**Closing Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 23:59

**Interview date:** Week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

**Start date:** 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### Work location

This role is contractually based in the Edinburgh office, but we do support hybrid working across our team. Currently, attendance in the office is required twice a month with both the cost and travel time being the responsibility of the employee and not compensated by the University.

Please note that there will be more frequent attendance required for the initial training period as well as holiday leave being restricted during this period. Leave will also be restricted in the busy peak periods.

### Change your career, change lives

The Open University is the UK's largest university, a world leader in flexible part-time education combining a mission to widen access to higher education with research excellence, transforming lives through education.

Find out more about us and our mission by watching this [short video](#) (you will be taken to YouTube by clicking this link).

The Open University in Scotland is an integral part of the Scottish Higher Education community. Social justice and equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything the Open University does and widening access to higher education is the ambition on which it was founded.

Our Senior advisor Team looking for talented new members, whose role will be to provide student-centred information by phone, email, and webchat, so that we can continue to provide an exceptional and responsive service. We are hugely passionate about what we do and are looking for likeminded individuals, with dynamism and energy, who genuinely care about our students and their journey with us, and who can work in a fast-paced environment which is focussed on continuous improvement.

### **About the Role**

The role holder will work as part of a wider Student Recruitment and Support Team and will help students and prospective students make choices about their studies that meet their needs and support retention, progression, and student satisfaction. The key duties are:

- To provide support across all areas of the curriculum, through the provision of complex advice to students and prospective students on a wide range of queries to maximise student success. To also act as a point of contact for queries and requests for advice and support received via a variety of channels.
- Where necessary refer to other staff with specialist expertise, as part of the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) model, making interactions with The Open University as effortless and seamless as possible.
- Delivery of a specific area of work/areas of work, such as supporting students in secure environments, and providing expert advice related to disability support.

## **Key Responsibilities**

To provide complex and/or curriculum related advice to support students and prospective students in registration and study with The Open University, through both proactive and reactive contact via inbound and outbound phone calls, emails, letters, online webchat, online forums and face to face:

- Support students and prospective students requiring complex advice using judgement and expertise to assess queries and ensure that needs are identified and addressed, referring on where appropriate
- Act as the first point of referral for students who may present with challenging issues
- Advice provision across all areas of the curriculum using judgement and expertise as well as reference to standard operating procedures and policies, informed by use of a knowledge management system as well as briefings, training events, use of databases and printed material to access accurate and up to date information and advice
- Supporting matters across the student lifecycle from choice of qualification, career-based enquiries, change of study intention to assignment extensions and tutor referrals

To undertake associated administrative and operational processes to action student and prospective student requests:

- Accurately record and maintain student and prospective student details on university systems and databases
- Ensure that complex guidance needs, and issues are identified referring/transferring calls appropriately and effectively to other specialist staff as part of an IAG model
- Where appropriate or necessary, book follow up appointments for those specialists at times convenient to students and prospective students

To work as part of a flexible operation to provide support and answer queries from students, prospective students and Associate Lecturers. To work to a rota to ensure that all activity is dealt with promptly and effectively within agreed Service Levels:

- Participate actively in the achievement service standards and contribute to the monitoring and review of these standards

- Exercise judgement in dealing with complex issues, interpreting, and applying guidelines with initiative whilst operating within defined boundaries

To assist proactively with the development and continuous improvement of good internal and inter team working and service provision:

- Attending and actively participating in team meetings and developmental activities.
- Showing initiative in helping the team to run smoothly, contributing to business improvement ideas and working with and supporting other teams as required
- Engage actively in the support and development of new team members
- Contribute to the development of effective team delivery relating to IAG
- Undertaking other activities as directed by the Team Manager

To continually develop skills and knowledge to maintain and improve personal performance in the spirit of continuous improvement and to adopt correct and evolving business practices and procedures:

- Undertaking all duties in accordance with internal policy and external legislation.
- Working with the Team Manager, Student Support to understand personal performance and areas for development
- Providing and accepting feedback to contribute skills and knowledge development

All staff are expected to comply with the University's Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies in the performance of your duties as well as ensuring Statutory Requirements, Codes of Practice, University Policies and Departmental Health and Safety arrangements are complied with.

## **Skills and Experience**

### **Essential:**

#### **Education, qualifications and training**

- A good standard of general education including Standard Grade Maths and English at Grade C or above, or equivalent.

#### **Knowledge, work and other relevant experience**

- Experience of answering and actioning complex and diverse queries, using a wide range of information sources.
- Experience of providing information and advice and the ability to transfer this experience to a higher education context.
- Ability to maintain own knowledge bank in a coherent and systematic way and carry out research as necessary.
- Ability to identify deficiencies in information sources and take proactive measures to improve and enhance clarity and accuracy for service delivery.

#### **Personal abilities and qualities**

- Fully engage and participate in supporting our team culture – demonstrating the highest levels of accountability, ownership and leadership
- Good communication skills: both oral and written, with effective telephone techniques and the ability to explain policies and processes in plain English as well as to write clearly, succinctly, and correctly in plain English.
- Good interpersonal skills: including active listening skills and the ability to respond to identified needs using varied questioning techniques.
- Flexibility: including adaptability to changing circumstances, duties, work practices and systems and a commitment to ongoing development with the ability to demonstrate a rapid understanding of newly presented information.
- Good planning and organisational skills: including the ability to cope with heavy workloads and to meet deadlines, working productively and accurately in a dynamic environment.
- Good negotiating skills.

- An ability to deal with and follow complex information and procedures: using initiative and judgement in problem-solving, whilst recognising boundaries.
- Strong IT skills: including use of standard Microsoft Office packages, and the ability to learn to use a range of in-house and commercial systems.
- An understanding of team working and the ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- An understanding of Equal Opportunities (EO) issues and a commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.
- Commitment to excellent customer service and continuous improvement.

## **Desirable:**

### **Education, qualifications and training**

- Relevant VQ to Level 2 or above (e.g., Customer Services or Information, Advice and Guidance, Customer Care).

### **Knowledge, work and other relevant experience**

- Experience of inbound and outbound calling in a complex customer services environment.
- Experience of working to personal, team and organisational targets.

### **Personal abilities and qualities**

- Ability to adapt interpersonal styles to suit different people or situations.
- Evidence of understanding the roles that individuals play as part of a team.
- Evidence of applying EO policy in a previous role.
- Ability to use management information systems.
- Ability to use customer relationship management systems.

*The Open University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion which is reflected in our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. We aim to foster a diverse and inclusive environment so that all in our OU community can reach their potential. We recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and culture, and that*

*this difference brings great strength. We strive to recruit, retain and develop the careers of a diverse pool of students and staff, and particularly encourage applications from all underrepresented groups. We also aspire to make The Open University a supportive workplace for all through our policies, services and staff networks.*

