# The Open University Logo

# Staff Tutor in Computing & Communications

*Full time Permanent role, (part time possible between 18.5 and 37 hours per week, potential for additional posts)*

**The Person Specification for this role is on pages 2-3. Please address each of the these bullet points in your personal statement.**

**The Role**

We are seeking candidates with a strong background in computing and communications. In particular we are keen to recruit staff with knowledge in the field of Artificial Intelligence, who can help to support the development of our new AI qualifications. We aim to appoint inspiring and innovative teachers and scholars, who enjoy developing novel approaches to teaching and research, and are effective in working collaboratively with colleagues. Some of the work is likely to include managing tutors on apprenticeship schemes.

A significant and distinctive part of the academic role of Staff Tutor is to manage a large number of part-time Associate Lecturers (OU tutors) who in turn directly support OU students through the means of correspondence tuition, email, telephone and face-to-face sessions and increasingly, other mechanisms such as online tutorials and conferencing. The Staff Tutor role also extends to helping the largely non-subject specialist advisory and study support staff in the Student Support Team to understand the needs of students, and in conveying the Faculty's curriculum developments and student support strategies to student services colleagues. A Staff Tutor may also be involved in designing and implementing local strategies to widen participation, promote employer engagement, and enhance more broadly the external work of the University.

The post-holder will spend at least half of their time managing ALs and providing specialised academic advice and guidance to students (as part of a wider Student Support Team). The nature of the Staff Tutor role means that they must be able to work well in multifunctional distributed teams, as well as independently. Many of the duties of a Staff Tutor involve the need to perform administrative tasks and undertake the recruitment of new ALs, organise tutorial programmes and work closely with colleagues in AL services to arrange the allocation of students to tutors. The management and quality assurance aspects of the role require an ability to deal sensitively with a wide range of people. The post holder will also need to apply academic judgment to ensure standards are maintained in delivery of learning and support to students. Therefore, a sound understanding of the issues and external contexts affecting higher education in the UK is important.

The post holder will spend the remainder of their time on academic activities such as teaching, research and scholarship. Candidates should bring an imaginative approach to the general challenge of teaching computing and communications topics to students from different backgrounds. Clear communication on academic, strategic and organisational matters is important, as a considerable proportion of the work of a Staff Tutor involves written, telephone and email contact with Associate Lecturers, students, other University staff and external stakeholders interested in and directly involved with the higher education agenda. Experience of managing student project modules at undergraduate and postgraduate levels would also be desirable.

Some travel will also be necessary, for example to our Student Support Teams based in Manchester and to our campus in Milton Keynes. Such journeys will be reimbursed according to the University scheme. Some aspects of the role will require working in the evenings and at weekends and as such Staff Tutors are expected to be flexible in their working hours.

We welcome applicants from a range of backgrounds, including professionals from academia and industry. In line with our commitment to the Athena SWAN initiative and the Race Equality Charter, we welcome and support all applicants equally.

**Person Specification**

*Detail how you meet or exceed the requirements of each of the individual points on this list in your 1000 word Personal statement.*

**Essential**

* A good honours degree (or equivalent) in a relevant area
* Demonstrable knowledge of the skills and experience required to support undergraduate and/or postgraduate taught students and the staff that tutor them
* Some experience of teaching at further or higher education levels in the area of computing and communications topics
* Some experience of adult learning within an online and/or distance learning environment
* An understanding and experience of dealing with issues of access and retention in the context of higher education
* Experience of staff selection and performance management
* Experience of delivering staff development
* Experience in the use of ICT in an educational context
* Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to communicate ideas clearly, and to offer and receive constructive criticism
* Good team working and interpersonal skills and the ability to work adaptively and responsively with a variety of colleagues in multidisciplinary teams; particularly when the team is geographically dispersed
* Ability to be personally resilient and be able to respond to school, faculty and organisational change
* Ability to prioritise demands when subject to conflicting pressures, and the ability to work flexibly and independently (including some evenings and weekends).
* Knowledge of, and commitment to, equal opportunities principles and practice
* Commitment to the aims, ethos and values of the Open University

**Desirable**

* Post-graduate qualification (such as a PhD or an EdD) in a relevant area and/or a relevant education postgraduate degree
* Experience of managing student project modules at undergraduate and postgraduate levels
* Higher Education Academy professional accreditation or equivalent
* Background in Artificial Intelligence or Degree Apprenticeships to support new qualifications being established.

## **Role specific requirements**

The successful candidate will be appointed to the School and will be a member of the Staff Tutor Group in the Faculty. There will be opportunities to work in conjunction with Staff Tutors located across the UK at regular meetings held via online conferencing and at the University campus in Milton Keynes.

The Open University is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all backgrounds and nationalities. Our work is carried out across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and you will need to be a resident of Wales, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, or the Republic of Ireland in order to work with us. This will be a homeworking or office-based post. The successful candidate may be required to undertake evening and weekend commitments and will be expected to travel in the UK, to meetings in Milton Keynes, Manchester, and to other locations as necessary.

Further details of Key Duties

The post holder is expected to:

*1. Administration and Management*

1. lead on the selection and appointment of Associate Lecturers to the School’s modules, including designing the recruitment pack, shortlisting, interviewing and managing Associate Lecturer appointments in line with student numbers and appropriate student-tutor group sizes;
2. carry out Associate Lecturer induction and ongoing development. (The post holder may also be responsible for managing Associate Lecturers working in other areas of the STEM curriculum);
3. manage, supervise and support Associate Lecturers in their role. (This includes: provision of academic advice on the delivery of module content and appropriate online and distance teaching methods; monitoring teaching activities undertaken by Associate Lecturers; organisation of staff development events and the conduct of staff appraisals);
4. be involved in the planning and organisation of online and face-to-face tutorials and day-schools, where appropriate;
5. Investigating and responding to student assessment related appeals and complaints.

*2. Teaching*

1. advise students studying School modules and provide a link between students, their Associate Lecturers, the Student Support Team, the School and the Faculty;
2. work as part of a distributed team with educational advisors and other academic and learner support staff in handling referred queries where specialist knowledge of modules is required;
3. ensure effective implementation of University policy in relation to Associate Lecturers, students and enquirers;
4. contribute to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching within the School, in line with University standards;
5. contribute to the development, planning and implementation of high quality and successful curriculum at undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels in the School where appropriate;
6. work with Staff Tutors, other colleagues in the support of School and Faculty objectives
7. work with Module Teams to develop and design tuition programmes

*3. Scholarship, research and enterprise*

1. undertake a self-directed programme of individual or collaborative scholarship or research in a field that will contribute to the School and Faculty strategic objectives;
2. undertake subject research or scholarship in teaching and learning that leads to publications in line with School and Faculty objectives;
3. undertake professional development as an academic educator and researcher.

*4. Outreach and public engagement*

1. promote the study of the School’s modules and qualifications, particularly in respect of under-represented groups;
2. contribute to the STEM outreach activities of the Faculty;
3. where appropriate, collaborate with professional bodies, learned societies;
4. where appropriate, work with employers, policy makers and other stakeholders.

*5. Other responsibilities*

1. comply with the University’s Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies in the performance of their duties;
2. co-operate with the Open University in ensuring as far as necessary, that Statutory Requirements, Codes of Practice, University Policies, and Departmental Health and Safety arrangements are complied with;
3. have a strong commitment to the principles and practice of equality and diversity.

## Panel and Interview

**The interview panel will be chaired by:**

Laura Alexander, Associate Dean –Tuition Delivery

**The other members of the interview panel will be:**

John Woodthorpe, Head of School – Computing & Communications

Frances Chetwynd, Lead Staff Tutor, School of Computing & Communications

+ 2 other members, to be confirmed

**The interviews will take place on:**

To be confirmed but likely to be in the period 10th -21st Feb

*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.*

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## About the Unit

**Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics**

The Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is comprised:

* School of Computing & Communications
* School of Environment, Earth & Ecosystem Sciences
* School of Engineering & Innovation
* School of Life, Health & Chemical Sciences
* School of Mathematics & Statistics
* School of Physical Sciences
* Knowledge Media Institute
* Deanery including teams supporting Curriculum, Research and Enterprise, Laboratory Infrastructure and Faculty Administration

**“We aspire to be world leaders in inclusive, innovative and high impact STEM teaching and research, equipping learners, employers and society with the capabilities to meet tomorrow’s challenges”**

The Faculty of STEM consists of 2500 staff including 1,800 Associate Lecturers. The Faculty delivers over 185 modules across undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum, supporting nearly 19,000 students (full time equivalents) which is 29% of the OU total.

The Faculty generates more research income (circa £17M) than any other Faculty in the University, supported by a comprehensive laboratory infrastructure.

We are proud of our distinctive values and capabilities underpinning our aspiration:

*We are inclusive:*

* We transform people’s lives, ensuring STEM education is openly accessible to many thousands of students from diverse backgrounds – our students express high satisfaction with their study experience.
* We engage the public in exciting citizen science and engineering, including through free open educational resources, multi-platform broadcasting, outreach to inspire the next generation and with programmes to encourage more women into STEM.

*We are highly innovative:*

* We are at the forefront of innovative developments in teaching practical science and engineering at a distance, through simulated and remote access laboratories and practical experimentation.
* Our high-quality teaching and curriculum are informed by world-leading research, strong links with professional bodies and communities of practitioners, as well as by scholarship focused on continuously improving our STEM pedagogy.

*We deliver significant social and economic impact:*

* We provide STEM higher education at a scale and reach unsurpassed in the UK, with a sizeable international reach and further growth potential.
* We inject transferable STEM skills and knowledge direct into the workplace for immediate employee and employer benefit, as students combine study while working.
* The employability value of our courses is underpinned by accreditation from leading STEM Professional Bodies and Learned Societies, as well as partnerships and sponsorship with leading employers.
* Our high quality, applied and academically relevant teaching and research addresses real-world issues, delivering impact for industry and society, including addressing pressing STEM skill-shortages across the UK.

**School of Computing & Communications**

The School of Computing and Communications has around 80 academic and research staff, and is home for a number of visiting researchers and full-time and part-time research students.

**Our vision is to *empower our students and wider society through life-changing learning and excellent research in computing & communications.***

We teach a comprehensive range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. Most of our students are studying part-time, and they study at different rates. We have the equivalent of over 4600 full-time students registered for our undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across the UK and Europe, and approximately 30 PhD students studying both full and part-time. We have a degree apprenticeship in Digital Technology Solutions in England. In Scotland we have undergraduate degree apprenticeships in Software Engineering, Cybersecurity and IT Management for Business, and an MSc apprenticeship in Cybersecurity. We also have a degree apprenticeship in Software Engineering in Wales.

We pioneered an online Introduction to Cyber Security MOOC (<http://bit.ly/1pMMKhk>), hosted on Futurelearn, which has been studied by over 200,000 learners worldwide. We also have extensive Open Educational Resources hosted by OpenLearn and have a robotics lab funded by HEFCE.

We aim for, and achieve, international excellence in research and teaching. The OU’s Computing research performed strongly in the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) assessment, with 75% of outputs rated world-leading or internationally excellent, and an excellent research environment (100% rated world-leading or internationally excellent).

We focus on the use of technology to enhance people’s lives. Our research is:

* Empowering: placing people at the centre
* Situated: focusing as much on context as on technology
* Interdisciplinary: creatively crossing discipline borders to give fresh perspectives and solutions.

Our strong sense of collegiality and community continues to shape and direct the interdisciplinary approaches used throughout our work. The School of Computing and Communications holds the Athena SWAN Silver Award and is committed to transforming gender equality. We offer a highly flexible working environment and working practices which are family friendly.