Job Description

Post:	Legal Counsel/ Senior Legal Counsel
Grade:	Grade 8 or 9 depending on experience
School/Division:	General Counsel, Governance and Compliance
Location:	Sussex House/hybrid
Responsible to:	Head of Legal Services
Key contacts:	General Counsel and Director of GCGC, Head of Legal Services, other Legal Counsel , COO and University Secretary, Directors of Professional Services and their leadership teams and academic colleagues
Role description:	Provision of high-quality specialist legal advice and guidance for senior colleagues within the University, based on sound legal research, expert analysis and reliable legal judgement. The post- holder will be expected to be able to think strategically and creatively, working with senior colleagues to identify appropriate solutions in support of the University's strategic objectives.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Advising generally across relevant areas of law and providing legal advice in at least one relevant specialist area of expertise as well as engaging directly with members of the University Executive and University Leadership (Executive Deans and Professional Services Directors) in support of the University's strategic priorities.

2. Provide pro-active advice on existing or forthcoming legislation, case law or regulatory guidance generally and in at least one area of expertise that will impact upon the University's work, leading or making a significant contribution to the development and implementation of compliant working practices.

3. Contribute to delivery of university strategy through engagement in relevant committees and working groups, leading on these as appropriate in areas of expertise, in order to meet university objectives and compliance obligations.

4. Actively manage stakeholders, delivering value for money for the University in the services provided, commissioning external legal advice where required and monitoring the performance, engagement and value for money of external legal advice.

5. Build and improve knowledge and awareness across the University of key legal and compliance issues and identify practical and creative ways to embed compliance effectively in working practices.

6. Diagnosing issues and scoping requirements and legal impact through analysis and effective listening, and questioning and assisting senior managers in developing their strategy and plans.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Advice and Guidance

1.1 Provide legal advice to colleagues across the University, sharing best practice and ensuring effective exchange of information across the Legal Team to provide a resilient service.

1.2 Work within a complex regulatory framework, cognisant of the political landscape within which universities operate, ensuring that advice is tailored according to this context, identifying areas of legal risk and risk mitigation.

1.3 Work collaboratively with colleagues in the team, sharing best practice and delivering legal awareness training to support non-legal colleagues in delivering their strategic objectives.

1.4 Ensure the effective flow of information to and from key stakeholders, to include analysis and evaluation of such information, identification of risks and provision of well-considered, pragmatic advice, ensuring utmost levels of confidentiality in recognition of the highly sensitive nature of some matters.

2. Policy Development

2.1 Work to implement strategy and design and develop policy and procedure to support the achievement of University objectives and strategic goals, including the writing and presenting of reports to the appropriate University committees.

2.2 Provide guidance and interpretation to management on the application of policy and procedures from a legal perspective.

2.3 Undertake stakeholder engagement activity to support policy development, including consultation and negotiation.

3. Engagement and communication

3.1 Identify and build effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders and networks, collaborating and influencing decisions on significant policy areas from a legal and compliance perspective, cognisant of the broader environment in which the University operates.

3.2 Work closely to influence a range of internal and external stakeholders, ensuring an understanding of complex, conflicting and technical information to inform effective, practical decision-making.

3.3 Establish effective and productive working relationships with internal stakeholders in order to optimise the contribution of the legal services team to the University. Work in close partnership with senior leaders and managers to understand their current and future business challenges, objectives and associated requirements, influencing them to address areas of legal risk, including difficult and sensitive issues, and support them in making difficult decisions.

4. Problem identification and resolution

4.1 Identify and diagnose the key issues within complex problems and prioritise these issues effectively to provide focused, accurate and robust advice to support successful resolution within a short timeframe. This will require analysis, problem identification, solution generation, decision making, planning and organising the approach, communicating the proposal, orally, in writing or both, and influencing others to engage.

4.2 Work with colleagues across the University to support the implementation of University plans and strategy, identifying areas of legal risk and tailoring advice to provide appropriate mitigation.

5. Leadership and Team Working

5.1 Working with relevant colleagues from across the University to ensure effective working relationships to achieve strategic aims, including allocation of resources to achieve targets and objectives and the selection, induction, performance management and development of any direct reports.

5.2 Support the development of others, providing leadership and coaching in area of expertise.

5.3 Work as part of the broader General Counsel, Governance and Compliance team, including delivering on the varied areas of law required, ensuring effective contribution, supporting and developing colleagues where needed.

To carry out any other duties that are within the employee's skills and abilities whenever reasonably instructed.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Able to work on a broad variety of legal matters and provide legal advice in a specialist area of expertise.

- Balance effectiveness and cost-efficiency in the management of external legal resource you are accountable for, demonstrating compliance with Value for Money principles to support the University's strategic aim to achieve a world-class standard of teaching and research by managing our resources effectively and efficiently.

- The post holder will report to the Head of Legal Services but enjoys a defined level of autonomy and responsibility to enable the post holder to manage their own work and that of their reports to achieve their agreed objectives. The role holder also supports the senior leadership team of the GCGC Division to achieve the strategic and operational goals of the University, Professional Services and their Division. The post holder is expected to work collaboratively across the University and with key stakeholders to deliver single team working that efficiently and effectively supports the achievement of those goals and objectives.

- Support achievement of the Division's compliance with all applicable statutory and regulatory compliance obligations, including (but not limited to): UKVI, Health & Safety, the Prevent Duty, data protection, Competition and Markets Authority requirements and equal opportunities. Additionally, to promote good practice in relation to University policy, procedure and guidance in relation to those compliance matters in respect of students, staff and other relevant parties.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Qualified to practise as a barrister or solicitor in England and Wales, and holding a current Practising Certificate
2. A lawyer with demonstrable experience in areas of law relevant to the University, gained private practice or in-house. At least 3 years PQE.
3. Highly effective leadership skills with the ability to motivate others to achieve.
4. Commitment to Continuing Professional Development
5. Sound legal professional skills and knowledge in specialist subject area(s) relevant to the University including public law, contract law, property, estates and construction, employment law, consumer protection law, regulatory principles/working with regulators, intellectual property, brand protection, and information law providing expert legal judgement based on sound legal knowledge and research.
6. An appreciation of legal risks and mitigation, with the ability to think strategically and creatively, seeing legal issues in their wider context and advising accordingly.
7. Highly developed oral and written communication skills with the ability to present complex and conceptual ideas in a way that can be understood by most stakeholders, with the ability to lead consultations and negotiations.
8. Demonstrably strong influencing, negotiating and communications skills with the ability to listen and respond to the needs of a wide range of stakeholders at all levels.
9. Highly developed interpersonal skills with the ability to effectively influence stakeholders in area of expertise, effectively contribute to team working and lead colleagues
10. Analytical skills with the ability to assess complex and competing information, generate effective solutions and make effective decisions
11. Ability to build effective relationships with, and command the respect of, a wide range of stakeholders, including senior staff members, influencing as necessary and resolving conflict.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Experience of working within the Higher Education sector and the regulatory environment