

University of Derby Job Description

Job Summary

Job Title

Principal Adviser to the Vice-Chancellor

College/Department

Vice-Chancellor's Office

Location

Kedleston Road, Derby

Salary

£57,427 - £71,784 per annum. Further progression up to £82,552 is available for exceptional candidates.

Reports To

A member of University Executive Board

Line Management Responsibility

This will comprise of 3 Executive Support Lead Coordinators who will report into the role holder plus a wider team of circa 8 people.

Job Description and Person Specification

Role Summary

The role of Principal Adviser to the Vice-Chancellor (VC) is to build and maintain a high level of working knowledge and assessment of external policy as well as a thorough understanding of the VC's full portfolio of responsibilities across the University. This knowledge and understanding will be essential in positioning you to ensure the VC is informed and fully briefed in all relevant areas. The University is committed to supporting both our civic and regional agenda but also to influencing at a national level on policy / decision-making as it effects the Higher Education sector, and it will be important for the person in this role to share our commitment across these areas.

Working closely with a wide variety of people both internally and externally, the Principal Adviser will be responsible for gathering information and intelligence to help inform effective decision-making and will make a significant contribution towards the drafting and revision of strategic materials, such as committee papers and briefing documents. Well-developed analysis and research skills will be vital.

The Principal Adviser will ensure that the VC is provided with appropriate briefings, presentations, and research to enable them to undertake their day-to-day activities effectively and will also facilitate efficient communication so that robust decisions can be taken as quickly as possible. It will be essential for the person in this role to have the ability to always communicate effectively and professionally.

The Principal Adviser will line manage the Vice-Chancellor's Office team, who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the office.

Principal Accountabilities

- To maintain oversight of, and seek to influence, the external policy landscape on behalf of the University. Ensuring the Vice-Chancellor, and colleagues are briefed accordingly.
- To function as the lead adviser to the Vice-Chancellor by maintaining a broad knowledge of current and emerging developments within the Higher Education sector, understanding the context in which the University operates and advising on process / policy change.
- To produce new policy and strategy documentation based on the above criteria as appropriate.
- To advise the Vice-Chancellor on relevant civic, regional and national agendas not directly associated with the sector but that may influence strategic decisions within the University.
- To develop and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the University's strategic aims and objectives to proactively assist the Vice-Chancellor across the full portfolio of duties.
- Producing succinct, evidence-based, strategic papers on a wide variety of issues, and for a variety of audiences, as directed by / and on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and providing associated options and recommendations.
- Creating concise and insightful reports bringing together complex data and analysis to support the Vice-Chancellor's / University's strategic decisions.
- To lead and line manage the support functions which underpin the Vice-Chancellor's office.
- Working together with colleagues from the Vice-Chancellor's Office:
 - Act as the first point of contact for the Vice-Chancellor, exercising judgement in resolving queries and dealing with issues on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor whilst ensuring they are fully briefed on all matters requiring their attention or awareness.
- Managing and facilitating communications to:
 - Ensure the Vice-Chancellor is effectively briefed on any upcoming internal or external challenges / issues related to policy and / or other aspects of their portfolio of duties;
 - Ensure the efficient flow of communications in and out of the Vice-Chancellor's Office;
 - Communicate the Vice-Chancellor's messages and intentions, both internally and externally, including drafting messages and dealing with highly sensitive matters;
 - Draft and coordinate the Vice-Chancellor's speeches and presentations for a wide variety of audiences;
 - Ensure the smooth running of the Vice-Chancellor's Office;
 - Ensure that the Vice-Chancellor's diary management and correspondence is proactively supported;
 - Secure and deploy resources effectively and commissioning external support where appropriate.
- Manage events and meetings of high importance, including liaising with senior internal and external stakeholders, and ensuring they are run to a high professional standard.
- Ensure alignment across the University, and in particular with the University Executive Board, on strategy and policy / decision-making, utilising their insight to support this.
- Develop and maintain relationships with external bodies and stakeholders, including building links with public affairs initiatives as part of the University's civic responsibility.

- To function as a key contact for external networks, including working with senior managers and exchanging information to inform strategic initiatives.
- Represent the Vice-Chancellor and / or the University at external events and networks as required by the Vice-Chancellor.
- Provide assurance to key stakeholders (internal and external) regarding the management of constraints, priorities, and risks to drive negotiations between parties to gain consensus where necessary to deliver results.
- Lead and manage the strategic delivery of medium and longer-term projects such as improving the operation of university processes that interface with the Vice-Chancellor (including budget management), ensuring that they are delivered to an excellent standard, by the deadline and within budget.
- Share best practice, coaching, and supporting colleagues across the University.
- Seek opportunities to raise the profile and reputation of the University.
- Accompany / represent the Vice-Chancellor on University business when required.

Points to note:

- The role requires flexibility to meet the VC's commitments including support / representing them at external and internal events and presenting the University / Vice-Chancellor's position at such events as appropriate.
- This job description is not exhaustive. The post-holder may be required to undertake other duties that are consistent with the grade of the role.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Qualifications

- Degree or significant equivalent experience in a related area, e.g. public policy, legal, politics
- Evidence of continual professional development

Experience

- Considerable experience of working in a senior, managerial or advisory role.
- A track record of providing high-quality strategic support, advice, and guidance to senior leaders.
- Experience of successful collaborative working, including coordinating resources and logistics to meet deadlines.
- Demonstrable experience of proactively managing a varied and complex workload whilst ensuring the highest standards of professionalism, accuracy, consistency, and attention to detail.
- Extensive experience of writing clear and concise material including the drafting of briefing documents and writing and delivering presentations, including the ability to revise multiple drafts and to resolve differing opinions of reviewers.
- Considerable experience of leading and delivering projects on time and to budget.
- Financial/budgetary management experience.
- Line management experience.

Skills, knowledge & abilities

- A strong knowledge of the higher education landscape and the internal and external environments in which universities operate.
- An understanding of how to develop specific actions and plans from strategic aspirations and business priorities with a commercial outlook.

- Solid research and analytical skills including the ability to probe and interrogate arguments as well as identify and use a range of resources to research, understand, and summarise a broad range of topics, and translate complex information and data into clear recommendations.
- Exceptional organisational skills and diligence with the ability to work to deadlines whilst managing competing priorities.
- Outstanding communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Ability to deal with and manage sensitive and confidential information with discretion and diplomacy.
- A proven ability to build and nurture relationships and maintain networks, both internally and externally.
- Ability to review and refine systems and processes.
- An understanding of the University's values and ability to demonstrate them in the work undertaken.

Business requirements

- The willingness to work flexibly across different work locations to meet the requirements of the Vice-Chancellor's role, both within the University as well as their external commitments.

Desirable Criteria

Qualifications

- A postgraduate degree or significant equivalent experience
- Management qualification
- Project management qualification
- Relevant professional membership

Experience

- Experience of working within in a senior, managerial, or advisory role in the Higher Education sector.

Benefits

As well as competitive pay scales, we offer generous holiday entitlement. We also offer opportunities for further salary progression based on performance, and the opportunity to join a contributory pension scheme. For more information on the benefits of working at the University of Derby go to the Benefit pages of our website. Benefits include:

- Generous annual leave entitlement of 30 days + bank holidays + 4 days concessionary leave
- Hybrid working
- Coaching and development in role
- Local Government Pension Scheme
- Access to employer-funded Private Health Insurance with BUPA
- Suite of holistic wellbeing benefits and support including family-friendly policies, generous sick pay provision, and comprehensive Employee Assistance Programme
- Access to variety of staff discounts at high street retailers
- Discounted onsite gym
- Discounted access to Devonshire Spa.

Our People

The University of Derby is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, however you identify. We actively celebrate the knowledge, experience, and talents each person brings. Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds; therefore, we are particularly interested to hear from applicants who will help our leaders and teams be more reflective of our student population.

Adaptive Working

The University operates an Adaptive Working Framework to enable a high-performing, flexible, and responsive work culture where the place, time, and manner of working are tailored to the specific work activity. This includes opportunities for hybrid working, as appropriate to business needs.