



Candidate Information

Position:	Safeguarding and Legal Services Officer
School/Department:	Legal Services
Reference:	24/112121
Closing Date:	Monday 26 August 2024
Salary:	£39,922 - £47,631 per annum
Anticipated Interview Date:	Thursday 12 September 2024
Duration:	Permanent - Full Time

JOB PURPOSE:

Reporting to the Head of Legal Services the postholder will be responsible for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults arrangements across the University, providing specialist advice and guidance to staff at all levels within the University, and developing and communicating the University's Safeguarding policies and procedures, in line with applicable legislation and guidance.

The postholder will lead in daily management of a legal case load of Industrial Tribunal and Court cases and will work closely with the Head of Legal Services and the University's solicitors in defence of claims.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Responsible for reviewing and updating the University's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policies and procedures in accordance with legislation and completing annual reports in line with University business.
2. Responsible for providing specialist, professional advice and assistance to staff at all levels across the University in relation to:
 - The continually changing Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk legislation and the University's associated policy, recommending appropriate actions to be implemented;
 - The current legal definitions of regulated activity;
 - AccessNI and criminal record checking procedure;
 - The Vetting and Barring Scheme;
 - Timeframes for the establishment of new/amended/replacement legislation;
 - Actions to be taken to ensure that the University is compliant with new legislation as and when it is established in law.
3. To keep up to date on safeguarding legislation to ensure the University's compliance, and to deliver specialist training to staff at all levels across the University on current Safeguarding policies and evolving legislation through presentations and briefing sessions.
4. As Lead Counter Signatory for the University manage the administration process relating to criminal history checks, ensuring appropriate counter signatories are in place across the University and registers are maintained. Provide ongoing training and guidance to Counter Signatory staff at all levels across the University. Manage the financial arrangements associated with criminal history checks, ensuring AccessNI invoices are correct, that the project code balances and payments are authorised in a timely fashion and any payment issues are addressed prior to payment. Maintain appropriate financial records and respond to all end-of-year queries.
5. In line with current legislative requirements and University's policies, to develop and undertake a University wide audit programme to measure the University's compliance level with safeguarding legislation and arrangements. Provide advice and training to the audit processes and policies, ensuring compliance by organising and carrying out regular audits. Provide direction on audit action plans to address issues of non-compliance and ensure such recommendations are implemented effectively. Produce reports and provide regular updates to the Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Group, the University Management Board and the University's auditors as required, on the results of the audit function.

6. To liaise with Government Departments, the Department of Health and Social Services, AccessNI (Department of Justice) and the Home Office in relation to current and future safeguarding legislation and to represent the University at meetings, forums, workshops and briefing sessions of the Access NI Stakeholders Group and the Independent Safeguarding Authority in relation to the Vetting and Barring Scheme. Draft written responses to and represent the University at Government consultations on the Review of the Vetting and Barring Scheme and Review of the Criminal Records Regime in Northern Ireland.
7. Manage the University's Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Group by providing specialist advice, guidance and updates on legislation, through the preparation of draft papers, policies and reports for consideration and approval. This will include organising meetings, preparing agendas, minutes and actions lists, ensuring that all actions are followed up and updates on the actions provided to the Committee.
8. Responsible for Queen's Safeguarding Staff Network Group, ensuring the Network Group is kept up to date on the University safeguarding arrangements. Plan and deliver three events per year for the Network Group. Maintain, update and develop the Safeguarding website and Intranet pages ensuring content is up to date and relevant.
9. To liaise directly with the University's solicitors in relation to Industrial Tribunal and Court proceedings, dealing with all queries and requests for further information. Identify and advise witnesses in relation to Industrial Tribunal and Court proceedings ensuring they are aware of their role, how the process operates, case progression, their legal responsibilities and what to expect at hearing. Advise witnesses on the requirements of evidence and documentation. Respond to all queries as they arise from witnesses.
10. In conjunction with the University's external legal representatives identify, request and collate all evidence and documentation that is required from witnesses in terms of responses to Industrial Tribunal and Court proceedings, Orders for Discovery and for the preparation of discovery and bundles.
11. In conjunction with the University's external legal representation, the Head of Legal Services and witnesses prepare draft replies to Statutory Questionnaires, Tribunal/Court Orders, Requests for Further Information, case chronologies, bundles for hearing and witness statements. Advise the University's external solicitor and Head of Legal Services of any issues of concern that are identified during the process.
12. Maintain appropriate records and registers of employment law cases and conciliation agreements, ensuring the terms of agreements are actioned within the required timeframe. Ensure appropriate record management procedures are in place.
13. In conjunction with the Chancery Office, monitor the Legal Fees Budget ensuring all invoices and refunds are accurate, paid and received. Maintain appropriate financial records and respond to all end-of-year queries.
14. Prepare all reports as and when required and within the required deadlines including the yearly Seante reports, case statics for the Equal Opportunities Unit for inclusion in the Article 55 Review and other statistics as and when required. Respond to Data Protection, Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Request as and when required and within the required timeframe.
15. To undertake other duties as required which are appropriate to the post as may reasonably be requested by the Head of Legal Services.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. An honours degree or equivalent qualification;
OR
Substantial recent relevant experience in a relevant safeguarding/legal role(s).
2. Significant recent, relevant professional experience in a similar or related role. This will include demonstrating:
 - A track record (minimum of 2 years) or in-depth recent experience of managing the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in a research or education environment;
 - Demonstrable sound knowledge and understanding of Northern Ireland's safeguarding and employment legislation;
 - Experience in developing, implementing and auditing policies;
 - A proven track record of providing professional safeguarding and/or legal advice.
3. Well-developed analytical and problem-solving capability and a proven ability to innovate in their work.
4. Attention to detail with highest standards of accuracy.
5. Strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to communicate with and influence colleagues and stakeholders at all levels of seniority.
6. Excellent IT skills with the ability to manipulate, analyse and interpret data, preparing reports which will inform decision making.
7. Evidence of well-developed planning and organisation capabilities.
8. Ability to work effectively as part of a multi professional team.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. A relevant postgraduate or professional qualification, preferably in Law.
2. Experience and evidence of analysing, developing and interpreting information for use at a range of management levels to support strategic decision making.
3. Experience working in Higher Education.