1 Advertisement

Post Title: Research Student Officer  
School/department: Student Experience Division, Research Student Admin Office  
Hours: 18.25 hours per week. Pattern of work to be spread over the front end of the week (Mon / Tues / Weds)  
Contract: permanent  
Reference: 5195  
Salary: starting at £25,941 to £30,046 per annum, pro rata  
Closing date: 10 February 2021. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.  
Expected Interview date: 17 February 2021  
Expected start date: as soon as possible

This vacancy is only open to those currently employed by the University.

The Research Student Administration Office (RSAO) is seeking to recruit a new part-time job-share Research Student Officer with a focus on supporting international Research Students and UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) compliance.

The Research Student Officer will supervise the work of staff in the RSAO, assisting in the development of fair and effective research student procedures, making recommendations for process improvements as directed. They will also provide administrative support to ensure compliance with external bodies and funders, most notably UKVI. The Research Student Officer will also be responsible for maintaining and improving office systems in support of their responsibilities.

Applicants should ideally have knowledge or experience of UKVI administration, preferably in a higher education environment. Familiarity in administering research student cases would be a distinct advantage.

The Research Student Officer will report to the Head of Research Student Administration. Key working relationships include School Research and Enterprise Coordinators, International Student Advisers and Directors of Doctoral Studies.

It is expected that the role holder would work from home during the pandemic, with remote support and equipment available. Occasional days on campus are required, with the longer-term expectation of being based predominantly on campus, subject to UK government policy.

Please contact Miles Willey, Head of RSAO, M.Willey@Sussex.ac.uk for informal enquiries.

For full details and how to apply see our vacancies page

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.
2. **The Division**

**Student Experience**

The Student Experience Directorate provides a range of administrative, academic and support services focussed on improving the student experience, both directly to students and also to colleagues in Schools and Departments.

**Key services**
- Careers and Employability Centre
- Chaplaincy
- Counselling, Health and Wellbeing
- International Student Support
- Student Life Centre
- Student Support Unit
- Sussex Regional ACCESS Centre
- Student progress and administration
- Technology and enhanced learning
- Research Student Administration, and the Doctoral School
- Registration, assessment, compliance
- Academic quality
- Student experience

Please find further information regarding the school/division at [www.sussex.ac.uk/schoolsandservices/professionalservices/student-experience](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schoolsandservices/professionalservices/student-experience)

**Research Student Administration Office**
[www.sussex.ac.uk/rcao/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/rcao/)

The Research Student Administration Office is responsible for the postgraduate research student journey from arrival to award, including registration, progress, assessment, examination and graduation. The office also maintains the Sussex Supervisor Register and ensures provision of training for doctoral supervisors and examiners. Our ethos is to deliver services in an efficient, helpful and accessible way and to seek constructive feedback on our performance. All members of the department have the opportunity, and are positively encouraged to help shape and improve the way we work.
3. **Job Description**

**Job title:** Research Student Officer

**Grade:** 5

**Reporting to:** Head of Research Student Administration (RSAO)

**Job Purpose:**

To provide efficient and effective administrative support to the Head of the RSAO in the operation, management and development of research student functions, policy and procedures. To provide advice and guidance to Schools of Study and other Professional Services Divisions on the application of policies and procedures in research student matters.

**Key Duties and Responsibilities**

1. To support the Head of RSAO and wider team in the development of fair and effective research student policies and procedures, and to supervise the work of RSAO colleagues.
2. To support the Head of RSAO and wider team in the development of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with funders, the office of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).
3. To administer processes alongside Research Student Co-ordinators on the progress and assessment of research students, and to oversee and advise on complex cases, making recommendations for process changes as a result.
4. To support staff in the Schools of Study and Professional Services in implementing progression and examination research student-related policies, procedures and systems.
5. To work collaboratively as part of the wider RSAO team as required to develop office systems and business processes to support the work of the RSAO.
6. To undertake research and analysis and draft reports as required.
7. To undertake other projects as required from time-to-time.

1.1 To support the Head of RSAO in updating policies and procedures by co-ordinating reviews, researching best practice, and providing assistance with consultations and drafting guidance. To support implementation of new policies and procedures by updating web pages and documents and providing other assistance where required.

1.2 To provide administrative support in complex case work, including drafting responses and making recommendations where required, as well as ensuring accurate record keeping.

1.3 To provide advice and support to staff and students on research student procedures.

1.4 To assist with the management of meetings and working groups relating to research student issues, and to act as clerk to meetings and working groups where necessary, taking minutes and writing reports.

1.5 To ensure that actions arising from working groups and meetings are managed effectively, including accurate record keeping and effective dissemination to appropriate staff.
2. To support the Head of RSAO and wider team in the development of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with funders, the office of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

2.1 To support the Head of RSAO in the development of policies and procedures to meet internal and external stakeholder requirements relating to funder, UKVI and CMA compliance.

2.2 To support the Head of RSAO in preparations for funder, UKVI and CMA-related reviews and audits, and to support course co-ordinators and other School staff in developing and implementing procedures, particularly in relation to Tier 4 students.

2.3 To project manage specific initiatives as required.

2.4 To work in partnership with departmental colleagues, members of the wider Academic Registry and Professional Services teams as required.

3. To administer processes alongside Research Student Co-ordinators on the progress and assessment of research students, and to oversee and advise on complex cases, making recommendations for process changes as a result.

3.1 To oversee the work of Research Student Co-ordinators within the RSAO, advising on difficult and complex cases whilst taking account of funder and compliance implications, building a bank of best-practice as informed by approaches at other UK universities.

3.2 Key RSAO progress and assessment responsibilities include:
   3.2.1 Overseeing registration procedures for new and returning PGR students
   3.2.2 Monitoring the status of PGR students and maintaining accurate records
   3.2.3 Overseeing the annual review process
   3.2.4 Formal appointment of thesis supervisors and internal and external examiners
   3.2.5 Processing thesis submissions
   3.2.6 Preparing documentation for transmission to the Research Degrees Exam Board

4. To work collaboratively as part of the wider RSAO team as required to develop office systems and business processes to support the work of the RSAO.

4.1 To work as directed to establish and maintain information on the internal and external University’s website to meet stakeholder requirements; ensuring information is accurate, concise and provided in a timely manner to comply with institutional standards of publication and to meet UKVI, CMA, UKRI and OfS requirements.

4.2 To provide administrative support to the wider team relating to UKVI compliance, and to liaise with Schools and other Professional Services Divisions on these matters.

4.3 To manage information and business systems in support of the work of the RSAO; to improve service delivery to colleagues in Schools and other Professional Services and to lead developments and improvements in these areas as required.

5. To undertake research and analysis and to draft reports as required.

5.1 To undertake research and analysis as directed to support the work of the RSAO.

5.2 To support the Head of RSAO by making early drafts of research findings, revised and new policies and procedures.

5.3 To take personal responsibility for continuing professional development and to ensure appropriate engagement in national networks as required.

6. To undertake other projects as required from time-to-time.
5. **Person Specification**

### Skills and Abilities

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<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of developing systems and business processes to improve service delivery.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent interpersonal and customer service skills, diplomacy and persuasiveness.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent oral and written communication skills, the ability to write to a high standard of accuracy and detail.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Ability to confidently express points to peers and members of School management.</td>
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<td>Good analytical skills.</td>
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### Knowledge

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<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>A graduate; equivalent qualification or experience</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>The possession of an education to 'A' level standard</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Demonstrable commitment to personal and professional development relevant to the role.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A good understanding of current policy and climate in HE both nationally and internationally; along with an understanding of the regulatory issues and current challenges relevant to HE.</td>
<td>X</td>
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### Experience

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<tr>
<td>A proven track record of working collaboratively and effectively with academic and administrative staff in a higher education or further education environment at all levels and from different functional areas</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Experience of dealing with student cases or related academic claims in a higher education or further education environment</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience of dealing with UKVI compliance in a higher education or further education environment</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Experience of working in a legal environment</td>
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### Personal Attributes

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<th>Desirable</th>
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<td>Ability to take the initiative and be pro-active</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Ability to prioritise tasks and meet deadlines.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Demonstrable service orientation together with a “client/customer” focus.</td>
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<td>Commitment to learn new skills and to keep abreast developments in the sector relevant to the post.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to build and maintain effective collaborative professional relationships with individuals at all levels.</td>
<td>X</td>
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