

1 Advertisement

Post Title: Senior Legal Counsel (Commercial)

School/department: Office of the General Counsel (OGC), Division of General Counsel, Governance & Compliance

Hours: Full time considered up to a maximum of 1 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be supported (subject to business need).

Location: Brighton, United Kingdom

Contract: Fixed Term (18 months)

Reference: A0044

Salary: Between £54,421 to £70,952 per annum, potential for negotiation based on experience, pro rata if part time.

Placed on: 09 June 2023

Closing date: 26 June 2023. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: To be confirmed

Expected start date: As soon as possible after interview.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a busy and successful in-house legal team. The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is part of the Division of General Counsel, Governance & Compliance (GCGC), within the University's Professional Services Team.

The work of OGC is fast-paced, often reactive and integral to delivering the University's policy and operational priorities. The legal issues are often complex and sensitive and span a variety of topics, for example: commercial, contract, consumer, employment, housing, land, licensing, intellectual property, charity, public and information law; civil litigation; a variety of regulatory areas; complaints and discipline procedures; and coronial and criminal law.

Members of OGC work collaboratively with other members of the Professional Services Team and academic colleagues to deliver robust, high quality advice that is solution-based and centred on a sound assessment of legal risk.

You will be expected to deliver high quality, pragmatic legal advice at pace across the broad range of the University's activities, providing an efficient and effective service that represents excellent value for money for the University.

To discuss the post generally, please contact Laila El Baradei L.ElBaradei@sussex.ac.uk.

[For details and how to apply see our [vacancies page](#)]

To apply, applicants should complete the Professional Services Application form and submit a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 explaining how they meet the Person Specification and Essential Criteria, and where possible, the Desirable Criteria.

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

2. The Division

The Division of General Counsel Governance & Compliance (GCGC), is led by the University's General Counsel and Director of Governance & Compliance. Her remit is to: provide the University's in-house legal function (the Office of the General Counsel, OGC); provide secretariat support to the University's Council, the University's Executive Group and their committees (Governance Services, which includes the Vice Chancellor's Office); and lead or oversee a variety of compliance functions.

The legal function is currently delivered by Head of Legal Services (Interim), 5 Senior Legal Counsel and a trainee solicitor. OGC is a friendly and supportive team and is committed to collaborative working and providing high quality solutions and focused advice to professional and academic colleagues across the University. This is achieved by sharing best practice, developing Knowledge Management processes to build resilience, and the provision of legal awareness training to help our non-legal colleagues deliver their operational requirements as efficiently and effectively as possible. The post holder will be expected to support these goals within OGC.

3. Job Description

Post:	Senior Legal Counsel (Commercial)
Grade:	Grade 9
School/Division:	General Counsel, Governance and Compliance
Location:	Sussex House/hybrid
Responsible to:	General Counsel/Interim Head of Legal Services
Direct reports:	None
Key contacts:	General Counsel, Pro Vice-Chancellors, COO, Directors of Professional Services, Director of Finance, School and Professional Service leadership teams and project teams.
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. This post will lead on the commercial law matters relevant to significant commercial projects, working collaboratively with colleagues across the University to deliver business critical operations with

strong commercial awareness, highly developed negotiation skills and a capacity to deliver innovative solutions that accurately proportion risk and reward.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Provide specialist legal advice and lead the provision of advice relating to commercial matters and predominantly projects related to capital change, engaging directly with members of the University Executive and University Leadership (Heads of Schools and Professional Services Directors) in support of the University's strategic priorities.
2. As required, provide pro-active advice on existing or forthcoming legislation, case law or regulatory guidance that will impact upon the University's business, leading or making a significant contribution to the development and implementation of compliant working practices within the scope of work.
3. Contribute to the formulation and delivery of university strategy through engagement in relevant committees (including project and steering groups) and working groups, leading on these as appropriate in relation to commercial law matters, in order to meet university objectives and compliance obligations.
4. Actively manage stakeholders, delivering value for money for the University in the services provided, monitoring the performance, engagement and value for money of external legal advice where appropriate.
5. Build and improve knowledge and awareness across the University of key commercial law and compliance issues and identify practical and creative ways to embed compliance effectively in working practices, specifically public procurement compliance.
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 specialist commercial 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 internally and externally to design and implement strategy, 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.

3. Engagement and communication

- 3.1 Identify and build effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders and networks, collaborating and influencing decisions 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 focussed, 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 Provide leadership for commercial law matters, 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, 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

- Responsible for the provision of legal advice for commercial matters.
- Balance effectiveness and cost-efficiency in the management of external legal resource you are accountable for, demonstrating compliance with Value for Money and Return on Investment 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 reports to the General Counsel, but enjoys a defined level of autonomy and responsibility to enable the post holder to manage their own work. 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 senior lawyer with demonstrable experience in areas of law relevant to the University, gained in private practice or in-house.
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 contract, commercial and procurement law (including drafting and negotiating varied contracts and commercial arrangements), intellectual property 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. Any areas of Regulatory law
2. Experience of advising on transactional or commercial matters within the Higher Education sector including partnerships and spin-outs
3. Experience of working in or with a large and complex organisation
4. An appreciation of the Higher Education landscape and the challenges facing Higher Education institutions would be an advantage