The University of Brighton logo.



# Job Description

**Job title:** Head of Legal Services & Deputy University Secretary

**Reports to:** University Secretary/Director of Governance and Legal service

**Department/School:** Vice Chancellor’s office

**Grade:** 10

## Purpose of the role

The University’s principal legal adviser, supporting the Vice-Chancellor, University Secretary, University Executive Board and wider management in the strategic leadership and decision making of the University by the provision of legal and governance advice; Deputy Clerk to the Board of Governors.

## Main areas of responsibility:

* To advise and guide the Chair of the Board, Vice-Chancellor, Governors and senior managers on legal matters by reference to the requirements of the Office for Students, the best practice guidance of the Committee of University Chairs and other regulatory requirements.
* To be the University’s principal legal adviser, providing effective legal advice to the Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the Board, the University Secretary and members of University Executive Board ensuring they are apprised of legal issues relating to the University’s activities, including new regulatory and compliance matters which may impact on the University’s objectives.
* To provide practical legal advice of high quality across a broad range of disciplines (including applicable public law; general commercial, company and contracts; employment; property and estates; equality, diversity, and inclusion; charities and constitutional matters; student matters; intellectual property and information rights and obligations; dispute resolution) and on mitigation of risk and regulatory compliance.
* To contribute to the planning and development of major University-wide projects, policies, and initiatives to support legal compliance and achievement of the University’s objectives taking into account legal and sector developments.
* To decide matters which require legal input and to be responsible for procurement of external legal advice when required, instructing external solicitors, counsel and other related professional advisers.
* Draft, negotiate, scrutinise, and endorse the terms and conditions of a wide range of commercial and other contracts, for example, joint venture and similar partner-type contracts, service level agreements, research, confidentiality and franchise agreements, draft policies, reports, letters and other documents.
* Where appropriate, represent the University in any litigation.
* To lead and manage contractual and compliance matters including all documents, policies and regulations forming the student contract ensuring compliance with current CMA guidance, best practice, factoring in the potential for reputational risk and tracking future developments.
* To lead and manage the University’s obligations relating to information rights, data protection, information compliance, information access and disclosure across all areas of the University including Freedom of Information and subject access requests, coordinating with central departments, including information Services, and academic schools, maintaining the University’s registration with the Information Commissioner.
* To exercise delegated authority and day-to-day autonomy in regard to dealings with individual governors, management of the business of the Board of Governors and preparation of agendas, ensuring the governance programme is appropriate for oversight of strategy and compliance by the Board of Governors.
* To support governors in fulfilling their fiduciary duties as charity trustees, leading on the induction of new governors and ensuring new and revised responsibilities for the governing body, legal developments and best practice are drawn to the Board’s attention.
* To handle confidential and sensitive information with discretion and tact ensuring the appropriate information flow to the Board.
* To ensure approval of the returns, regular and exceptional reporting to the Office for Students coordinating with the Academic Board and specific departments, prioritising and managing deadlines as appropriate.
* To deputise for the University Secretary and in his/her absence to ensure the fulfilment of the University Secretary's duties, including as Deputy Clerk to the Board of Governors.
* To work closely with Secretariat, ensuring staff work with a high degree of confidentiality, accuracy in the preparation of agendas, papers and minutes, adherence to tight deadlines and coordination with members of UEB.
* To lead the handling of student complaints, acting as the principal point of contact with the OIA and working closely with Deans of School, to provide advice and support in the investigation and resolution of student complaints.

* To lead and advise on general governance issues including student disciplinary, fitness to practise issues, Prevent, freedom of speech and arrangements for external speakers.
* To advise on the law relating to child protection and safeguarding, advising on Disclosure and Barring Service and child protection matters and to be the point of contact with Local Authority Social Services and Police.
* To liaise with regulatory and sector bodies such as the Office for Students, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, the Information Commissioner’s Office and the Committee of University Chairs on behalf of the University Secretary and Vice-Chancellor as ‘accountable officer’.
* To maintain appropriate links with sector groups such as University Alliance, Advance HE and the Association of University Legal Practitioners.

## General responsibilities

These are standard to all University of Brighton job descriptions.

* To undertake other duties appropriate to the grade and character of work as may be reasonably required, including specific duties of a similar or lesser grade.
* To adhere to the University’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy in all activities, and to actively promote equality of opportunity wherever possible.
* To be responsible for your own health and safety and that of your colleagues, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act.
* To work in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

# Person Specification

The person specification focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities, qualifications, and the experience required to undertake the role effectively. Please ensure that your application demonstrates how you meet the essential criteria. You will be assessed by your completed application form **(A),** at interview **(I)** and in some instances through an exercise **(E**); these are shown at the end of each criteria.

## Essential Criteria

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| **Knowledge, skills, and abilities** |
| * Good analytical skills with the ability to see the key points through a plethora of sometimes conflicting information. **(A,E)** * Excellent and meticulously accurate written communication skills. **(I,E)** * High level of integrity, diplomacy and confidentiality. **(I)** * Well organised with the ability to work effectively to tight deadlines in a high pressure working environment and to manage several diverse projects at once. **(A,I)** * The ability to influence, persuade and communicate effectively and self-confidently with a wide range of different people within and outside the university. **(A,I)** * Competent IT skills with a good level of proficiency in Outlook, word processing and, ideally, web editing. **(A,I)** |
| **Qualifications** |
| * UK qualified solicitor holding a current practising certificate **(A)** * An honours degree or equivalent in law or another recognised legal qualification. **(A)** |
| **Experience** |
| * Significant post-qualification experience (gained at a reputable law firm or in-house) of advising on a wide range of legal matters typically encountered in substantial public or charitable organisations. **(A,I)** * Proven ability to lead the legal function in the areas of work identified in the role description. **(I)** * Proven ability to provide solution-based legal advice and support in a dynamic and evolving legal context in a way which balances operational needs and pragmatism. **(A,I)** * Ability to draft and negotiate reports, contracts, and other documentation necessary to perform the role. **(I)** * Excellent oral and written communication skills. **(I)** * Ability to work with colleagues at all levels and interpersonal skills that enable effective working relationships internally and externally to be built and sustained. **(A,I)** * Politically astute and self-awareness to manage sensitive issues with tact, discretion, and respect for confidentiality. **(A,I)** * Excellent analytical skills and sound judgment. **(A,I)** * Ability to lead and motivate a team. **(I)** * Ability to work independently and exercise sound judgment. **(A,I)** * Passion and commitment to the values and purpose of the University of Brighton’s mission as articulated in its strategy ‘Practical Wisdom’ with an empathy and appreciation for its academic and student endeavour. **(I)** * An understanding of the higher education sector, policies and issues. **(I)** |
| **Managing people** |
| * The role will require an ability to manage staff effectively, including to conduct annual reviews, train and induct new members of their team, together with an ability to motivate others and act as a role model. **(I)** |
| **Physical demands and/or other requirements** |
| * The role will require occasional travel to other university sites and partner institutions. **(I)** * The role is office based in Brighton but the role holder will be expected to attend meetings at other sites as appropriate. **(I)** * The role holder will be expected to work remotely for a substantial proportion of time, in accordance with the University’s working from home policies, using appropriate technology to attend online meetings. **(I)** * The post is based in a busy office and will include light physical effort in operating typical desktop equipment, including a keyboard. **(I)** * A high level of concentration is needed as the post requires meticulous attention to detail due to the nature of work undertaken. **(A)** |

# Additional Information

* Any appointment is generally made at the bottom of the salary range for the grade dependent upon experience and previous salary.
* The University of Brighton welcomes job sharers. Job sharing is a way of working where two people share one full-time job, dividing the work, responsibilities, pay, holidays, and other benefits between them proportionate to the hours each works, thereby increasing access to a wide range of jobs on a part-time basis. The advert for the post for which you are applying will indicate whether applications from job sharers can be considered (this may not be possible for a post that is already part time for example). Refer to the ‘Balancing Working Life’ section on our website here: [Benefits and facilities](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/working-with-us/jobs/benefits-and-facilities.aspx).
* Annual leave entitlements are shown in the table below and increase after 5 years’ service. In addition, to the eight Bank Holidays, there are university discretionary days between Christmas and New Year. All leave, including bank holidays and discretionary days, is pro-rated for part time employees.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grades** | **Annual entitlement per grade** | **Grades** | **After 5 years’ service** |
| 1-3 | 23 days | 1-3 | 28 days |
| 4-7 | 25 days | 4-7 | 30 days |
| 8-9 | 27 days | 8-9 | 30 days |
| Band 10 and above | 30 days | Band 10 and above | 30 days |

* More information about the department/school can be found here [Professional Services Departments](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us/professional-services-departments/index.aspx) or here [Academic Departments](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us/academic-departments/index.aspx).
* Read the University’s [Strategy 2019 - 2025](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/practical-wisdom/index.aspx)
* The University has an attractive range of benefits, and you can find more information about them on our [website](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/working-with-us/jobs/benefits-and-facilities.aspx).

Date: **July 2025**