



Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Legal Services and University Counsel
Directorate:	Legal Services
Job type	Professional Services
Grade:	10
Accountable to:	University Secretary
Accountable for:	Legal Services Team
Purpose of the Post	
<p>The Head of Legal Services and University Counsel will be the University's principal legal adviser, responsible for shaping and overseeing the institution's legal approach. Working within the Governance and Compliance portfolio and reporting to the University Secretary, the postholder will ensure the University receives clear, forward looking legal guidance that supports sound decision making and protects institutional interests.</p> <p>They will manage provision on a wide range of legal matters including drafting and negotiating complex agreements, managing litigation and dispute resolution processes and advising on a variety of issues. They will keep a pro-active watching brief of current and forthcoming legislation that may impact upon the University.</p>	
Key Areas of Responsibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic leadership to the Legal Services function, establishing standards, priorities and working practices that enable the team to deliver responsive, solutions oriented legal support across the University's full range of operations. • Act as the University's senior legal authority, advising on issues spanning employment, commercial engagement, research activity, governance frameworks, student matters, risk and compliance, and other areas arising from institutional business. • Oversee the commissioning and stewardship of external legal providers, ensuring appropriate specialist advice is obtained, monitoring performance, and securing value for money and quality of service. • Offer trusted advice to senior leadership team, executive board and the Council, being a trusted advisor to the Vice-Chancellor on complex, sensitive or high impact legal matters that influence institutional direction and operational risk. • Manage the financial and staffing resources allocated to Legal Services, ensuring the function is appropriately structured, sustainable and aligned with emerging legal needs. • Play an active role within the Governance and Compliance leadership team, collaborating with colleagues to deliver the directorate's strategic aims, workforce 	

priorities, and performance targets, and contributing to a culture that emphasises professional development, inclusion and high engagement.

Key duties and tasks

Legal strategic leadership:

Collaborate with the Senior Leadership Team to align legal services approach with the overarching University objectives and our RH2030s strategy.

Engage directly with Executive Board members on legal matters, providing high quality trusted input and advice.

Engage directly with the Chair of Council, Chair of Audit and Risk, Chair of Finance Committee and other council members on legal matters as appropriate, providing effective and understandable briefings and recommendations in respect of complex matters.

Provide leadership, guidance, and mentorship to the legal team, fostering a high-performance culture and promoting professional development.

Legal Advice and Risk Management:

Stay up to date with relevant laws, regulations, and sector standards to ensure compliance across all aspects of the University's operations, taking a risk-based approach.

Ensure Senior Leadership are appraised of legal issues, including new legislation which may have an impact on the University's activities and objectives.

Being a trusted advisor direct to the Vice Chancellor and Principal as Accountable Officer, also providing regular briefings and updates on emerging issues.

Oversee the provision of practical, timely, relevant, and accurate legal advice at all levels across the University.

Oversee the commissioning of specialist legal advice where required, ensuring it is of good quality, properly instructed, managed and represents value for money.

Identify and assess legal risks and develop effective risk management strategies and mitigation plans.

Support due diligence reviews and contribute to the development of policies and frameworks to promote best practice and manage the University's risk exposure.

Contracts and Agreements:

Oversee the drafting, review, and negotiation of a wide range of contracts with third parties ensuring that contracts comply with legal requirements and protect the universities interests.

Provide advice on IP and the commercial and contractual arrangements regarding IP.

Manage contract disputes and liaise with external legal counsel as necessary.

Litigation and Dispute Resolution:

Manage and oversee litigation matters, including working closely with external counsel, gathering evidence, and representing the Universities interests in legal proceedings.

Develop and implement strategies for effective dispute resolution, including negotiation, mediation, and arbitration.

Compliance:

Ensure compliance with applicable laws, including privacy, intellectual property, and corporate governance.

Manage the UKVI Compliance Manager and oversee UKVI compliance that ensures our sponsor duties are met, acting in support of the University Secretary who is the UKVI Authorising Officer.

Work with the Data Protection Officer in support of relevant compliance obligations including relevant advice on legislative change, compliance requirements and act as a supportive second line consideration on FOI issues.

Collaboration and Stakeholder Management:

Collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams, such as Human Resources, Finance, Marketing, R&I to provide legal guidance and support on various projects and initiatives being a trusted and respected advisor, positioning the role and the team as a strategic partner across the University.

Build and maintain strong and effective relationships with external stakeholders, including government agencies, industry associations, and legal professionals.

Other Duties

The duties listed are not exhaustive and may be varied from time to time as dictated by the changing needs of the University. The post holder will be expected to undertake other duties as appropriate and as requested by their manager.

The post holder may be required to work at any of the locations at which the business of Royal Holloway is conducted.

Our Values

Advancing equity and inclusion is central to our identity as a University of Social Purpose, guided by our values of being Respectful, Innovative, Open, and Daring. We strive to build a fair and inclusive environment for all colleagues and students, where we challenge ourselves and others with integrity, and approach difference with understanding and kindness. Every member of our community is expected to treat others with dignity, work collaboratively across a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives, and contribute to a place where everyone can participate fully and feel valued.

Person Specification

Job Title: Head of Legal Services and University Counsel **Directorate:** Legal Services

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, Education, Qualifications and Training		
Qualified as a solicitor in the UK with significant post qualification experience and holding a current SRA Practising Certificate.	X	
Degree level or equivalent qualification.	X	
Broad knowledge and able to act as first point of reference for a wide range of legal matters.	X	
Knowledge of employment law.	X	
Skills and Abilities		
Ability to lead, manage and develop a professional team.	X	
Proven ability advising on a range of legal and policy matters, utilising a risk-based approach.	X	
Excellent organisational and administrative capability including a strategic approach to problem solving.	X	
Highly skilled in communicating complex details clearly both verbally and in formal report format to a broad range of stakeholders.	X	
Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to listen and engage effectively, building	X	

productive relationships with academic and professional staff, the Senior Leadership Team, independent members of Council and with external stakeholders including the Student Union.		
Strong commercial awareness and effective negotiation skills.	X	
Ability to demonstrate resilience and effectiveness under pressure.	X	
Experience		
Experience of working in a diverse legal environment.	X	
Experience in advising on and drafting contracts with external parties.	X	
Experience working in HE or with research bodies.		X