

Job Description

Job title	Senior Student Advisor (Immigration)
School / department	Student Services
Grade	6
Line manager	Head of Student Advice and Immigration
Responsible for	Student Advisors (Immigration)

Main purpose of the job

This is a key role within the Student Services Department to support and contribute to a professional and specialist advice and guidance service on a range of international student immigration and student experience issues to all non-UK students at UWL, to encourage academic progress and student retention.

The post holder will undertake complex casework and advocacy on behalf of students and staff in respect of a range of practical advice issues, including immigration and associated international student support regulations.

The post holder is responsible for the supervision, training and support of Student Advisors and any Trainee Advisors and Administrative staff within the Immigration strand of the Student Advice & Immigration team. In addition, this post holder will occasionally be required to deputise for the Head of Student Advice and Immigration.

The post holder, together with the Head of Student Advice and Immigration, will lead on initiatives to improve communication and student experience, work closely with the student community (including the UWL Student Union), academic and Professional service departments to foster engagement and an understanding of services provided within the Team.

The post holder will also line manage Student Advisors (Immigration) within the Immigration strand of the Student Advice & Immigration team, conducting regular one-to-one meetings and taking care of all administration with regards to annual leave, sickness, payroll and other HR notifications.

The post holder would be expected to support and work collaboratively with the Senior Student Advisor (Money & Funding) Adviser. In their absence, they would provide line management and other overall support to these strands of Student Advice & Immigration in order to maintain the service level for the students and staff. In addition, this post holder will occasionally be required to deputise for the Head of Student Advice and Immigration.

The post holder will also be responsible for providing advice to staff throughout the university on all matters relating to international students' visa and immigration procedures, and fee status assessment.

This appointment requires a flexible approach to working hours as occasional weekend and evening cover is required, mainly for open days. Advisors will be based primarily at the St Mary's Road campus in Ealing, but regular cover will be required on our campuses in Brentford and in Reading, weekly / monthly on a rota basis with other advisors.

The role requires detailed and up-to-date knowledge of:

- International student issues e.g. UK immigration law, UKVI Student visa and EU Settlement Scheme regulations, submission of Student visa applications from inside and outside the UK, healthcare and NHS entitlements and immigration options for students during and after their studies.
- Fee status regulations at both FE and HE
- Housing rights for international students and their dependants renting in the private sector (e.g. right to rent, council tax)
- Information for international students coming to stay in the UK with their dependant families, such as transport, school, healthcare and other practical/logistical queries.

Key areas of responsibility

- Support Student Advisors (Immigration) with the provision of expert, accurate and confidential advice to students on a one-to-one basis in person, via email and on telephone / remotely through Microsoft Teams on fee status entitlements, UKVI Student visa and EU Settlement Scheme regulations and other international student issues. This will include where any of these are affected by students wishing to interrupt their study, undertake a period of repeat study, transfer to another course or withdraw from the university. This service is to be provided for students currently in higher education, and also to potential students interested in applying to the University of West London.
- Use effective spoken and written communication skills to deal efficiently, effectively and tactfully with people at all levels.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of complex changes and developments in relevant legislation, policies, procedures and working practices within an education environment.
- Actively participate in regular formal supervision and training of the Student Advice team to ensure high professional standards and ethics and compliance with competency frameworks. Particular topics include: all aspects of the Student visa route, including submitting applications from inside and outside the UK and challenging refusals via Administrative Review; conducting appeals of fee status assessments where students believe they have been assessed incorrectly by Admissions; providing support to international students and their families renting in the private sector with regards to the right to rent, council tax exemptions etc.; providing additional support to international students regarding settling into life as a student in the UK, including advice on culture shock/reverse culture shock, healthcare and schooling for dependant children.
- Taking complex cases forward to external stakeholders such as UWL's Premium Customer Service Team at UKVI.
- Regular attendance and networking at UKCISA and AISA regional events in order to represent UWL and share best practice with other HEPs.
- Assist the Head of Student Advice and Immigration in providing staff development training to other departments within the university on topics connected to student support e.g. fee status assessment, student immigration.

- Participate in recruitment and enrolment-related events and assist with other activities which underpin the student lifecycle from induction to graduation, as required.
- Recruitment and line management of any casual Student Assistant staff to help with student-facing events (e.g. open days and others that promote the international student experience).
- Devise and co-deliver presentations and workshops with other Student Advisors, the Senior Student Advisor (Money and Funding), and other colleagues throughout the university for both current and prospective students on a range of immigration-related issues.
- Undertake duties at all times with due regard to the university's Equal Opportunities Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy
- Be aware of and comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information Act at all times.
- Adhere to all of the university's procedures and policies.
- Any other duties assigned by the Head of Student Advice and Immigration and by the Director of Student Services to ensure the efficient and effective operation of Student Services.
- In addition to the above areas of responsibility, the post-holder may be required to undertake any other reasonable duties relating to the broad scope of the position.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<p>Qualifications and/or membership of professional bodies</p>	<p>Graduate level qualifications or equivalent.</p> <p>Qualification in information, advice and/or guidance</p> <p>Evidence of training and continuous professional development from a recognised advice sector provider e.g. UKCISA, NASMA.</p>	<p>Postgraduate qualification related to providing advice and guidance in an educational setting</p> <p>Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) professional development programmes</p>
<p>Knowledge and experience</p>	<p>Substantial experience of delivering impartial, client-centred advice as part of an advice service.</p> <p>Experience of undertaking specialist advocacy and representation work on behalf of individual clients.</p> <p>Experience of line management and supervision of staff in a changing environment, frequently under pressure from competing deadlines at busy times of year</p> <p>Experience of working within a higher education environment.</p> <p>Knowledge of immigration legislation and of current UKVI requirements for Student visa holders and their dependants, as well as for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals pre- and post-Brexit.</p> <p>Detailed understanding of UKVI financial requirements for Student visa applications made by international students</p> <p>Extensive knowledge of legislation and regulations relating to international students' fee status and financial matters.</p> <p>Experience of undertaking specialist advocacy and representation work on</p>	<p>Awareness and understanding of the basics behind the US Federal Loans system.</p> <p>Knowledge of hardship funds available to international students, asylum seekers and refugees offered by external trusts and charities.</p>

	<p>behalf of individual clients, e.g. Student visa applications, Administrative Reviews.</p> <p>Experience of planning and prioritising a number of complex operational activities in a changing environment and frequently under pressure.</p>	
Specific skills to the job	<p>Well-developed client interview and caseworking skills and the ability to maintain boundaries and professional ethics within a confidential setting, including keeping thorough, accurate and up to date client case notes in compliance with confidentiality policies, professional standards and GDPR.</p> <p>Ability to disseminate to colleagues any changes in legislation and regulations.</p> <p>Extensive experience of offering immigration advice and services at Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) level 2 code of practice.</p> <p>Ability to set objectives, monitor and manage line reports' performance, encouraging and motivating colleagues and line reports to excel in a fast-paced and challenging environment.</p>	<p>Familiarity with advising international students on the impacts of culture shock and reverse culture shock on their wellbeing.</p>
General skills	<p>Excellent written and verbal communication, including the ability to devise and deliver high quality presentations and workshops.</p> <p>Understanding of cross-cultural awareness, working with a diverse community</p> <p>Excellent IT skills, especially in using MS Office applications (e.g. Word, Excel, Powerpoint) as communication and management tools</p> <p>Ability to show attention to detail and produce work and documentation of high quality.</p>	

<p>Other</p>	<p>Self motivated, with a flexible approach to work and working hours across all sites.</p> <p>Resilience and the ability to perform consistently well under pressure, meeting competing deadlines in an environment where the pace of work is demanding</p> <p>Ability to think strategically and work collaboratively.</p>	
<p>Disclosure and Barring Scheme</p>	<p>This post requires an enhanced DBS check</p>	
<p>Essential Criteria are those, without which, a candidate would not be able to do the job. Applicants who have not clearly demonstrated in their application that they possess the essential requirements will normally be rejected at the shortlisting stage.</p> <p>Desirable Criteria are those that would be useful for the post holder to possess and will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.</p>		