

THE POST

College/Service:	Campus Infrastructure & Operational Support Services
Post:	Project Assistant (Project Exceptional)
Reference No:	P59328
Grade:	D
Reporting To:	Office Manager

Job Description

Main purpose of the job:

Project Exceptional aims to create a world class research and education facility on the Streatham campus in support of the University's global ambitions. The project will involve working with multiple internal and external stakeholders to design and build a highly innovative multi-functional building. The building will be home to some of the University's leading research groups as well as supporting the delivery of highly interactive, collaborative research and teaching initiatives for academics and students as well as international events.

Reporting to the Office Manager, Estates Services, the primary purpose of this post is to provide high-level support to the Project Exceptional programme team. This will include supporting the programme governance bodies, supporting communications initiatives, providing general administrative support to the team and assisting the two Programme Managers to manage their priorities and workload through expert, proactive diary management and executive support. The post will work closely with the Registrar's Executive team in matters involving the Executive Suite. The post holder must be able to plan and prioritise a busy and varied workload, will be expected to contribute to a range of key projects and activities, and will have a strong awareness of dealing with people at the highest level within the University. The role is challenging, and the postholder will be expected to exercise judgement to manage competing priorities in a very busy environment. An understanding of how to deal with sensitive and confidential information, as well as the possession of excellent inter-personal skills, is absolutely essential.

Main duties and accountabilities:

- The post holder will often be the first point of contact in respect of the various projects and he/she must be able to answer queries as expected, direct enquiries elsewhere if necessary and communicate effectively and courteously with all callers, replying to enquiries that cannot be dealt with immediately, in a prompt and accurate manner.
- To minute key governance and stakeholder group meetings and follow up on the resolution of matters arising from these meetings, maintaining project action logs, project risk registers and project issues logs. Organisation and preparation of papers for meetings, including obtaining additional information when necessary.
- To configure the management of the project's documentation, maintaining a filing and information/document retrieval system (including drawings), using paper and electronic files; photocopying, collating and distributing documents and drawings; working with other University colleagues to ensure that all relevant project documentation and paperwork is completed; managing papers received by the Programme Managers for the internal and external groups of which they are members.
- Coordination of project workshops and other events, including inviting attendees, and booking facilities, equipment and refreshments as required.

- To assist with tracking and reporting on overall project progress, working with project leads to gather progress against tasks and maintain and update project plans and progress reports including set up, log and maintain Excel spreadsheets and the bespoke Planon database to record data for projects and other Estate Services activities/information. Ensuring all data and files can be easily interrogated and cross referenced.
- Support the preparation of tender documentation. Check and collate tender documents and administer the tendering process taking responsibility for sending out and receiving tender documents. This includes administering tenders through electronic and other tendering systems such as EU Supply; the South West Framework Agreement for Consultants, the Southern Construction Framework Agreement and works/services procured in accordance with European Directives. Act as the first point of contact and lead administrator for Estate Services staff, tenderers and Framework Managers involved in the tendering process. Arrange for the safe keeping of received tenders and arrange formal tender openings.
- Support the preparation of contract documents. Arrange for the receipt and sending out contract documentation and arrange for necessary signatures, the official seal, etc., and secure storage. To oversee the effective and proactive management of the two programme managers' diaries and itinerary, including appropriate prioritisation, resolution of conflicting priorities and expert optimisation of their time.
- To support the project team on projects and activities and in particular the communications lead. This may include leading and/or working with colleagues on University meetings and events.
- To carry out background research and analysis as required for activities relating to the project.
- Ensuring effective distribution of mail in and out of the core programme team, both written and electronic, disseminating information to relevant staff, monitoring follow-up and flagging up urgent matters. This will include drafting, often complex, correspondence on behalf of the senior project team members, employing the highest attention to detail.
- Organising and coordinating the project team members' travel and accommodation requirements.
- To take a proactive approach to understanding and gaining a thorough knowledge of the Programme as it evolves.
- Promote and ensure the consistent and correct application of processes, procedures, systems and codes of practice in line with the Estate Services QMS system and Strategic Development Unit processes, resolving problems and ensuring compliance with internal and external regulation are adhered to within your area of responsibility. Train other in the correct usage as required.

Planning and Decision Making

- Estate Services is essentially a team working environment in which information is shared and activities coordinated, so collaborative working with team colleagues is essential. This is inclusive of the provision of cover for other administrative staff, as necessary.
- The objectives and targets are set by the University and the Project Administrator will work to targets and performance standards as agreed with the Office Manager.
- The Project Assistant makes decisions independently on a daily basis, judging priorities, dealing with unforeseen circumstances and exercising judgement as to whether an enquiry should be passed on to another and in dealing with matters arising in the Programme Manager/s absence.
- The post holder is required to work unsupervised on behalf of the Programme Manager/s and to anticipate the support required and develop knowledge relating to the role. The post holder is expected to exercise judgement and confidentiality, be proactive and have the necessary confidence to interact appropriately with a wide range of people, both internal and external to the University and at all levels. Flexibility and creativity is essential, as is an ability to take on a wide range of responsibilities and work to tight deadlines.

Contacts

- The job holder will interact with a wide range of members of the University community and with external contacts, customers and stakeholders from all walks of life, including the University Executive, College Deans and Managers, donors, consultants and contractors.

This job description summarises the main duties and accountabilities of the post and is not comprehensive: the post-holder may be required to undertake other duties of similar level and responsibility and may be required to work outside office hours if necessary.

Person Specification

Essential

Significant experience in a relevant administrative role, ideally within a similar working environment, including:

- High standard of written and numeracy skills, including ability to draft correspondence and briefings in appropriate styles.
- Experience as a PA and acting as Secretary for high level governance meetings, including arranging venues, negotiating complex diary management for senior level staff, circulation of papers, minute taking and progress chasing actions.
- High standard of organisational skills, including excellent time management and ability to work simultaneously on a variety of tasks and prioritise them.
- Effective communication, networking and negotiating skills, having confidence in dealing with a wide variety of stakeholders, including senior decision makers, both internally and externally.
- Able to record information quickly and accurately.
- High level of IT expertise and experience including Microsoft Office applications, databases, email systems, updating and creating material for the web. A high level of competence in Word, Excel and Outlook is essential. Competency in Microsoft Project would be an advantage.
- High level of competence in obtaining close attention to detail.
- Appropriate social skills and personal presentation and superb customer service skills.
- Ability to be flexible and use initiative and sound judgement in problem solving.
- Ability to manage a challenging and diverse workload, working for a number of different people and remaining calm and effective under pressure.
- A strong team working ethic, willing to take responsibility for, and contribute to, the achievement of team goals; actively supporting colleagues at all levels
- To feel equally comfortable working in a team and on own initiative.
- Willing to visit and from time to time, work in offices on construction sites.
- Significant previous experience in a PA role supporting a senior executive in the public or private sector.

Desirable

- Experience of working in higher education.
- Establishing good working relations with relevant staff in the University and external contacts, maintaining excellent familiarity with the key networks.

Terms & Conditions

Our Terms and Conditions of Employment can be viewed [here](#).

Further Information

Please see our [website](#) for further information on working at the University of Exeter.