Head of Research Student Administration
Student and Academic Services

Closing date: 1 February 2018
Interview date: to be confirmed
Vacancy reference: 6326
INTRODUCTION

As Head of Research Student Administration you can look forward to leading an enthusiastic and friendly team who work in partnership with colleagues across the University to provide administrative services that support the research student journey at York. The team was established in 2013 to bring together the administration of Research Councils UK (RCUK) funding, University and private studentships, examinations, records, and special cases.

This is a post in which you will have line management responsibility for the four members of the established Research Student Administration team (RSA), and responsibility for the administrative processes supporting the research student journey. It is important that you are able to build successful and productive relationships across the University and with external bodies and professional networks to promote the work of the team, and to contribute to ongoing policy and business process review and development. You will work closely with the Dean of the School to ensure that the administrative support for research students continues to develop in line with our strategic aims to support consistency of opportunity and success for postgraduate research students.
Main purpose of the role

The key purposes of the role are:

- to take responsibility for the administrative processes for research students at the University, leading policy and process development, and providing specialist advice and guidance to senior managers of the University, colleagues in academic departments and centres, and staff in professional support services; and
- to lead and manage the organisation and operation of the Research Student Administration team (RSA), overseeing the work of the team in support of agreed strategic goals, ensuring that strategy, policy and business plans are implemented.

Key responsibilities

Specialist activities:

- Take responsibility for the administrative processes for research students, displaying substantial specialist knowledge of the research student journey and act as a recognised source of expertise including providing advice and support to others, personally or through delegation.
- Lead and manage the organisation/operation of the Research Student Administration team (RSA) to deliver specific goals, ensuring agreed strategy, policy and business plans are implemented.
- Manage and monitor the delivery of services by the RSA to ensure consistent and equitable services to all users.
- Lead in setting standards for service delivery that are meaningful to students, departments and the team, and monitor the attainment of those standards.
- Report to and participate in the York Research Graduate School Board, and other relevant committees to contribute to strategy, develop policies and practice, and make recommendations.
- Contribute to or take the lead in policy development through contribution of own expertise.
- Identify areas for service or process improvement and initiate and oversee targeted programmes of change.
- Exercise professional and specialist knowledge of research student administration to identify issues, trends, and problems in the research student journey which may have broad (eg University-wide) impact.
- Advise on processes for assessing complex situations, information or data and propose and lead the application and testing of innovative solutions with broad impact.
- Provide lead advice on the analysis and interpretation of information and data, on the sources of additional related information where appropriate, and on reporting progress to senior management to support the resolution of problems within research administration.
- Oversee and ensure that the processes for storage and retrieval of information in the student record system (SITS), the financial recording system (Agresso), and any other data requirements are effective and up-to-date so that internal and external requirements can be met.
- Service, or supervise the servicing of, the York Graduate Research School Board, and relevant working parties, including the provision of specialist expertise.
- Produce written reports, briefings and presentations for senior members of the University, support staff and academic departments as required.
- Draft University policy and guidance relating to research students.
- Disseminate best practice and promote educational and administrative innovations at a local level.

Customer service / support:

- Provide expert advice on a University-wide basis, and support colleagues throughout the University in making appropriate decisions regarding research students within the University’s regulations and guidelines.
JOB DESCRIPTION

- Lead the Research Student Administration Team (RSA) in establishing appropriate standards and measures for the service provided.
- Monitor and support the team in providing an appropriate standard of support to students and staff, working with students and departments to ensure best practice is met.
- Review service provision, identifying areas requiring improvement and design or coordinate the development of solutions.
- Use judgement and expertise to make decisions to ensure the service is effective and appropriate for customer needs.

Planning and organisation:

- Lead on aspects of the agreed programme of the University Plan and Strategy for Student Life relevant to research students.
- Contribute to the development and review of the Strategy for Student Life as regards research students, and to any other relevant or subsidiary strategies.
- Plan and organise work associated with the central administration of research students, taking responsibility for decision-making and working with senior colleagues as appropriate to set and meet specific long-term objectives, taking into account long-term issues.
- Set priorities for work with regards to research students, in consultation with senior colleagues, and allocate resources to meet planned objectives taking account of timescales.
- Manage specific project and service improvement initiatives for research administration, including planning and managing the project and coordinating the work of staff in cross-Academic Registry project teams.

Finance and resource management:

- Oversee the management and reconciliation of RCUK, charity, collaborative and University studentships and the associated grants.
- Manage the research student administration budget.
- Contribute to the broader resource and budget planning within Student Services.

People/relationship management:

- Line manage all members of the Research Student Administration Team (RSA).
- Support team members in their personal development and in meeting the team’s objectives, communicating requirements and monitoring and reviewing individual and team progress and performance, ensuring agreed strategy, policy and business plans are implemented.
- Provide specialist support and guidance on research students and associated processes and policies to staff and students.
- Delegte work to others, ensuring work is completed to required standards and timescales.

Communication and collaboration:

- Build successful and productive relationships, alliances and partnerships within Student and Academic Services, with academic departments and professional services across the University, and with external bodies and professional networks in order to promote the work of the team and the University.
- Represent the team, section and Directorate within and beyond the University as appropriate.
- Deputise for line manager as required.

Personal and professional development:

- Maintain a personal and professional development plan.
- Monitor and maintain awareness of HE agendas and developments nationally.

The above list of duties is not exhaustive and is subject to change. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties within the scope and grading of the post.
# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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## Knowledge

| Understanding of the policies and procedures relating to the research students’ experience in the UKHEI context | ☒         | ☐         |
| Understanding of the policies and procedures relating to the UK Research Councils | ☒         | ☐         |
| Understanding of the application of the principles of equal opportunities and the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act | ☒         | ☐         |
| Understanding of the needs of those working and studying in a higher education environment | ☒         | ☐         |
| Awareness of a range of staff and project management methodologies | ☒         | ☐         |
| Understanding of team dynamics and how this contributes to effective service delivery | ☒         | ☐         |
| Insight into the University’s Research Strategy | ☐         | ☒         |
| Knowledge of SITS, SITS Fund Manager, e:Vision, and/or Agresso | ☐         | ☒         |
| Click here to enter text.                     | ☐         | ☐         |

## Skills, abilities and competencies

| Able to apply a range of management styles | ☒         | ☐         |
| Excellent communication and presentation skills, both written and verbal | ☒         | ☐         |
| Ability to work under pressure and on own initiative | ☒         | ☐         |
| Ability to convey complex information to non-experts and to influence an audience | ☒         | ☐         |
| Ability to solve complex problems, developing service improvements with an appreciation of possible longer-term implications | ☒         | ☐         |
| Ability to take the lead on the development and improvement of services | ☒         | ☐         |
| Ability to use negotiation skills to facilitate open discussions with individuals and groups | ☒         | ☐         |
| Excellent teamwork and interpersonal skills | ☒         | ☐         |
| The ability to demonstrate flexibility and innovation in adapting to changing needs | ☒         | ☐         |
## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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### Proactive approach to keeping up to date with developments in Research Student policy and practice

### Able to motivate, develop and encourage the commitment to secure high performance in others

### Organisation and time-management skills to plan and organise activities of some complexity and manage the activities of others

### The ability to think strategically; eg when making decision and formulating policy

### Experience

| Experience of working within a university’s regulatory framework
| Experience of managing information, analysing and presenting statistics
| Experience of developing and managing services, and success in initiating and leading change in organisations.
| Experience of motivating, organising and coordinating the work of a team of people
| Experience of developing performance measures and utilising these to inform operational planning
| Experience of service planning at an organisational level, including the development of policies and procedures
| Awareness of financial procedures and regulations
| Experience of working in the administration of research students’ progress
| Experience of working with complex databases
| Experience of managing a budget and of financial procedures and planning

### Personal attributes

| Conveys positive attitude and commitment to organisational values
| Personal credibility and integrity
| Motivation towards customer service excellence and quality
| Collaborative
| Pragmatic
| Encouraging towards innovation and development
| Open communication style, demonstrating sensitivity and empathy with users, colleagues and staff

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THE DEPARTMENT

Student and Academic Services provide administrative and advisory services and opportunities for development to support the student experience. Working collaboratively with students, colleagues and external partners we facilitate learning, development and success.

As one of the largest professional service directorates we make a significant impact on the University’s ability to achieve its ambition of offering and outstanding and valuable experience, and to support our colleagues in achieving excellence in research, teaching, and the student experience. We are in a strong position to shape and influence the way that the University delivers its objectives. We provide a collection of professional services which contribute to the quality of the student experience; these services are organised in five sections:

- Academic Support
- Careers and Placements
- Colleges
- Open Door
- Student Services

Student Services is engaged in a broad range of activities which underpin the student lifecycle from enrolment through to graduation. We are the first point of contact for students for everyday enquiries and specialist advice, and provide and support essential processes, systems, and events that underpin the student journey, the administration of teaching and learning, and the University’s relationship with key stakeholders and external agencies. We are responsible for matters relating to:

- front-of-house support, information, and guidance;
- student advice;
- student records management;
- student enrolment;
- student financial support;
- academic progress;
- examinations and assessment;
- academic appeals;
- graduation;
- research student administration;
- compliance and statutory returns; and
- student systems development.

We are comprised of a team of approximately 60 staff members organised in 11 teams. Our teams work in partnership with academic departments and professional services across a wide range of operational and development activities. We’re working together to identify opportunities to introduce greater harmonisation of the administrative
processes and tasks that support the student journey, and to adapt and develop our services to meet new requirements.

The Research Student Administration Team (RSA) was formed in early 2013 to bring together the administration of Research Councils UK (RCUK) funding, University and private studentships, examinations, records, and special cases. The team play a pivotal role in supporting the research student journey at the University, and in ensuring a high level of service to students, academic departments, and external stakeholders.

The RSA takes responsibility for the research students' life cycle; from working with staff in academic departments to ensure that financial claims meet all of the funders' requirements for research student funding, through to receipt of the thesis and confirmation of the award. It takes in administration of any institutionally-managed funding including that coming from Research Councils and support for the consideration of any 'special case' issues that the student's progress involved (such as extensions, suspensions, and student appeals). The team work closely with the Dean of the Graduate Research School, and participate in and support the Graduate Research School Board. The Research Student Coordinators work as a team sharing case work between them in a broadly, but not exclusively, faculty-facing structure.
Founded on principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, the University of York opened in 1963 with just 230 students. In 2017 it is the home of more than 17,000 students across more than 30 academic departments and research centres. Since opening over fifty years ago, we have become one of the world’s leading universities and a member of the prestigious Russell Group.

We are consistently recognised as one of the leading Higher Education Institutes and one of just six post-war universities which appear in the world top 100 (2013-14) and 15th in the Times & Sunday Times league table (2016). The University of York has won six Times Higher Education (THE) Awards and five Queen’s Anniversary Prizes.

The University is proud of its association with Athena SWAN, holding 12 awards in support of gender equality, representation and success for all, with gold awards for Chemistry and Biology and a University-wide bronze award.

Of 154 universities that took part in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, The University of York ranked 14th overall and 10th for the impact of our research. The University is consistently in the top ten UK research universities and attracts over £60m a year of funding from research alone.

Our vision is to make the University of York a world leader in the creation of knowledge through fundamental and applied research, the sharing of knowledge by teaching students from varied backgrounds and the application of knowledge for the health, prosperity and well-being of people and society.
THE UNIVERSITY

Attractive workplace

Centred around the picturesque village of Heslington on the edge of the city of York, our colleges are set in an attractive landscaped campus. York enjoys a safe, friendly atmosphere with facilities including bars, shops, theatres and concert halls all within easy walking distance.

The University has undergone an unprecedented period of expansion and renewal since 2000. We have invested in twenty new buildings on the original campus and have completed the first and second phases of a £750m campus expansion. Our investment in new colleges, teaching and learning spaces, laboratories, research facilities and a new sports village mean there has never been a better time to join us.

During this period of change we’ve worked hard to retain our friendly, informal and collegiate atmosphere, which is important to our core values of inclusivity and interdisciplinarity.

We have a thriving international community and are committed to providing staff moving to York with as much support as possible through our Relocation Package and Welcome Officers.

The University aims to offer a nurturing and supportive environment as an employer. Flexible working hours, nursery facilities, childcare vouchers, cycle to work scheme, generous holidays and an attractive pension scheme all make the University of York one of the region’s leading employers.

For further information please visit our employee benefit pages.
The City of York

Internationally acclaimed for its rich heritage and historic architecture, York’s bustling streets are filled with visitors from all over the world. Within its medieval walls you will find the iconic gothic Minster, Clifford’s Tower and the Shambles - just a few of the many attractions.

But York isn’t just a great place to visit - it's also a great place to live and work. While nourishing a vibrant cosmopolitan atmosphere, York still maintains the friendly sense of community unique to a small city.

Visit www.visityork.org for more information on the city of York.

Shopping, culture and entertainment

York boasts specialist and unique boutiques but also all the high street stores on its busy shopping streets. Alongside them you will find cinemas, theatres, an opera house, art galleries, a vast range of restaurants, live music venues and clubs. York is particularly renowned for its multitude of pubs and bars, from the modern to the medieval.

Housing and schools

Whether you choose to live close to the city, in one of the surrounding villages or further afield, you will find a wide range of housing within comfortable distance of York and the University. For families, the area has a range of excellent schools both in the state and independent sector.

Great location

York is one of Britain’s best-connected cities. Halfway between London and Edinburgh on the East Coast mainline, on intercity trains you can reach London King’s Cross in less than two hours and Edinburgh in two and a half hours. York is also well served by road links, and it is easily accessible from the A1, M1 and the M62.

For those travelling from overseas, Manchester Airport is two hours away and Heathrow Airport just three and a half. Flights from nearby Leeds Bradford Airport provide easy access to mainland Europe. By Eurostar from London St Pancras, Paris is just over six hours away.

Yorkshire

The Lonely Planet guide recently declared Yorkshire the third best region in the world to visit. There is something to cater to every taste, whether it be the rugged landscapes of the Moors or the Dales, the picturesque seaside towns of Scarborough and Robin Hoods Bay, the gothic architecture of Whitby or the vibrancy of cosmopolitan Leeds.
Apply online

- Go to https://jobs.york.ac.uk
- Find this job using reference 6326
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (local UK time) on 1 February 2018

What will I need?

We will ask you for details of:

- your employment history
- relevant qualifications
- two referees

You need to be ready to show us how you meet the requirements of the job, either in a written statement and/or by answering questions.

Help and assistance

Direct any informal queries to jen.wotherspoon@york.ac.uk

If you have any questions about your application, contact the HR Services team:

recruitment@york.ac.uk
+44 (0)1904 324835