

Last Updated 03/12/25			
<b>Job Title</b>	Director of Legal Services		
<b>Faculty/ Department</b>	Governance and Risk Assurance	<b>Legal Entity</b>	Cervus Plus Ltd
<b>Job Family</b>	Professional Services	<b>Job Level</b>	7
<b>Reports To</b>	Chief Operating Officer	<b>Line Manages (role title(s))</b>	Lawyer x 3

### **Job Statement**

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Legal Services provides strategic leadership and management of the University's legal function. The role ensures high-quality, timely, and business-focused legal advice across the full range of university activity (*currently excludes research contracts but may be reviewed*), supporting effective risk management, compliance, and decision-making. The postholder will oversee the delivery of legal services, lead the development of legal processes and systems, and manage relationships with external legal advisers and key internal stakeholders.

### **Key Responsibilities** This is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but the main responsibilities

- Provide strategic legal leadership to the legal team ensuring advice and decisions align with institutional priorities and regulatory obligations.
- Deliver expert legal advice on employment law, student related matters, commercial and IT contracts, procurement, subsidiary governance, data protection, charity law, and operational property matters.
- Support major institutional projects, including transnational education partnerships and overseas campus developments, commissioning and managing external legal expertise where necessary.
- Oversee litigation, ensuring appropriate external legal support is appointed and effectively managed.
- Act as senior adviser on regulatory and statutory matters, including GDPR, data protection, procurement regulations and charity law obligations.
- Support the Chief Operating Officer in ensuring robust legal compliance across the University and its subsidiaries, contributing to risk management processes, policy development and assurance activity and ensuring the appropriate use of corporate structures, delegations and documentation.
- Lead and manage the Legal Services team, ensuring effective workload allocation and consistent delivery of professional standards, and proactive team development.
- Develop and oversee effective case management and contracting workflows, including case management systems, contracting processes, and standard documentation tailored to university requirements.
- Identify and implement legal support technologies to streamline processes, improve efficiency, and support contract and knowledge management.
- Manage external legal resources and budgets, ensuring cost-effective and high-quality legal support, and maintaining an approved panel of external advisers.
- Provide training and capability-building for colleagues across the University, raising awareness of legal risks, contracting best practice, and regulatory responsibilities.
- Drive continuous improvement in legal processes, maintaining templates and guidance materials, and monitoring legal developments to inform institutional policy, risk, and strategic decision-making.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.

### **Role Scope and Impact** This is a summary of the post holder's role in delivering outcomes, making decisions, and the complexity of problem-solving involved in the role.

#### **1. Accountability: Describe the level of autonomy and decision making**

The Director of Legal holds significant institutional accountability as the University's most senior legal adviser, responsible for ensuring that all legal, regulatory, and contractual risks are appropriately identified, managed, and escalated. The post carries direct accountability for safeguarding the University's legal position, financial exposure, and regulatory compliance, including in areas with substantial strategic and reputational impact. The role is accountable for leading the Legal Services function, ensuring the quality and integrity of advice provided across the institution, and for making authoritative recommendations to the Chief Operating Officer, Executive Board, and governing body on matters with far-reaching institutional consequences.

## 2. Problem solving: Describe complexity and nature of problems handled

The role requires high-level autonomous decision making and expert problem solving in a complex and rapidly evolving regulatory environment. The Director of Legal is expected to interpret ambiguous legislation, assess organisational risk, and provide solutions to sensitive and novel legal issues where precedent may be limited or non-existent. The post holder must make informed judgements on the management of litigation, negotiation of high-value contracts, allocation of resources, and the commissioning of external legal advice. Decisions taken by the Director of Legal frequently have long-term strategic implications, requiring the ability to balance legal risk with institutional priorities and to provide clear, pragmatic direction on complex issues to senior leaders and non-specialist stakeholders.

**Person Specification** This section describes the knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships		
Professionally qualified with a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification, plus a significant number of years' relevant leadership experience, or substantial experience and proven success in a strategically important broad function/specialist area. Or: Substantial and extensive vocational experience demonstrating professional development and achievement in a series of progressively more demanding, influential and broad work roles, backed by evidence of deep and broad knowledge of the whole functional work area		E
Qualified solicitor or barrister entitled to practice in the UK		E
Demonstrated experience providing legal advice at senior or executive level		E
Strong understanding of legal frameworks relevant to higher education, charities or the public sector		E
Experience leading an in-house legal team		D
Knowledge of the Higher Education and Research Act, Office for Students regulation, charity law and public procurement		D
Additional qualifications in governance, risk or compliance (e.g. ILM, ICASA / CGI)		D
Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge) This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role (please refer to the Competency Framework for clarification where needed and the Job Matching Guidance).	Essential/ Desirable	Level 1-3
Skilled in drafting and reviewing governance frameworks, policies and terms of reference.	E	3
Ability to interpret and apply statutes, ordinances, regulations and constitutional documents.	E	3
Strong working knowledge of Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework, Charity Law and sector codes (e.g. Prevent Duty)	E	3
Demonstrable experience in advising chairs, committee members and senior executives in governance procedures and good practice.	D	3
Technical understanding of risk management and governance frameworks	E	3
Knowledge of internal audit processes and assurance methodologies	E	3
Understanding of governance implications of major partnerships, collaborations and commercial ventures	E	3
<b>Special Requirements</b> This may include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, regular overseas travel, driving licence, shift work.		<b>Essential/ Desirable</b>

The post holder will be placed on a rota to provide Silver or Gold-level responses to critical issues. Occasional out-of-hours work may be required.	E
<b>Core Competencies</b> This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade.	<b>Level 1-3</b>
Communication	3
Adaptability and Flexibility	3
Customer, Client service and support	3
Planning and Organising	3
Continuous Improvement	3
Problem Solving and Decision-Making Skills	3
Managing and Developing Performance	3
Creative and Analytical Thinking	3
Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills	3
Strategic Thinking and Leadership	3
<p>This Job Purpose outlines the core activities of the role. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder evolve, the duties and focus of the role may change. The University expects the post holder to adopt a flexible approach to work, including undertaking relevant training when necessary. If significant changes to the Job Purpose are required, the post holder will be consulted, and the changes will be reflected in a revised Job Purpose.</p> <p><b>All staff are expected to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.</li> <li>Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.</li> <li>Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.</li> <li>Contribute towards broader university initiatives that have a positive impact on student experience, recruitment and campus operations. This may include participation in cross-functional activities such as open days, confirmation and clearing, welcome week, graduation.</li> <li>Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.</li> <li>Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your manager.</li> <li>Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.</li> </ul> <p><b>Help maintain a safe working environment by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are, therefore, required to adhere to the University's Our Safety Policy Statement and associated Procedures.</li> </ul>	
<b>Organisational/Departmental Information &amp; Key Relationships</b>	
<p><b>Background Information</b></p> <p>The University operates in an increasingly complex regulatory, legal, and governance environment, shaped by evolving expectations from the Office for Students, the Charity Commission, government departments, professional bodies, global partners, and funding organisations. As a large and diverse higher education institution with significant research activity, international collaborations, philanthropic income, and extensive student and staff communities, the University must demonstrate the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and regulatory compliance. The Governance Risk Assurance function plays a central role in ensuring that institutional decision-making is robust, legally sound, and aligned with statutory and regulatory requirements. The department provides expert leadership, assurance, and oversight across governance, legal, regulatory, and ethical domains and is critical to safeguarding the University's reputation, ensuring the integrity of institutional processes, and supporting effective governance in a dynamic and highly regulated sector.</p>	

## Department Structure Chart

