

<b>Last Updated:</b> 25/03/2026			
<b>Job Title</b>	Lawyer		
<b>Faculty/ Department</b>	Governance & Risk Assurance	<b>Legal Entity</b>	Operate Surrey Limited
<b>Job Family</b>	Professional Services	<b>Job Level</b>	5HRZ
<b>Reports To</b>	Director of Legal Services	<b>Line Manages (role title(s))</b>	N/A

**Job Statement**

This role provides expert legal advice and support to clients of Operate Surrey Limited (in particular its parent company, the University of Surrey). The role will focus on delivering high-quality and practical legal solutions across a broad range of university activities ensuring the University operates in compliance with relevant legal frameworks while effectively managing risk. The role advises on commercial contracts, intellectual property, property and construction, consumer law, employment matters, student matters, regulatory compliance and dispute resolution while supporting governance and decision making at all levels of the organisation. The postholder will work collaboratively with academic and professional service teams to enable the delivery of the university's strategic objectives, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements including those of the Office for Students, charity law obligations and relevant legislation such as the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations.

**Key Responsibilities** This is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but the main responsibilities (5 to 8 maximum)

1. Draft, review, amend and negotiate complex legal agreements for research collaboration, purchasing of goods and services, IT contracts and property agreements.
2. Provide expert and timely legal advice, ensuring appropriate risk allocation and regulatory compliance and at all times demonstrating adaptability and diplomacy in client interactions.
3. Ensure compliance with higher education regulatory frameworks, including (but not limited to) conditions of registration set by the Office for Students, charity law obligations, Consumer Rights Act 2015, UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 and institutional governance requirements.
4. Support senior leadership in governance matters, including ensuring compliance with the organisation's constitution, codes of conduct and reporting obligations.
5. Lead or contribute to development / improvement projects, including policy and process relating to commercial and student (consumer) contracts. Create, maintain or improve templates and guidance documents to improve efficiency and to support the wider organisation.
6. Collaborate with senior leadership team, academics and professional services to achieve required outcomes and enable teams to deliver university strategic objectives.
7. Manage relationships with external legal counsel, ensuring cost effective and high-quality support when specialist advice is required.
8. Supervise and mentor junior legal team members, supporting their development and ensuring high standards of achievement.

**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**  
The post holder will operate with autonomy and make decisions within defined boundaries, ensuring compliance with legal standards. Decisions outside these parameters will require approval from the Director of Legal Services. It is expected that the post holder will be able to take initiative and work with minimal supervision.
2. **Problem Solving**  
The post holder will manage complex legal issues, ensuring practical solutions are provided. Tasks will require both independent judgment and collaboration with senior leadership when necessary.

**Supplementary Information**

The role impacts the legal operations of Operate Surrey Ltd and the University of Surrey, influencing policy, contracts and compliance. The post holder will interact with a wide range of stakeholders, including academics, professional services and external clients.

**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 broad demonstrable management experience in similar or related roles	E
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Substantial relevant post qualification experience	E
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Qualified (in England and Wales) solicitor or barrister with current practicing certificate	E
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Membership of relevant professional legal body (e.g. Law Society or General Council of the Bar)	E
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<b>Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge)</b> 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). Level 1: basic level of understanding/experience and can apply it with guidance. Level 2: good level of understanding/experience and can apply it with little or no guidance. Level 3: expert level of understanding/experience and can apply, develop it and guide others.	<b>Essential/Desirable</b>	<b>Level 1-3</b>
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Substantial experience providing advice in relation to complex and time-critical legal matters	E	3
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Commercial contracts experience including IT contracts	E	3
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Ability to communicate across diverse groups	E	3
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Significant legal drafting experience	E	3
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Persuasion and negotiation skills	E	3
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Experience or understanding of the Higher Education sector	D	2
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In house legal experience	D	2
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Substantive experience in one or more of the following areas of legal practice; consumer rights, intellectual property, employment law, property, construction, litigation / dispute resolution, data protection, finance & banking.	D	2
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Experience of instructing and managing external counsel	D	2
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Familiarity with governance responsibilities and board engagement	D	2
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<b>Special Requirements</b>	<b>Essential/Desirable</b>
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Flexibility to travel to client sites as needed.	E
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<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>
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Communication	3
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Adaptability and Flexibility	3
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Customer, Client service and support	3
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Planning and Organising	3
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Continuous Improvement	3
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Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills	3
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Managing and Developing Performance	3
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Creative and Analytical Thinking	3
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Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills	3
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Strategic Thinking and Leadership	2
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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.

**All staff are expected to:**

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.
- Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.
- 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.
- Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by their line manager.
- Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.

**Help maintain a safe working environment by:**

- 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.

## Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

### Background Information

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.

### Department Structure Chart

