

Job Description

Position / Job Title:	Data Protection Officer
Position Holder:	679
Ref:	0005054961
Location/Building:	Studland House
Faculty/Professional Service:	Legal Services & Corporate Governance / University Secretariat
Group/Section:	OVC
Normal Hours per Week:	37 hours
(Some flexibility will be required in order to ensure that key time scales and deadlines are met.)	
Grade:	9
Accountable to:	Acting Clerk to the Board
Responsible for or supervises:	To line manage the Senior Freedom of Information Officer

Job Purpose

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) is responsible for leading and overseeing the University's compliance with data protection legislation, including the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations and other data protection laws and related regulatory requirements.

The postholder provides authoritative, strategic advice to senior management and executive committees, ensures effective governance of personal data across the institution (including records management), and promotes a strong culture of data protection and information rights. The role includes line management responsibility for the Senior Freedom of Information Officer (who also acts as the Legal Services Operations Officer), ensuring integrated delivery of data protection and freedom of information.

Notwithstanding reporting and line management arrangements, the postholder will have direct access to the Chief Operating Officer, as and when appropriate.

Main Responsibilities

Data Protection Leadership and Compliance

- Act as the University's designated Data Protection Officer in accordance with UK GDPR, maintaining independence and reporting on compliance to senior management.
- Responsible for the monitoring, overseeing and advising on compliance with data protection legislation, relevant codes of practice, and regulatory guidance.
- Lead the development, implementation and maintenance of University-wide data protection policies, procedures, processes, standards and guidance to embed a culture of privacy and data protection awareness across the University.
- Provide expert advice to staff and leadership on lawful bases for processing, consent, transparency, data minimisation, retention, and information security.
- Responsible for the management of personal data breaches, including investigation, risk assessment, ICO notifications, and mitigation actions.

- Oversee and support the effective handling and processing of subject access requests, complaints, queries and information requests from Data Subjects, supporting the Senior Freedom of Information Officer on complex, sensitive, or high-risk requests. Where appropriate, act as a contact point for data subjects on issues relating to processing, ensure responses to subject access request are met within the statutory deadlines, data deletion and third-party requests for data.
- Lead and advise on Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for high-risk processing activities addressing any issues that arise.
- Proactively identify risks associated with data processing activities and advise on appropriate mitigation measures, ensuring the University's interests are protected while upholding individuals' rights.
- Act as the primary point of contact with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on data protection matters.
- Monitor, annually, review and amend the University's Information Commissioners Office registrations and notification(s), or equivalent, and monitor and lead on notifications outside the UK.

Advisory and Strategic Role

- Be the University's primary expert in privacy legislation, the Freedom of Information Act Environmental Information Regulations, other data protection laws and records management.
- Provide clear, proactive and pragmatic advice to senior leaders, academic departments, and professional services on complex data protection issues.
- Support strategic projects and initiatives (particularly those supporting the implementation of the University's new strategy, BU2035, for example digital transformation, research, international collaborations, student systems) by embedding data protection by design and by default.
- Keep under review legislative developments and emerging risks, advising on their implications for the University and ensuring the University is prepared for emerging compliance expectations.
- Contribute to institutional governance committees and working groups, providing expert and pragmatic advice and guidance on all areas of data governance to ensure it is embedded in all aspects of the University's operations and activities.
- Contribute to, and lead on where required, institutional planning and guidance related to the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI), including the development of governance frameworks to support transparency, accountability, and fairness.

Freedom of Information and Information Rights Oversight

- Provide strategic oversight of the University's compliance with Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations, and related legislation.
- Oversee and support the effective processing of Freedom of Information or Environmental Information requests, supporting the Senior Freedom of Information Officer on complex, sensitive, or high-risk information rights requests, taking advice from Legal Services where necessary.
- Conduct internal reviews when required and refer to Legal Services where appropriate.
- Ensure consistent decision-making and appropriate risk management in disclosures and exemptions.

Line Management and Team Leadership

- Line manage the Senior Freedom of Information Officer and Legal Services Operations Officer, providing leadership, direction, and performance management (working collaboratively with the Head of Legal Services [and the University Secretary where appropriate] in respect of performance of the Legal Services Operations Officer part of the role).
- Ensure effective coordination between data protection, freedom of information, environment information and Legal Services (where necessary).
- Support staff development, training, and succession planning within the team.
- Allocate and prioritise workloads to ensure statutory deadlines and service standards are met.

Training, Awareness, and Culture

- Lead the development and delivery of data protection training and awareness programmes for staff and students.
- Promote a culture of accountability and best practice in the handling of personal data across the University.

- Prepare guidance, briefings, and communications on data protection and information rights.
- Along with the Senior Freedom of Information Officer and Legal Services Operations Officer, lead on the development and delivery of freedom of information and environment information training and awareness programmes for staff and students.
- Provide advice and instructions on how to conduct Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs).
- Support the Senior Freedom of Information Officer and Legal Services Operations Office, to plan, implement and maintain web pages on compliance issues, including the University's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, monitor the University's compliance with the Publication Scheme and provide advice to other parts of the university on Publication Scheme requirements and update the scheme when necessary.

General

- Maintain accurate records of processing activities and compliance documentation.
- Perform audits and risk assessments, and manage data protection incidents.
- Prepare reports, metrics, and assurance statements for senior management and governance bodies.
- Represent the University on sector networks with others responsible for data protection and information compliance.
- Work with the University's IT and/or Planning Teams to support data governance and strategy.
- Undertake any other duties as directed by the University which are relevant and commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the post.

Organisation Chart

The Legal Services and Corporate Governance Team are currently restructuring and transitioning into a University Secretariat. This role will currently report into the Acting Clerk to the Board.

Acting Clerk to the Board

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This Role

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Senior Freedom of Information officer

Dimensions

The postholder will work across the whole of the University and directly with UET and all Faculties and Services to lead on and deliver high quality specialist with a regulatory focus and compliant Information Office.

Contacts

Internal:

UET / COO

Deans and Directors of Professional Services

Legal Services and Corporate Governance

Other Staff

External:

Regulators including the ICO

Legal Advisors

Contacts at partners or other third parties

Challenges

The University operates in a highly regulated sector with constantly changing and increasing legal, and regulatory requirements and guidance. The role requires staying up to date with detail whilst working collaboratively with a diverse range of staff to ensure the University operates in accordance with all data protection regulation and governance best practice.

Information Governance Responsibilities

Data User

- i. Comply with the associated data protection, information security, information management and information technology regulations, policies, processes and procedures.

Data Steward

- i. Inspect, manage and monitor Information Governance compliance within their area.
- ii. Identify and manage data protection risks for the data used within their team/function.
- iii. Supervise what data is stored where, in what format and its quality throughout its lifecycle through to its appropriate deletion/destruction.
- iv. Ensure access is provided where there is a clear justification and removed when it is not required.
- v. Ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to protect data (e.g. physical and technical controls, and local processes and procedures are development, implemented, followed and regularly reviewed).

Additional Information

NB. The purpose of the job description is to indicate the general level of responsibility and location of the position. The duties may vary from time to time without changing their general character or level of responsibility.

The University is an equal opportunities employer which values a diverse workforce. The post holder must at all times carry out their responsibilities with due regard to the University's Dignity, Diversity and Equality Policy Statement.

Our highly skilled and creative workforce is comprised of individuals drawn from a broad cross section of the globe, and who reflect a variety of backgrounds, talents, perspectives and experiences to build our global learning community. Through fused activity, the post holder must have an understanding of and commitment to promoting a global outlook.

All employees have an obligation to be aware of the University's Sustainability Policy, Climate and Ecological Crisis Action Plan, Travel Plan and associated documents, and to ensure that they carry out their day-to-day activities in an environmentally responsible manner and inspire students to do the same.

APRIL 2026



Person Specification

Position / Job Title: Data Protection Officer	Position No: 0005054961
Faculty / Service: Legal Services & Corporate Governance (OVC)	Date: April 2026
SELECTION CRITERIA	Essential / Desirable
Knowledge (including experience & qualifications)	
Degree or equivalent professional qualification, or substantial relevant experience.	E
A postgraduate or professional qualification in a relevant area, for example, Data Protection practitioner, information security, legal qualification.	D
Significant experience of Data Protection compliance operating at a senior level within a large/complex organisational setting, preferably in higher education or the public sector.	E
In-depth knowledge and application of the relevant data protection legislation, information security standards and ICO guidance.	E
Knowledge of data sharing agreements, privacy, consent and data management including cross-border / international data flows.	D
Experience of leading incident management responses in relation to data protection, involving multiple systems and departments including the co-ordination of reporting to senior stakeholders and external regulators.	E
Understanding of systems and processes involved in gathering, storing, transferring and collecting data.	E
Knowledge and experience of structuring and delivering training/awareness raising campaigns.	D
Experience of working with senior stakeholders and providing authoritative advice.	E
Broad knowledge and understanding of complex information technology applications and infrastructure.	D
Experience of overseeing freedom of information and environment information compliance.	E
Experience of data protection issues in HE, research, or international data transfers.	D
Experience of taking responsibility for the delivery of outcomes and ownership of projects.	D
Skills / Attributes	
Excellent oral, interpersonal and written communication skills, including ability to engage effectively with colleagues across a wide range of seniority.	E
Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret legislation and apply it pragmatically.	E
Proven ability to build strong working relationships/networks.	E
Strong project management and organisational skills.	E
Strong motivational and influencing skills necessary for achieving results through collaboration.	E
Ability to manage competing priorities and meet statutory deadlines.	E
Ability to plan and manage own workload.	D
Independent thinker and creative problem-solver.	E
Enthusiastic with a positive approach to new challenges and a commitment to delivering high quality outputs.	E
Willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills.	E
Ability to be flexible and deal with unexpected occurrences.	D
High level of integrity, discretion, and professional judgement.	E
Positive attitude towards safeguarding	E