

Job Description

Job Title:	Legal Executive Officer
Department:	Legal and Immigration Services (LIS)
Reports To:	General Counsel
Jobs Reporting:	Legal Assistants
Salary Grade:	USG 11
Effective Date:	July 2022

Primary Purpose

The Legal Executive Officer represents the Mission and Values of Legal and Immigration Services (LIS). The Legal Executive Officer reports directly to the General Counsel and is accountable for oversight and management of the administrative operations of LIS. This is the senior administrative staff position in LIS and provides strategic and operational advice and support to the General Counsel. Areas of responsibility include day-to-day support for the General Counsel, the management of highly sensitive legal files, and acting in an administrative supervisory capacity to the administrative staff. This position is responsible for the planning and co-ordination of administrative operations of the department, including human resources administration, management of facilities and space, project management, oversight for managing the operating accounts, financial reporting, and fundamental activities for improvement-focused projects for the continual efficiency of the department. The Legal Assistants have a joint reporting relationship with this Legal Executive Officer and Legal Counsel. This position is often a primary administrative contact for senior administrative leaders, the President's Office, Office of the Vice-President Academic & Provost, Vice-Presidents, Deans, faculty members, external counsel, government agencies, students and the general public.

Key Accountabilities

Strategic Advice and Leadership

- Supports and provides senior administrative management advice and guidance to the General Counsel.
- Provides leadership, advice and strategic input to the LIS team.
- Leads collaborative projects, sets clear and reasonable expectations, provides ongoing feedback, ensures the delivery of results, and establishes a strong foundation for performance.
- Creates and maintains a work environment that fosters, recognizes, and rewards supportive mentorship, professional quality, respectful communication, and creativity.
- Manages and oversees activity and assignments of administrative staff members, providing guidance, development and leadership within a high functioning team-based environment.
- Monitors priorities of the General Counsel and frequently exercises executive authority in this role, acting on behalf of, and without direct consultation to ensure critical business is executed in a timely manner.
- Liaises with the Office of the President, Office of the Vice-President Academic & Provost, Office of the Vice-President, Research & International, Office of the Vice-President, Advancement, Office of the Vice-President, Administration & Finance, Secretariat, Offices of the Deans, Human Resources and numerous other departments across campus.
- Supports the General Counsel in advancing internal and external relationships.
- Oversees and manages the efficient day-to-day administrative operations of LIS.

- Applies professional judgment in situations where clear direction is not available and/or interpretation is required.
- Participates in the recruitment process, including the interviewing and recommending of new hires for LIS, including Legal Counsel, Legal Assistants, or other staff positions, as needed.
- Assigns and directs work for the legal administrative team, ensuring ongoing work quality. assessments, conducting performance appraisals, rewarding/recognizing and counselling administrative staff, providing the opportunity for skill development, coaching, mentoring and training, as well as addressing concerns and resolving issues.
- Serves as a primary point of contact for visitors, staff, faculty members, or students contacting the office, to consult and advise on planning, implementation and evaluation of complex, sensitive or highly confidential matters, answering or re-directing inquiries as appropriate.
- Identifies urgent issues that require immediate attention and facilitates a resolution, escalating issues that requires the General Counsel's attention, where necessary.
- Problem solves matters that can be remedied without the General Counsel's intervention.
- Maintains a strong knowledge base of University policies, procedures, and guidelines, resources and services, developing and fostering strong and constructive working relationships with senior leadership and administration of the University and often serving as a resource to consult and advise on internal and external information.
- Promotes a culture of continuous improvement in terms of efficiency and leveraging systems capacities and new technologies.

Proficient Legal Support

- Provides legal support with in-depth knowledge and management of a large volume of high profile, highly sensitive legal files and ensures the effective management of confidential and highly sensitive information.
- Drafts and prepares internal and external correspondence, various confidential legal documents to assist in the progression of legal matters as required.
- Liaises with external counsel, government agencies, courts, and tribunals for various matters.
- Develops and implements legal best practices (i.e. litigation management) for LIS.
- Manages the administration of sensitive legal files on issues including employment matters, human rights, civil litigation, class actions, corporate law, etc.
- Attends meetings with or on behalf of the General Counsel to ensure efficient and appropriate advancement of the files.
- Examines incoming communications for action and provides written and verbal responses to enquiries on behalf of the General Counsel. If necessary, directs items for action to the appropriate individuals, and follows up as appropriate; investigates matters requiring background information; resolves problems which can be remedied without the General Counsel's intervention or, if necessary, provides to the General Counsel for decision.
- Manages relevant policies, procedures and processes and implements best practices to maintain a strong internal framework and ensure the accurate recording of all legal matters within the department.

Financial Management

- Provides decision-making support and guidance to the General Counsel for management of the LIS operational budget and external legal spend budget.
- Monitors allocations in order to make recommendations to work processes and/or resource allocation to meet defined budgets, as needed.
- Oversees the day-to-day financial activities of the office to ensure they are carried out according to best practices and comply with University policy and procedures.
- Monitors all financial transactions and reconciles accounts monthly.

- Assists with the year-end financial statement reporting and audit process to deliver clarification and supporting documentation for the external auditors.
- Responds to internal requests for financial information to support business decisions.
- Reviews and approves all external legal spend invoices.
- Monitors and maintains the up-to-date tracking of external legal spend for reporting purposes.
- Completes and submits travel and expense claims on behalf of General Counsel.

Departmental Operations Management

- Supervises the implementation and maintains the legal data management system and acts as an internal resource to ensure efficiency.
- Participates in the recruitment and retention of staff and the development of staff positions and reclassification requests.
- Provides advice and guidance on all aspects of the recruitment process and enacts recruitment posting, analyze data of candidate pool.
- Conducts performance appraisals of administrative staff.
- Responsible for the smooth transition and on-boarding of new hires.
- Organizing meetings that may include multiple internal and external stakeholders; and that meetings are prioritized and scheduled based on time sensitivity and importance.
- Provides relationship management and administrative co-ordination for LIS including preparation of reports, organizing meetings, and developing agendas.
- Assesses filing systems and processes to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and proposes and implements changes where necessary and desirable.
- A sound resource for informed decision-making and creative problem-solving.
- Creates and prepares and is accountable for digital content for the departmental EDMS systems and the LIS website.
- Prepares and submits expense claims on behalf of LIS, ensuring all required documentation is provided and maintained.
- Responsible for records and information management within the LIS office in accordance with University records management and retention policies, guidelines and legislated requirements.
- Develops spreadsheets, reports, and other tracking materials, as required. Information must be compiled, analyzed, formatted, and modified to meet various administrative needs. The highest level of accuracy is required.
- Develops processes, templates, best-practices and other tools to increase efficiencies and improve effectiveness of the services provided by LIS.
- Assists the General Counsel with administration and tracking of progress of annual workplan/key metrics, extracts, cleanses and redacts key data for purposes of building reports and Microsoft Power BI presentations to the President Vice-President Committee (PVP) and the Vice-President, Academic & Provost.
- Handles calls independently or refers them to other staff/departments where appropriate.
- Manages all confidential correspondence with a high level of accuracy and confidentiality with a keen sense.

Project Management

- Implements projects, reports, and tasks assigned by the General Counsel, including conducting research and providing synopses to the General Counsel.
- Spearheads multiple and simultaneous projects for the department aimed at increasing the efficiency and management of the services provided by LIS.
- Key stakeholder for the implementation of new technologies and maintains the specialized data management systems and external billing platform.

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- Provides technical support and ongoing training to relevant users.
- Develops specialized intake forms for use by the entire university community.
- Participates in the Project Management process improvement initiatives within the department.
- Acts independently and exercises initiative and sound judgment to represent LIS.
- Plans and executes sound data management practices, including adherence to policies for the sharing and distribution of sensitive and confidential data.
- Acts as a member of the management team responsible for developing and implementing the strategic direction of the LIS team.
- Identifies, develops, and implements projects to improve service quality, relationships, stakeholder satisfaction, timeliness, staff capability and performance.
- Leads and participates in other department projects as required.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- University Degree or equivalent education and experience required.
- College Diploma in a law-related discipline (e.g. Legal Assistant, Law Clerk, Paralegal), or equivalent extensive administrative experience.
- Professional Administration designation or equivalent preferred.
- Project Management or equivalent preferred.

Experience

- Minimum 10 years professional experience in a legal environment and able to provide administrative and overall office administration management at an executive level in a large institution or corporation.
- Considerable proven financial management experience, including budget development and allocation, strong research, analytical and technological skills.
- Experience in a university management setting.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills to communicate precisely and professionally with internal and external sources.
- Ability to quickly assimilate information, analyze data and be able to provide advice, guidance and make sound decisions to resolve issues.
- Considerable experience developing and implementing innovative administrative processes.
- Must demonstrate outstanding leadership and management skills and be an accomplished problem solver, demonstrating the ability to make independent decisions.
- Demonstrated ability to multi-task, take initiative, to work independently, and be part of a team in a fast-paced environment.
- Advanced knowledge of and experience interpreting University policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Sound judgment and diplomacy are essential.
- Strong technical aptitude and proficiency in a Microsoft Office environment.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Proven ability to manage a large number of legal files, conflicting priorities, and competing deadlines.

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- Outstanding organizational, analytical and problem-solving skills, exceptional time-management skills, and meticulous attention to detail.
- Verbal and written communication skills to clearly express ideas in an objective and discretionary manner.
- Demonstrated competency and ability to take initiative, to work independently, and follow through on work assignments within tight timeframes.
- The ability to prioritize, often under pressure and handle sensitive/confidential information with excellent planning and creative problem-solving abilities.
- Demonstrated ability to participate in any file at various stages of the file.
- High ethical standards with the highest levels of discretion and confidentiality to be maintained.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to work collaborative in an integrative environment, negotiate, and facilitate solutions while focusing on client service.
- Strong analytical, critical and systems thinking skills; discretion, tact, diplomacy and proven ability to exercise sound judgement.
- Reflects a positive attitude by engaging, listening, and seeking to understand the needs of all clients.
- Provides leadership and support in preparing the Office for guests, lunch n' learns, or other events.
- Proven ability to deescalate challenging situations effectively when dealing with the public.
- Sound judgment and personal and professional integrity.
- Proven ability to multi-task and maintain an effective work environment.
- Demonstrated flexibility and adapts readily and effectively to changing and urgent demands.
- In depth knowledge of various legal procedures (including but not limited to: civil litigation, human rights matters, judicial review, corporate regulations, etc.).
- Knowledge of various University policies, procedures, and guidelines, programs, and resources.
- Professional, personable and courteous in working relationships with colleagues, students and external contacts.
- Comprehensive understanding of the administrative, academic and governance structures of the University.
- Strong analytical and financial skills to assist with budget portfolio, and to review and assess the budget implications of initiatives.
- Strong computer skills and demonstrates willingness and ability to learn and adjust to new technology.
- Work outside the normal operating hours of the institution is frequent in this role.
- Ability to think and act strategically, creatively and dynamically in a high-pressure work environment.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Regular contact with the General Counsel, Office of the President, Vice-President, Academic & Provost, various Vice President positions and other senior administrative leaders, Deans, Chairs/Directors, faculty, students, external counsel, court and tribunal representatives.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position supports the General Counsel in the administrative operation and efficiency of the LIS office. This position often acts as a point of first contact to triage high profile and time sensitive matters.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Significant level of responsibility and accountability to provide guidance and problem-solving support to General Counsel and the LIS office on a wide range of administrative issues involving strategic and operational matters, which may include interpretation of guidelines, policies, and/or procedures or which may require decisions for which no known precedent exists. Often manages highly confidential issues for the office. Provides direct support to General Counsel and assists in monitoring the operating budget of LIS and external legal spend. LIS manages highly

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complex issues in order to eliminate or mitigate significant reputational risk to the University. Provides guidance and strategic problem-solving support to the General Counsel and LIS office. Must use professional diplomacy and consistency with discretion for notarial responsibilities with a demonstrated ability to make independent decisions.

- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** This position requires exemplary customer service, sound judgement, strong work ethic, calm demeanor, ability to work under very tight and challenging time constraints, constant interruptions and competing priorities. This position requires a high mental and visual concentration while working at the computer for extended lengths of time maintaining a high attention to detail.
- **Working Environment:** This position is primarily office based, however does require some travel for court related activities, or requirements for other administrative tribunal matters or relevant conferences. There is some exposure to disagreeable and frustrated individuals. The frequency and urgency of interruptions is continuous in this position. Priority needs to be applied to the external and critical issues that arise. Energies need to be diverted to dealing with crucial situations on a regular basis. Exposed to stress and pressure associated with senior level responsibilities. There may be unusual hours or schedules, multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control and unplanned but urgent support requests.