

JOB AND PERSON DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Public Affairs & Legal Research Officer

Division: Secretary-General's Office (SGO)

Job Grade: Pay Point - J

Reports to: Public Affairs Adviser to the Secretary-General

General Information

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, as the Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Secretariat, is responsible for its executive direction and management. She also interacts regularly and widely with a large number of constituencies. In carrying out these duties the Secretary-General relies on the availability of support and assistance within her own executive office on public affairs, and on legal matters concerning governance, contractual and human resource issues in the context of an organisation under international administrative law.

Job summary

The role of the Public Affairs & Legal Research Officer is to assist the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff, the Legal Counsel, and the Public Affairs Adviser to the Secretary-General in preparing position papers, briefing notes and talking points for the Secretary-General, writing up minutes and other records, responding to external correspondence, preparing initial drafts of speeches and public statements, and preparing initial drafts for contributions to publications including print and social media. These responsibilities entail undertaking research and collaborating with colleagues throughout the Secretariat to develop proposals for policy, and analysis relating to the provision of legal advice.

Task description

The post-holder will assist the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff, the Legal Counsel, the Public Affairs Adviser and other members of the Office of the Secretary-General by:

1. Preparing initial drafts for all manner of written material so that in correspondence and communications issued by or on behalf of the Secretary-General, or by the Commonwealth Secretariat, high standards of consistency are maintained and content is coherent with mandates and agreed policies, by:
 - Drafting responses or replying to correspondence addressed to the Secretary-General
 - Preparing drafts for the Secretary-General's communications to staff
 - Collating background information and preparing initial drafts for the Secretary-General's speeches, forewords and media contributions



- Requesting drafts of technical content from specialist colleagues and editing such material to accord with the content and style desired by the Secretary-General
 - Collaborating on the drafting of messages, articles, and press releases relating to the work of the Secretary-General and quotes attributed to her.
2. Collating up-to-date reports and information so that the Secretary-General is well prepared and fully briefed on all aspects of Secretariat policy for a wide range of interactions and high profile public engagements by:
- Ensuring the timely provision by Secretariat colleagues of background material on policy developments and technical interventions and ensuring it is presented in the correct format for the Secretary-General
 - Preparing country and policy briefings and talking points for the Secretary-General in preparation for overseas travel and meetings with external counterparts
 - Working with the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff and the Public Affairs Adviser to agree the content of messages to be developed and put forward
 - Preparing draft speaking notes for engagements and interviews undertaken by the Secretary-General.
3. Providing legal and administrative support to the Legal Counsel on a range of issues including:
- Legal aspects of human resources matters, personnel policies and procedures, grievances, disciplinary cases, development of policies in areas such as procurement and financial management
 - Research on international administrative law including the jurisprudence of international administrative tribunals
 - Initial analysis of employment disputes and assisting with the preparation of case documentation
 - Assisting with issues handled by the Legal Counsel including employment disputes and providing periodic status updates on revision of the employee handbook
 - Any other relevant duty or responsibility assigned by the Legal Counsel.
4. Adhering to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy; and
5. Performing any other duties as may be required from time to time.

Person Specification

Education: A degree in law from a recognised university.

Desirable: A master's degree in law from a recognised university.

Experience: Experience of conducting research and preparing analysis on diverse legal issues, and in drafting various legal documents and an understanding of international law, employment law and contracts.

Desirable: Working knowledge of the Commonwealth and experience in dealing with governmental and international affairs.



Competencies:

Respect for Diversity

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.

Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.

Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.

Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.

Encourages others to evaluate systems, processes & behaviour to ensure respect for diversity is demonstrated

Working with Others

Manages conflict and works towards mutual solutions

Identifies organisations with which to partner for specific solutions

Encourages others and provides them with the autonomy to pursue relationships

Uses personal influence to establish compromise and agreement when faced with conflict

Demonstrates balance between directness and diplomacy in negotiations

Uses influence to persuade partners and third parties toward Commonwealth Secretariat aims

Encourages and supports others in demonstrating cultural awareness when working with others

Developing & Applying Professional Expertise

Applies specialist knowledge to achieve anticipated results

Uses specialist knowledge to bring an alternative perspective to a situation

Liaises with stakeholders to facilitate implementation of recommendations

Uses experience and advanced technical expertise to support others

Decision Making

Determines what can be realistically achieved when deciding on strategic solutions

Is proactive and responsive in making decisions on complex, technical issues based on appropriate information

Accountability

Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines.

Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters.



Takes responsibility for own shortcomings and compliances.

Supports subordinates, provides oversight and takes responsibility for all delegated assignments.

Interpersonal: Communication

Communicates and explains complex issues to a wide range of audiences, selecting the most effective medium

Sets parameters for others to ensure consistency of approach and style of communications

July 2017