

JOB AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Legal Officer (Institutional Matters)

Division: Secretary-General's Office

Grade: H

Reports To: Legal Counsel

General Information

The Commonwealth Secretariat is the principal intergovernmental body of the Commonwealth, an international organisation responsible for advancing and achieving the shared goals of the 53 member governments in promoting democracy, development and respect for diversity. The Secretary-General, as the Chief Executive of the organisation, is responsible and accountable for overall leadership, management and delivery within the mandate set by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

The Legal Counsel's office provides advice to the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Senior Management Committee and the Secretariat more generally; briefs the Governing Boards as required; and oversees the conduct of cases brought before the Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal.

Job summary

The Legal Officer (Institutional Matters) reports to the Legal Counsel in the Office of the Secretary General, assisting the Legal Counsel in providing advice on questions arising out of the work of the Secretariat as an international organisation operating under international administrative law, while respecting local domestic law and engaging with domestic law actors. This may relate to public international law, including international organisations law and international administrative law; the relevant laws of the UK as host country; or the domestic law of other Commonwealth member states. The job holder undertakes research and collaborates with colleagues across the Secretariat to draft legal documents and develop proposals for legal and policy analysis.

Task description

Under the supervision of the Legal Counsel, and with a large degree of autonomy depending on experience, the post-holder will:

1. Review and advise on legal documents, prepare legal opinions and draft and negotiate legal arrangements.
2. Manage a subject portfolio, giving prompt, practical, user-friendly legal advice, including by:



The Commonwealth

- advising on the interpretation of the Secretariat's Staff Regulations and Rules and internal policies;
 - collaborating with Human Resources experts in areas of HR policy development and advice, including an ongoing review of the Staff Handbook;
 - advising Directorates on corporate matters such as finance, contracts and procurement, intellectual property, real estate and facilities management at Headquarters and at the Small States Offices in New York and Geneva, ensuring that compliance and regulatory best practice standards are met;
 - developing and updating templates, guidance and procedures, liaising with internal and external domestic law and international law stakeholders as required, and providing related training for staff; and
 - advising on partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding between the Secretariat and governments, non-governmental organisations and international organisations, and preparing legal instruments for signature by the Secretary-General.
3. Assist the Legal Counsel by:
- Conducting research and legal analysis into principles and jurisprudence of international organisations law and international administrative law; the practice of other international organisations; and into relevant approaches across Commonwealth jurisdictions;
 - Drafting legal policy papers, briefing notes and reports of meetings;
 - Supervising consultants, interns and work placement students as required;
 - Processing payments for professional fees and expenses;
 - Preparing submissions and bundles for litigation before the Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal.
4. Adhere to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy.
5. Perform any other duties as may be required or as delegated by Legal Counsel.

Person Specification

Education: Qualified to practise law in a Commonwealth jurisdiction.

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

Experience: At least six years' post-qualification experience in private legal practice, government, non-governmental organisations, international organisations or academia.

Demonstrable experience of providing legal advice and delivering practical solutions to clients and/or stakeholders through clear and user-friendly written and oral engagement; conducting research and preparing analysis on diverse legal issues; and drafting legal documents.

In-depth knowledge of the principles of employment law, contract law and access to information/data protection principles in a domestic jurisdiction of a Commonwealth member country, and an understanding of public international law including international administrative law.

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

Competencies

Respect for Diversity
<p>Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.</p> <p>Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.</p> <p>Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.</p> <p>Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.</p> <p>Changes systems & processes when biases are identified.</p>
Working with Others
<p>Promotes teamwork and removes barriers to effective team working</p> <p>Provides advice and guidance for others sensitively and where appropriate</p> <p>Establishes ownership for relevant activities from the outset</p> <p>Develops a wide network, including senior level contacts to facilitate activities and further own knowledge.</p> <p>Manages expectations of member states e.g. to ensure the alignment of what is requested and what Commonwealth Secretariat can offer</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to negotiate with and influence senior colleagues and contacts</p> <p>Proactively liaises with other divisions, partners and third parties</p>
Developing and Applying Professional Expertise
<p>Applies specialist knowledge to achieve anticipated results</p> <p>Proactively identifies how to develop specialist knowledge</p> <p>Presents self as credible to both internal and external contacts</p>
Adapting & Innovating
<p>Encourages and works with others to develop innovative approaches</p> <p>Drives forward improvements and innovations within own area of responsibility, adding value where appropriate</p> <p>Develops creative ideas into something practical and workable</p> <p>Encourages others to demonstrate flexibility to ensure that objectives are achieved</p> <p>Adapts approach and/or reconsiders decisions in light of new information</p> <p>Promotes new ideas that are picked up by senior colleagues</p> <p>Understands the motivations and objectives of differing groups and adapts approach accordingly</p>