

Uniac
Experienced Audit Professional / Assistant Director
Job Description
June 2010

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Salary: c. £45-50,000 dependent upon qualifications and experience

**Other Benefits: 28.5 days annual leave (25 discretionary and 3.5 days fixed)
plus defined benefit pension scheme**

General Background

Universities are facing some of the most significant challenges in generations and Uniac's role is to help institutions respond. Uniac is a leading internal audit provider in the Higher Education sector. We work mainly in the North of England, but also work with universities in Wales and in London. We have a strong reputation within Higher Education, and are looking for an experienced and excellent auditor (MIIA or CCAB qualified) to supplement our existing team.

Our work mostly consists of finding out how systems and processes in universities operate and either providing reassurance that they are working effectively, or agreeing improvements that will make them better. We review financial processes; student-facing processes such as recruitment, admissions, registration and retention; estates planning and maintenance; the planning and management of research activity; and many, many more aspects of universities' operations. Much of our time is spent talking to university staff and reading supporting documents to understand how things work, and then evaluating what we find. We produce written reports for discussion and agreement with management. If you have an enquiring mind, are a good thinker, have strong oral and written communication skills, enjoy dealing with people, can exercise tact and diplomacy, have pride in your work, and really want to make a difference to the universities we serve, then you definitely have the potential to succeed with us.

Uniac operates a strictly risk-based approach to individual audits. Every audit starts with a blank sheet of paper and is carefully thought through and tailored to the client and the audit subject. We do not use checklists or standard audit programmes.

Most of your time will be spent working on audit assignments handling all of the stages from initial planning through to final completion: ensuring that client staff are fully engaged with the process and are encouraged and enabled to contribute.

You will have early potential to be nominated as an Assistant Director (which, although the main role we're recruiting for is permanent, is a 3 year fixed-term but renewable role).

Our salaries are intended to attract and retain the very best staff over time. The more you take on and the better you perform, the more we will reward you.

To apply please email your CV to seniorrecruitment@uniac.co.uk

No agencies please

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Background to the Role

We are looking for someone who works well within the team and is also keen to develop relationships across our member base. Working with the Directors, you will deliver quality audits and play a strong role in supporting Uniac's relationship with and programme of work at designated member institutions.

You will also play a significant role in developing and delivering our strategy and facilitating the development and progression of *all* staff.

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- Member facing: works with the relevant Director at assigned institutions to ensure that Uniac understands and responds effectively to the needs and expectations of the Audit Committee and Senior Management Team and that these are communicated to and understood by colleagues. Support the relevant Director by overseeing and making a full contribution to the delivery of agreed programmes of work ensuring they meet Member expectations of time and quality; and are delivered in line with Uniac's methodology. Undertake high-level assignments where appropriate. Deputise for the relevant Director from time to time as required at Audit Committee and other high level meetings.
- Staff facing: ensure staff assigned to audits understand the institutional context for the audit and Member requirements and are motivated to meet those requirements. Oversee delivery of audits within expected time and cost standards and to the level of quality required. Motivate, coach and develop staff to use their talents and skills to the full in meeting Member expectations. Support the Directors in providing timely and effective feedback on performance and where appropriate agree any action required.
- Internally facing: contribute to the development of Uniac through supporting a specific portfolio (HR, Finance/Admin, Methodology, Strategy, External Relations and/or New Business Development). Contribute to discussions openly and honestly while seeking and respecting colleagues' views and working to build consensus. Ensure that appropriate Health and Safety arrangements are in place for Uniac staff working at assigned institutions.
- Sector facing: build, demonstrate and deploy knowledge of HEFCE and knowledge of the Sector applying these to Uniac's work and ensuring that Uniac is portrayed positively within the Sector

Accountabilities

Uniac Director responsible for your assigned institution

Staff are expected to deliver audit work to a high standard across our Member universities, ensuring Members' needs and expectations are met or surpassed, whilst contributing to the future direction and strength of Uniac. In particular, the role involves the following core responsibilities and activities.

Advising

Passing on knowledge and experience (internally and externally) specifically including support for the relevant Director in:

- Ensuring that Uniac colleagues undertaking work at your assigned institutions are informed of institutional context at the outset of each audit; and
- Ensuring that relevant staff within your assigned institutions are briefed on relevant audit issues and developments affecting the Sector.
- Providing appropriate advice and assurance to senior management and to Audit Committee members within your assigned institution

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- Reporting work done at Audit Committees ensuring that we deliver appropriate and balanced assessments of the institution's approach to internal control, value for money, corporate governance and risk management
- In conjunction, and by agreement, with the Directors, providing feedback to Uniac colleagues on how individual and organisational effectiveness can be improved

Sharing best practice.

Offering suggestions and making recommendations.

Helping people understand the options available, including the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Translating knowledge into a format that others can use and that is appropriate for the audience.

Keeping members up to date and informed of progress. In particular, highlighting potential risks or observations as they come to light, rather than waiting until the end of the audit.

Writing

Communicating clearly, concisely and professionally in writing, particularly through:

- Terms of reference and annual planning documents.
- Factual documents, primarily audit reports.
- e-mails and letters to members and other people.

Reviewing draft terms of reference and reports for audits at assigned institutions to ensure these are clear, meet institutional needs, and are presented professionally.

Influencing

Spending time talking to people, listening carefully and asking questions to understand.

Working with the relevant Director to promote the appropriate use and deployment of internal audit within your assigned institutions

Working with the relevant Director in establishing:

- senior management and Audit Committee expectations of internal audit and ensuring, through dialogue, that these expectations are compatible with professional standards
- why members have asked for audits, what they want to get out of them and what their constraints are (for example timescales).

Identifying key people to gather information from within the planning process.

Being able to justify a position or view when challenged, including anticipating, preparing for and handling objections (with tact and whilst continuing to listen).

Planning

Establishing clear project objectives and developing terms of reference for individual audits.

Leading, with the relevant Director, development of annual audit plans at assigned institutions and contributing more generally to the development of audit plans at other institutions.

Planning and managing your own workload, priorities and diary.

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Ensuring that Uniac colleagues working at your assigned institutions are available as expected and are aware of principal milestones and deadlines for each audit

Organising yourself and colleagues, drawing on the right expertise to meet demands efficiently.

Choosing between different priorities to maximise efficiency.

Setting timescales and deadlines.

Anticipating obstacles, building in contingency arrangements and revising plans in the light of changing circumstances.

Researching

Identifying and gathering appropriate, relevant information or data before and during an audit, whether internally, from our members or from published information sources.

Ensuring that colleagues working on audits at your assigned institutions have sufficient knowledge to operate effectively.

Using appropriate methods to gather information, which may include workshops, surveys, questionnaires, literature reviews, testing or data analysis in addition to interviews or meetings.

Reading widely to maintain or develop an area of specialism.

Remaining abreast of current developments and future plans at your assigned institutions and supporting the Director in ensuring that this knowledge is used to inform current audits and future audit plans

Analysing

Employing the Uniac audit methodology and ensuring that it is applied appropriately by colleagues.

Analysing verbal, and occasionally numerical, information (including speech, interview notes, reports etc).

Deconstructing complex problems into their constituent parts.

Applying logical analytical processes.

Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information.

Making appropriate links between disparate facts, noticing things and getting to root causes.

Distilling the key themes from large quantities of information.

Using statistical/data audit packages to aid analysis as appropriate.

Synthesising

Gathering individual views to form a group view (for example through internal meetings, and also externally).

Collating data and information of different types and from different sources.

Identifying common themes and extracting key messages.

Identifying how things can fit together, especially different or conflicting points of view.

Summarising information (for example in reports or in discussion).

Problem Solving

Asking questions to gather relevant information.

Identifying areas for improvement (within member institutions and also within Uniac).

Getting to the root cause of problems.

Thinking about solutions and improvements.

Resolving disputes, conflicts or differing views between people using humanistic and communication skills, for example in meetings.

Identifying and learning lessons from previous work to prevent problems recurring.

Learning

Learning new ways of doing things: acquiring and using new skills.

Perfecting skills and understanding.

Learning about new legislation, rules or regulations.

Learning about other people and yourself.

Absorbing and reflecting on new information.

Attending training courses as appropriate.

Keeping up to date with external developments.

Striving for continuous improvement.

Collaborating

Working one-to-one with specific individuals on particular projects.

Working with a group of people that may change between projects.

Working with people from member institutions or other organisations, often including people from different functions or departments.

Responding to questions from members, resolving queries.

Listening to others' ideas.

Sharing information, learning, knowledge or expertise.

Assisting others with tasks outside normal daily activities.

Getting involved in organisational, industry, or sector initiatives (for example through HEFCE, initiating or contributing to projects within Uniac, undertaking secondments, participating in internal audit groups or groups within the Higher Education sector etc).

The person specification details the personal competencies we expect all audit staff to display whenever the opportunity arises.

Judgement

Applying experience, expertise and personal values to new situations to make clear and appropriate decisions.

Creative problem solving

Understanding issues, analysing problems and taking account of the broader organisational factors. Linking day-to-day issues to long-range strategic objectives. Identifying a range of options and different ways of looking at issues as a basis for innovative thinking. Thinking laterally and 'outside the box'.

Customer focus

Working to understand customers' real needs, and investing time and energy in building strong relationships. Providing a high quality of service. Taking ownership for the quality and value of work completed.

Teamwork

Working co-operatively and supportively with colleagues and clients. Developing positive working relationships in order to solve problems and meet client needs.

Influence and impact

Communicating effectively to convince, persuade or influence others. Building support for a course of action, idea or initiative.

Written and oral communication

Giving and receiving information clearly, concisely and accurately through a variety of different media (for example face to face meetings, telephone conversations, email, formal written reports, presentations etc).

Planning and organising

Organising resources, identifying and prioritising key tasks. Implementing plans in the best, most efficient and timely way possible.

Drive for continuous improvement

Demonstrating the drive and energy to achieve high quality and timely results and continuously improve performance. Striving to find faster, better, more efficient and more effective ways of working. Using initiative and being proactive.