

Role profile

Role title	Head of Conference Unit
Department and directorate	Conference unit/finance and corporate services
Grade	Guide
Reports to (job title)	Group Chief Financial Officer
Direct reports (job titles)	Conference Manager and Conference Assistant

Summary – purpose of the role

Describe as concisely as possible the overall purpose of the job and including the core duties/responsibilities required to be performed in the role (eg, to provide a full range of administrative support services to the department including x,y,z)

- To manage all of the operational and logistical arrangements for the association's flag ship event, the annual representative meeting (ARM). The ARM is a complex and multi-faceted event that requires meticulous long-term planning (3-4 years in advance), and requires the post-holder to keep all parties (both internal and external) to a pre-defined conference schedule. The post-holder will also project manage a range of other conferences, including managing event budgets, negotiating contracts, venue liaison, programme committee and speaker liaison, publicity, overall delegate management and attending the event on the day.
- To act as secretary to the conferences subcommittee, and to influence and implement the policies and decisions of the conferences subcommittee.
- To set service standards and establish procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of these service initiatives and develop and improve the variety and quality of services the unit can offer its clients (BMA departments) and external customers (members and non-members).
- To recruit, lead, develop and manage staff within the conference unit to ensure the effective operation and provision of a professional, high quality customer focussed conference service for the association and its members. To undertake the training and development of new members of staff, and to provide continued support, advice and guidance to current team members depending on their own knowledge or experience. The unit organises events ranging in size from training courses to large scale multi-faceted complex conferences.
- To support the creation of local business plans and the implementation of agreed objectives as a senior member of the finance and corporate services directorate.

Skill (level and breadth of application)

What relevant experience is necessary to undertake this role? What specialist, technical or professional qualifications are required to be able to perform the job?

How far does the role extend out across the organisation, eg confined to own team, involves co-ordination with another department or requires regular negotiation with many other parts of the organisation. Why is this necessary? Describe the range of issues that are involved in this, eg resolving people's IT problems, collecting information on key research items or advising members on a particular issue.

- The post-holder will be required to have several years' experience, at a senior level, of organising a variety of events including, large scale complex conferences, specialist branch of practice (BoP) conferences, training courses, social events etc; detailed and meticulous project planning (both short and long term) is required to ensure that each event is delivered on time, to budget and to the required quality standard.
- Leadership and people management skills are essential to build, lead, motivate and develop staff within the unit, and to ensure that staff members, planning committees etc are keeping to pre-defined conference schedules.
- Must be able to think innovatively and implement change effectively, often at very short notice.
- Maintains awareness of new and emerging technologies and their potential application for use at the ARM, and any other associated events.
- The role is one of high visibility, both internally and externally, demanding attuned influencing and negotiating skills, as well as strong interpersonal and communication skills as the post-holder is required to engage with both internal and external contacts at a high level. Diplomacy and tact are essential, as is the ability to work with, and command the confidence of, members and senior colleagues. An ability to handle sensitive and confidential matters is a necessity, as well as a general political awareness of developments within the association.
- The post-holder is responsible for, and is the main point of contact, for all of the operational/logistical arrangements for the ARM. As such the post-holder liaises with a wide range of departments across the association. The post-holder will co-ordinate multiple teams both across and outside the association – including contractors, venues, suppliers etc - communicating effectively and facilitating the delivery of a successful event to the highest professional standard. The post-holder is responsible for managing the following: accommodation (including HQ and staff hotels), transport of equipment, co-ordinating the involvement of the Designer/Production Companies/suppliers, all social events, venue requirements (including: stage set/design, AV, IT, telecommunications, catering).
- The role also involves the organisation and co-ordination of a variety of other projects (as well as the ARM) and this requires excellent organisational, time and management skills. The post-holder is responsible for all aspects of the event: including assessing, and assisting in the completion of, the conferences proposal form prior to approval to ensure that the event supports the association's key objectives, venue liaison, AV, catering and IT liaison. It is the responsibility of the post-holder to keep all parties informed of progress, and develop and maintain good relationships with clients, contractors, suppliers and team members.
- The post-holder must have a clear and detailed understanding of the unit's customers and their different needs and approaches, and must maintain a high level of awareness of the wider association and any on-going developments in order to ensure that events are planned and managed appropriately.

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

What sorts of problems, situations or issues are typically dealt with? Give any illustrative examples. How are the problems, situations or issues dealt with (eg undertaking original research and analysis or seeking specialist advice)?

To what extent are standard procedures and processes followed when undertaking typical tasks, and how is personal initiative used when solving problems? To what extent is creativity used in solving the problems (eg adopting different approaches, trying things that have not been done before within the organisation or improving/changing previous approaches).

Intellectual demands (complexity and challenge)

- The post-holder is responsible for managing the workload of the unit, assessing the unit's schedule, the complexity of each event, staff resources, and setting a limit on the number of events that the unit can realistically organise without compromising on the quality of service provided. The post-holder is responsible for ensuring that positive working relationships remain in place with their clients even when the unit is unable to assist with an event.
- The post-holder is required to use their initiative on a regular basis to deal with the changing requirements of their clients, and to use their influencing skills, tact and diplomacy, to sway some decisions or proposals especially when they are not practical or cost-effective to initiate, and suggesting alternative solutions to the satisfaction of all stakeholder groups. This may mean influencing the opinion of chief officers, senior members, and at all times retaining positive working relationships.
- The role includes researching and recommending potential ARM venues 3-4 years in advance. The impact of these recommendations, and subsequent negotiations, impacts heavily on the association as the commitment to costs is significant. The post-holder is required to use their expertise and negotiating skills to ensure they obtain the most favourable rates.
- The post-holder is often required to review decisions, think innovatively and implement changes at short notice due to unforeseen or unpredictable occurrences.
- The post-holder has to be able to respond appropriately and ensure the successful delivery of an event.
- The post-holder offers advice and guidance to members of staff when responding to difficult members/non-members; and ensures that any complaints are dealt with appropriately and efficiently. The post-holder is responsible for ensuring that any complaints are investigated and action taken to mitigate any future such problems.
- The unit has clearly defined service standards and established procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of these service initiatives to ensure that the unit's clients and external customers (members/non-members) are receiving an efficient and professional service. The post-holder is responsible for ensuring that these service standards are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- The role involves complex contract negotiations in respect of the ARM (as well as general conferences), and it is the post-holder's responsibility to lead all contract negotiations with suppliers/contractors. Clearly defined procedures have been established with the legal department to assist in the review of these contracts, and after consultation, the post-holder is responsible for producing any associated correspondence to ensure the association's liability and exposure is limited. The post-holder is also responsible for reviewing contracts/agreements in place between the association and contractors/suppliers to ensure that they remain current and reflect the changing business needs of the association. This role also involves producing tender documents and reviewing proposals, to ensure that current contractors/suppliers are providing value for money and a first class service.
- On occasion the unit is asked to act as a professional conference organiser for external organisations. This post-holder has to establish whether the event conflicts with the association's current objectives, if it can be accommodated within the unit's schedule, negotiate the management fee to be charged and draft any agreements. (The unit's involvement in any such activity is always discussed, and cleared, with the director of finance and corporate services.)

Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

What are the typical decisions that are made in the job without reference to any higher authority? What informs/constrains the decisions (eg expenditure limits, have to follow clearly laid down procedures or working within broad objectives). What influence upon policy, procedures or resources is there (eg giving advice to others)?

Who (or what) is next to be affected by the decisions that are made – for example, supervisor sees them before they leave the team or the whole department sees and has to respond to the change that is made. Give typical example(s) of the consequences of the decisions (eg what impact does the decision-making have on the performance of the team/section/department/organisation)?

Judgement (independence and level and impact limitations)

- The post-holder's decision making is largely autonomous, within a set framework, and they are expected to work on their own initiative and take independent decisions within that framework to guarantee projects are delivered on time and to budget, and to ensure other members of the team are providing a similar service. The post-holder needs to be aware of association-wide developments and its aims and objectives to ensure that any decisions taken are in line with these. The role includes keeping the chief officers informed of developments re the ARM, BoP conferences and general events, especially if significant costs are involved, or sensitive/controversial matters.
- The post-holder contracts with various suppliers, contractors etc on a daily basis without reference to anyone else, and they must be aware of the implications of this as the commitment to association costs is significant. The post-holder can sign contracts/invoices up to the value of £15k.
- The post-holder should seek to continually improve the team's performance and seek innovative ways of delivering the service to improve the unit's efficiency and professionalism. The post-holder needs to remain aware that the unit is organising events on behalf of their clients and any changes to the delivery of service provided may impact on their clients as well as the association as a whole.

Use of resources (supervision of resources and influence)

What responsibility is there for managing people, equipment, budgets, resources, customer's welfare or confidential information? If this is a staff management role describe what is involved, eg staff reporting, staff development, appraisal, leading a department or the allocation of work.

How does the role fit within the organisation, eg support role, team member, team leader, specialist policy adviser, or leading major areas of core business?

- The post-holder has management responsibility for the conference unit team. The post-holder recruits, trains, leads, manages and develops staff within the department and has the responsibility for appraising two members of staff, and working with them to set objectives.
- The post-holder is responsible for producing and managing the ARM budget each year, preparing the annual budget bid and managing expenditure over the budget period. The post-holder also oversees the conference unit and manages a range of event budgets, and reviews expenditure post-event, supported by a finance business partner.
- The post-holder is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the unit's established service standards, and that these are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure excellent customer service is maintained.
- The department handles confidential and sensitive information, including financial data, and the post-holder must ensure that team members are managing this appropriately.

Communication (level, internal and external demands and significance)

*What people are typically contacted (regardless of the medium) **inside** the Association, eg immediate colleagues, senior managers or administrators? Committee members are the only members classed as internal communication. Normal non-committee membership and doctors are external (see below)*

*Who is in regularly contact with the role holder **outside** of the Association, eg members who are not committee members, suppliers, members of the public? Approximately what percentage of the time is spent on external communications?*

What is the purpose of these contacts, eg conveying information, gathering data?

- The post-holder is in regular contact with committee members, council members, heads of department and senior managers. Excellent interpersonal skills are required to build and maintain excellent working relationships at all levels. The post-holder requires considerable influencing skills, as well as tact and diplomacy, as they often need to "manage" their colleagues, members etc, in order to obtain the information they need for an event, and to keep them to pre-defined conference schedules.
- The post-holder has extensive contact with external individuals and organisations, including contractors, suppliers, members, invited speakers, and members of the public. The role is one of high visibility externally

Communication (level, internal and external demands and significance)

and the post-holder spends a large proportion of their time communicating with external contactors/suppliers to ensure the necessary arrangements are in-situ for any one event.

- The post-holder acts as secretary to the conferences subcommittee and regularly liaises with the chief officers to keep them informed of arrangements for the current, as well as future, ARMs, and general conferences.
- The post-holder will represent the BMA at meetings and events, including working with external stakeholder groups, liaising with suppliers, and it is important that the association's requirements are met and the reputation of the BMA maintained.

Physical demands & coordination (physical effort and mental strain)

Are there any unusual physical or mental demands of the role; for example, lifting heavy objects, standing for long periods, using VDUs extensively or high levels of concentration?

- The post-holder will be required to work long and unsocial hours during busy times and in the lead-up to events and conference. The role also requires early start to prepare and set-up for events and late nights when managing social functions such as dinners and parties. The post-holder will be the point of contact for issue resolution at event.
- When preparing and setting up for events, some lifting and moving of heavy objects may be required, and standing for long periods of time is a regular part of the job when at events, and this may include working outdoors in unfavourable weather conditions.

Working conditions and emotional demands)

What are the environmental conditions in which the work is conducted, the social and emotional demands faced by the role and the pressures resulting from these?

- The role can be highly pressurised with a high volume of work required during particular times of the year, mostly to fixed deadlines.
- As a customer-facing role dealing with complex and sensitive situations, the role requires the post-holder to remain composed and professional under occasionally difficult circumstances.

Values and behaviours

The post-holder is expected to execute their role in line with our four organisational values. The following examples illustrate how we are using our values to inform how we act:

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- **We Campaign, Organise and Represent**
 - We win positive changes at work and in wider society
 - We are the trusted collective voice of our profession, seeking progress for doctors, medical students, our patients and populations
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- **We are accountable and member-led**
 - Our representatives and staff work in partnership for and on behalf of our members
 - We are open and democratic
- **We are expert and trusted**
 - We grow professional communities of practice to provide credible information, guidance and support
 - We use our influence to champion advancement, innovation and professional development for the benefit of health and society
- **We find strength in unity and celebrate our diversity**
 - We seek to be fair and just, and foster respectful discussion of our differing (potentially conflicting) perspectives and contributions
 - We fight prejudice and discrimination of all kinds
 - We are committed to creating a culture that is inclusive of all members and staff
 - We extend solidarity to each other and other groups

Sign-off

Manager:

Date:

Role holder:

Date: