

Meet a... Director of Studies



Dr Gillian Menzies, Director of Studies at Heriot-Watt University

How would you describe your job in a tweet i.e.140 characters

Huge autonomy to research and teach what I enjoy and a varied task list of responsibilities.

What does an average day look like?

Arrive 0830 and answer emails, have a coffee. There is no average day, but each day may include a couple of hours of teaching to classes of maybe 30 students, perhaps a directors meeting for organising how we teach and link to industry professionals, working with colleagues to make teaching diverse, interesting and hands-on. I also spend time on my own writing papers and reports, plus schedule in research students to provide guidance and direction on their work. Go home around 1730.

What are the key skills and qualifications required for your job?

You need a specialism in my job – evidenced usually by a PhD qualification, which shows that you are an expert in a particular research field. This allows you to inform teaching and syllabus work, and yet remain relevant to your industry externally.

What training and continuous professional development do you require?

As a Chartered Engineer I need to maintain my CPD record annually, evidencing that I am staying up to date with my field, my industry and my teaching.

What are your top three responsibilities?

- To look after undergraduate and postgraduate teaching discipline in Architectural Engineering.
- To carry out leading research, evidenced by publications and grant awards.
- To ensure my teaching is relevant, interesting and professional.

Tell us something surprising about your job that people may not know about?

We don't just lecture – we do a lot of research.

What are the positives and negatives of the job?

Positive – huge autonomy and freedom to research and teach what we feel is relevant. No timesheets and no hours to the job.

Negative – there are no hours to the job – sometimes this means that the job takes significantly more than 9-5.



To help our Members understand more about the roles in further and higher education institutions, we've created a suite of career profiles. These share the main responsibilities and skills and knowledge required of many of the key roles that play a part in embedding sustainability in a tertiary education institution.

View the entire suite at www.eauc.org.uk/meet_a_member

Registered Office : EAUC UK Office, University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham, GL50 2RH
Tel : 01242 714321, info@eauc.org.uk, www.eauc.org.uk

Company Limited by Guarantee in England & Wales No : 5183502 Charity No : 1106172
Printed on 100% recycled paper



In partnership with





Do you manage a budget, and what are your key priorities for this?

Yes – to make sure that teaching is delivered within a reasonable budget, but that new and innovative ideas and trips are included.

What does the path to career progression in this role look like?

Career progression relies on effective and professional teaching, coupled with a successful research portfolio of publications and grant fund attainment. This can be difficult in times of government cut-backs and recession.

What is the minimum and maximum salary band for this role?

£30-£80K.

What advice do you have for graduates and other potential candidates who are considering joining?

Do a PhD young, while you still have flexibility and choose a topic you are passionate about. That way your career always remains interesting.

For institutions without a Director of Studies – what 3 aspects of your role do you think are the most important for any institution's sustainability journey?

As this is also my research area – to remain relevant and teach up to date content. The university estate would benefit from practising what we teach.

What department do you and your line manager sit in? Which departmental interactions are vital for your role?

Teaching and research school. I have interactions all over the campus, but particularly with estates and operational development.

What opportunities and challenges does working in a higher education institution bring?

Budget is always a challenge to teaching and research aspirations, but the opportunities to develop areas of my choice are limitless.

How do you communicate the outputs of your role to the wider institution, and what does this include?

Good teaching and research practice is shared. Publications are shared external to the university.

What are the unique opportunities to embed sustainability in to this job?

Teaching and research opportunities – to inspire the next generation and to investigate new solutions through research and enquiry.

How has EAUC Membership helped you in your job and within your institution?

Newsletters and updates.

How can other Members contact you?

- Email: g.f.menzies@hw.ac.uk
- Telephone: 0131 451 4663
- Website: www.sbe.hw.ac.uk
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/CarbonAcademic

Registered Office : EAUC UK Office, University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham, GL50 2RH
Tel : 01242 714321, info@eauc.org.uk, www.eauc.org.uk

Company Limited by Guarantee in England & Wales No : 5183502 Charity No : 1106172
Printed on 100% recycled paper

