1. Advertisement

Post Title: Disability Advisor
School/department: Division of Student Experience, Student Support Unit
Hours: 0.6 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).
Contract: Permanent
Reference: 5007
Salary: starting at £33,797 and rising to £40,322 per annum, pro rata
Closing date: 05 January 2021. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.
Expected Interview date: 11 January 2021
Expected start date: As soon as possible

The Student Support Unit is looking to recruit a Disability Advisor to join a well-established and experienced team.

We seek to appoint an experienced professional to assess the needs of existing and prospective students with a range of physical disabilities, long term health conditions and mental health conditions and ensure that support packages and reasonable adjustments are in place and implemented.

You will have sound knowledge and experience of working with a range of physical disabilities and long-term health conditions as well as mental health and autistic spectrum conditions. You will have substantial experience of determining the suitability of reasonable adjustments and how to proactively support students within an education setting. You will have excellent communication skills, be able to develop professional relationships with colleagues, and contribute positively to the development of policies and procedures.

A strong team player we are looking for a positive, pro-active individual who can be flexible, responsive and who is willing to share their experience and advice with immediate colleagues and more widely with the academic community to support them in working with students with disabilities.

Key Working relationships: Students from across the University, Connectors in co-creation roles, Director for the Student Experience Development, all academics and professional services within schools, Division of the Student Experience, local needs assessment Centres, primary and secondary care providers, social care teams

Please contact Wendy Tozer at w.j.tozer@sussex.ac.uk and she can arrange an informal conversation with the Associate Director.

For full details and how to apply see our vacancies page

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.
2. The School / Division

Please find further information regarding the school/division at https://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/strategy-and-funding
https://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentsupport/
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schoolsandservices/professionalservices/student-experience

Job Description

Job Description for the post of: Disability Advisor

**Department:** Student Experience

**Section/Unit/School:** Student Support Unit

**Location:** Bramber House

**Grade:** 7

**Responsible to:** Associate Director Student Engagement and Achievement

**Responsible for:** Student support workers

**Job Purpose and Overview:** To contribute to a professional and specialist advice and guidance service to students [with disabilities, long term health conditions and mental health and autistic spectrum conditions] to enable students to access their studies successfully and encourage academic progress and student retention.

To contribute to the work of the Directorate in the formulation, promotion, delivery, monitoring and review of University policies and procedures regarding students [with disabilities, long term health conditions and mental health and autistic spectrum conditions] to ensure legal and contractual obligations under equality legislation.

**Main accountabilities and responsibility areas**

- To provide a professional and specialist advice and information service to disabled students and those with mental health and autistic spectrum conditions. This service is to be provided for students and also to potential students applying to the University of Sussex.

- To accurately interpret, and keep up to date with, all relevant legislation relating to disabled students to ensure that accurate and appropriate advice is offered at all times.

- To maintain a case work portfolio providing continuing support for individual applicants and students as appropriate. This may involve regular reviews and updates of provision, case conferences with academic staff and other professional services directorates to ensure that students are able to access their studies effectively throughout their time at University.

- To organise and prioritise a client caseload; to routinely monitor and review casework, taking into account any urgent action required and mandatory deadlines for submission of applications and to take responsibility for deciding when to invoke peer or management supervision.

- To liaise with the University’s academic and support services regarding the learning
needs of students with including the provision of special examination arrangements and reasonable adjustments in respect of teaching, learning and assessment.

• To identify circumstances where it is necessary to breach the Services Code of Confidentiality and clients who are at risk of harming themselves or others and to invoke emergency procedures or referrals where necessary ensuring that duty of care responsibilities are discharged at all times.

• To offer advice on individual support plans students and referrals to an approved National Access Centre, to enable students to apply for Disabled Students Allowance or other relevant funding to cover their support needs.

• To keep thorough, accurate and up to date client case notes ensuring compliance with the Student Support Service’s Code of Confidentiality, professional standards and the Data Protection Act.

• To actively use systems to record statistical information on clients and casework and to keep thorough, accurate and up to date client case notes ensuring compliance with the Student Support Service Code of Confidentiality, professional standards and the Data Protection Act.

Major deliverables, projects, processes, responsibility areas etc.

• To ensure that all students who have declared a disability, long term health condition and / or SpLD receive the appropriate level of support in line with their needs under the Equality Act 2010.

• To liaise with the Administration Team and /or external providers to arrange a diagnostic assessments, or non-medical support personnel, e.g. sighted guides, note-takers, communication support workers, mentors for disabled students

• To liaise with local authority social services, community mental health teams, and other relevant agencies in the support of students with diagnosed/suspected long term health conditions, physical disabilities and mental health / autistic spectrum conditions.

• To be a recognised advisory points of contact for university staff/stakeholders when dealing with critical incidents / student crises.

• To liaise with appropriate academic and any other relevant staff to ensure that any anticipatory and reasonable adjustments required by students are implemented, in accordance with equality legislation. [This could include liaison with other professional service directorates and faculty staff, offering advice and recommendations on physical accessibility, appropriate format of teaching materials and any other practical considerations in order to ensure that individual applicants and students can access their studies].

• To liaise with appropriate academic and other relevant staff to support widening participation and access, academic progress and student retention.

• To support and contribute to training for colleagues in the Directorate and schools around reasonable adjustments and the adaptation of materials as appropriate to ensure access to up to date and detailed information about support and provision.

• To contribute to promoting good practice to ensure compliance and improvements in provision for students

• To represent the University of Sussex at regional and national events and
professional interest groups in order to influence local and national policy and
decision making regarding students in higher education.

- To undertake any other reasonable duties and responsibilities as may be reasonably
  expected as part of this role and in line with the grade.

4. **Person Specification**

**Essential Criteria**

**Skills and Competencies**

Degree or equivalent

Experience of providing advice to students on disability related matters

Able to maintain clear professional boundaries

Ability to manage a large caseload and prioritise work

Well-developed interview, case working and practitioner skills

Competence in accurate record keeping and report writing.

**Knowledge Areas**

Substantial knowledge of issues affecting students with physical disabilities and long
term health conditions undertaking higher education

Knowledge of issues affecting students with mental health conditions and / or
learning differences undertaking higher education

**Previous experience**

Extensive experience of supporting people with physical disabilities and long term
health conditions in a professional context

Proven ability to articulate complex legislative or regulatory issues to a range of
audiences

Ability to apply knowledge of current approaches to supporting disabled students and
students with mental health conditions

Ability to remain calm and professional within a busy environment when dealing with
clients with various challenges and in difficult situations

**Professional qualities**

Organisational abilities, including an ability to manage priorities and workloads

Highly developed interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills

Literate in IT and reporting tools

Understanding and commitment to the importance of equality of opportunity within a
student support service environment.

An enthusiastic, can-do approach to supporting students and promoting the services
and the Directorate.

**Desirable criteria**

Professional / vocational qualification in a disability related field

Ability to develop and deliver training to staff

A good knowledge of the Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) scheme and the DSA
Quality Assurance Framework