1 Advertisement

Post Title: Disability Advisor (with a specialism in Learning Differences (SpLD))
School/department: Division of Student Experience, Student Support Unit
Hours: 0.5 FTE (flexibility as to how these hours are worked subject to business need)
Contract: Permanent
Ref: 5925
Salary: starting at £33,797 to £40,322 per annum, pro rata
Closing date: 17 June 2021. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.
Expected interview date: 24 June 2021
Expected start date: As soon as possible

The Student Support Unit is looking to recruit to a part time (0.5 FTE) Disability Advisor (with a specialism in Specific Learning Differences) 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 disabilities and specific learning differences and ensure that support packages and reasonable adjustments are in place and implemented.

You will have detailed knowledge of a range of disabilities and a detailed, deep and thorough knowledge of a diverse range of specific learning differences. You will have gained substantial experience of working with people with a disability, mental health condition and SpLD and the ability to determine 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 and specific learning differences.

For full details please see the Person Specification and Job Description.

For an informal conversation about this role, please contact Therese Reinheimer-Jones at T.Reinheimer-Jones@sussex.ac.uk

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 Division

Student Experience

The Student Experience Directorate provides a range of administrative, academic and support services focussed on improving the student experience, both directly to students and also to colleagues in Schools and Departments.

KEY SERVICES

- Careers and Employability Centre
- Wellbeing, Therapeutic and Residential Life Services
- Student Conduct, Complaints, Appeals and Regulations
- International Student Support
- Student Life Centre
- Student Support Unit (disability support)
- Sussex Regional ACCESS Centre
- Student progress and administration
- Technology and enhanced learning
- Registration, assessment, compliance
- Academic quality

The Student Support Unit

The Student Support Unit is a team of 10 highly skilled disability advisors who also have specialisms in a range of different areas. Together, sharing knowledge and skills they support students with SpLDs, disability and long term health conditions and mental health and autistic spectrum conditions. Colleagues also work with professional services staff and academics across the university to provide training and information.
3. Job Description

Job Description for the post of: Disability Advisor (with a specialism in Learning Differences (SpLD’s))

Department: Student Experience

Section/Unit/School: Student Support Unit

Location: Bramber House

Grade: 7

Responsible to: Associate Director Student Engagement and Achievement

Responsible for: some supervisory duties of specialist tutors and student support staff

Job Purpose and Overview: To contribute to a professional and specialist advice and guidance service to students [with disabilities, specific learning differences, medium to long term health conditions and mental health and autistic spectrum disorders] 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 and specific learning differences 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 students with specific learning differences. This service is to be provided for students and also to potential students interested in applying to the University of Sussex.

- To accurately interpret, and keep up to date with, all relevant legislation relating to disabled students and those with specific learning differences 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 refer students who may have a specific learning difference for a diagnostic assessment to determine the cause of any difficulties they may be experiencing.
• 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 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 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 non-medical support personnel, e.g. note-takers, communication support workers, mentors for disabled students

• 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.
4. **Person Specification**

**Essential Criteria**

**Skills and Competencies**
- First Degree or equivalent
- Experience of advising students on disability related matters
- Able to maintain clear professional boundaries
- Ability to manage a large caseload and prioritise work
- Well-developed interview and case working skills
- Competence in accurate record keeping and report writing.

**Knowledge Areas**
- A good knowledge of the Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) scheme and the DSA Quality Assurance Framework
- Substantial knowledge of issues affecting disabled students undertaking higher education

**Previous experience**
- 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 who have a specific learning difference
- Ability to remain calm and professional within a busy environment when dealing with clients with various challenging and difficult situations
- Experience of working with students in crisis

**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**
- Qualification related to Specific Learning Differences
- Ability to develop and deliver training to staff