Career Lab : Student Consultancy Programme 2022

"I would definitely recommend the programme to other organisations. The students did an amazing job and gave us great recommendations!" Raphael Weiner, Co-founder of Brovation

Important information for organisations

Introduction

Our Career Lab programmes support all undergraduate students but is particularly targeted at those who are from underrepresented groups. As part of this programme you can benefit from a team of final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate students that will work on a live challenge faced by your organisation.

Career Lab: Student Consultancy offers our valued partners the opportunity to tackle a live challenge whilst providing meaningful work experience to undergraduate final year and taught postgraduate students. Student teams will be from multidisciplinary backgrounds and spend a combined 100 hours on your challenge, presenting their final thoughts to you on completion. There is no financial obligation (the University provides a stipend directly to the students), the research will be carried out remotely, and the time commitment is very low.

Students will have varying levels of work experience but will have strong research skills and a willingness to learn. They will receive training and support from the University throughout. Projects that assist you with recovering from the impact of COVID-19 or improve environmental sustainability practices within your organisation are particularly welcome.

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Contact us:

Careers and Employability Centre - Career Lab programmes: careerlab@sussex.ac.uk

1. What can our students do for your organisation?

Organisations that become clients of the Student Consultancy programme will benefit from a group of students that will research, analyse and recommend solutions to a challenge based on the project brief provided by you, on topics such as:

- **Market/competitive analysis**
  Identify your key competitors' strengths
  Understand your target audience and what they are looking for
- **User experience testing**
  Test a new product/webpage/service and receive feedback
- **Environmental sustainability improvements**
  Analyse current practices in your organisation and suggest areas where you can become more environmentally conscious and sustainable
- **COVID-19 response and strategies**
  Investigate what/how customer trends have changed in relation to your industry in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
  Discover opportunities to diversify your organisation to become more resilient to global change

2. What will your organisation receive?

All clients receive a professional-style presentation, delivered by the student team, at the end of the project which highlights their key findings. The contents of the presentation depends upon the scope of the project, but will typically include a synthesis of their research from the following options:

- Interview data and conclusions drawn
- Collation of primary/secondary research
- Results from user experience testing (e.g. verbal feedback, data collection and analysis)
- Overview of their recommendation for potential new directions

Clients benefit from a dedicated Programme Officer at the University throughout the duration of the project for queries and ongoing assistance.

"It was minimal effort on behalf of the organisation to give students some good commercially aimed experience." Dean Altass-Hye, Native

3. When and how long does a project take?

The Student Consultancy Programme will run twice during the academic year:

Spring 2022: 14 February to 11 March 2022 (students work part-time on project)
Summer 2022: 6 to 13 June 2022 (students work full-time on project)

For each cycle, your student team will work for a combined 100 hours on the project brief. If your project requires more/less time than this, we are happy to discuss alternative opportunities for collaboration with you.

Please see below an exemplar timeline:

Week Commencing	Task
22 November 2021	Project brief application deadline
31 January 2022	Project allocation to student teams
14 February 2022	Student teams receive pre-project training (University of Sussex) Initial meeting and project briefing with students and client Week 1 of project work
21 February 2022	Week 2 of project work Students will contact their client in either week 2 or 3 for questions and updates
28 February 2022	Week 3 of project work Students will contact their client in either week 2 of 3 for questions or updates Students receive training on how to present their project findings (University of Sussex)
7 March 2022	Week 4 of project work
11 March 2022	Students deliver briefing presentations to the client (Students will liaise with client on a suitable date and time) Students receive training on how to present their work experience on CVs and during interviews (University of Sussex)

Please note that during the project, we ask clients to be available to speak with the students on a minimum of three occasions:

1) Initial meeting and project briefing (date/time to be organised with the Career Lab team)
2) Week 2 or 3 midway meetup (date/time to be organised by the student team)
3) Final project presentation (date/time to be organised by the student team)

4. What we need from you

- Write a brief project proposal as part of the expression of interest form
- Provide a key contact person who is available for the initial introduction meeting, midway meetup, and final presentation brief with the student team
- Be available for a quick conversation (Teams/Zoom/Phone) with a representative from the Career Lab team to discuss your project further and confirm that it is an appropriate fit for the programme
- Engagement with students, including provision of all necessary materials to set students up for project execution e.g. relevant context, data and examples of deliverables

5. What to consider when proposing a project

Please be aware of the following when proposing a consultancy project:

1) Projects should not require any expert knowledge of your industry/organisation that cannot be feasibly gained within the timeframe of the project (i.e. not technical or require specialist knowledge/experience)
2) Due to the short duration of the project, topics should not require access to specialist systems/databases that require additional training
3) Topics should be discrete, contained and meaningfully completed in 100 hours (including research, analysis, write-up time)
4) Suitable for 'kick off' projects that explore new ventures and opportunities
5) Topics where external perspective is valued and important for decision-making

Students will be undergraduate final year and taught postgraduate students from a multidisciplinary background. They have strong research skills, a willingness to learn and will receive training and support throughout the project.

Please note: if the topic area requires the student team to sign a non-disclosure agreement, we can support you with this.

"We would definitely recommend the programme if the organisation has a suitable, discrete project. Our experience was valuable and gave us insights and potential solutions we did not previously have."

6. Example project brief and topics
Please see below an example of a completed expression of interest form:

- What is the challenge that you would like our students to tackle?
  As a newly trading business to the UK market, we are looking to better understand our UK-based competitors in the honey industry, as well as receiving a recommendation of the price range and variety of honey products on offer at the UK's largest supermarkets. This information will be used within our business plan to investors.

- Please list up to four specific questions, or tasks, that you would like the students to work on
  1) What are the top 3 avenues to sell honey products in the UK?
  2) What is the price range for honey products in the UK?
  3) What proportion of honey products sold in UK supermarkets are from EU suppliers?
  4) Based on your research of the above questions, what supermarkets, and price range, would you recommend we begin our trade with?

Other project topics may include:
- We wish to launch a new charity-arm to our business. Please provide us with suggestions as to how we can successfully launch this charity-arm to the local community
- We wish to raise our profile as an equal-opportunities employer. Please suggest ways in which we can improve our recruitment of LGBTQ+ staff.
- Please test the useability and navigability of our new webpage. Suggest ways that we may improve traffic to our webpages. What works, what doesn't?
- We are an eco-conscious clothing retailer. How can we reduce our carbon footprint in both production and transportation?
- I would like to create an online magazine for my young students to submit their work to. Please suggest three suitable online publishing platforms that I could use to create this magazine for my students. From your research, please advise on your preferred platform from your shortlisting.
- Please conduct a competitor analysis on our industry in the UK. Based on your research, who are our top competitors? What do they do well? What do they not do so well on?

Please note: we cannot accept project briefs that require the students to conduct a survey with the public or other students.

Dependent upon government guidelines, we may be able to offer students the chance to visit your organisation's workspace during their work on the programme. You will be asked in the Expression of Interest form whether you would like to offer your project as 'online-only' or with an opportunity to visit your organisation in person. You must have employer's **liability insurance** to offer in person activities.

7. Express your interest in becoming a client

In order to express your interest in hosting a consultancy project, organisations must complete the following expression of interest form which can be found on the University of Sussex Career Hub website:

https://careerhub.sussex.ac.uk/Form.aspx?id=1852403

The closing date for expression of interest is **22 November 2021** for Spring 2022 entry.

Please note that submitting an expression of interest is not a confirmation of involvement, however, be assured that if your project proposal is not a suitable fit for this programme we will very happy to discuss alternative opportunities to collaborate with you.

If you have questions about any stage of the process, please do not hesitate to contact us: careerlab@sussex.ac.uk