Senior Disability Adviser

Job Specification

Date created: November 2024

JOB DESCRIPTION

Employment status:	Permanent, full time (part time considered)
Hours:	Full time hours at UCEM are 35 per week, Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and this role follows this pattern. We can consider part time however we require a minimum of 21 hours per week
Location flexibility:	The place of work for this role is **Split** between the Horizons office in Reading and your home; the exact split of days/hours is negotiable but must include a minimum of 2 working days per week spent at Horizons (you may work more in the office should you wish).

Please note the following:
- When you work at Horizons you must attend on core office days only
- Core office days are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- The building is closed to staff on Fridays
- On a Split contract you cannot attend the office on a Monday, unless you have worked a minimum of 3 other core days in the office
- Working at home is only possible if your environment meets certain conditions – see the **Attachment** to this Job Specification document – and if not, you need to work at Horizons

Department:	Student and Registry Services
Line manager:	Richard Higgins, Head of Disability and Welfare

Role summary

The Disability and Welfare team provide information, advice, and guidance to all students to ensure they are safe and well supported throughout their studies. You will work with students to carry out needs assessments, advise on reasonable adjustments, formulate support plans, and offer guidance and signposting to external services if needed, monitoring the success of students on your caseload.

You will be a leader within the team, supporting with decision making and working with stakeholders across the organisation to ensure students and staff are well informed and the support being provided is effective. You will act as a point of contact for the Disability Advisers and Administrators for day-to-day queries whilst supporting a caseload of students.

Your work will require you to build rapport with students in the online world and navigate complex situations in a calm and professional manner. Working with your immediate colleagues and those across UCEM, you will ensure the best outcomes for our students.

Working closely with the Head of Disability and Welfare, you will ensure there is a culture of continuous development and reflective practice within the Team. You will provide students with the tools to develop skills

to manage the challenges they experience throughout their studies. This will be achieved through developing resources and the provision of effective information, advice and guidance and regular engagement via awareness events.

Role accountabilities and responsibilities

- Support and be responsible for a caseload of students, providing help and/or advice to disabled students by assessing students' needs, determining, and implementing support arrangements and monitoring progress.
- Maintain a leadership role within the Disability and Welfare Team by being a point of contact for day-to-day queries, ensuring efficient and effective working is taking place, supporting with decision making, and deputising for the Head of Disability and Welfare when necessary.
- Lead on UCEM's support provision for students with specific learning difficulties and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- Advise students on applications for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and Educational Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) financial support, following up on applications to ensure a successful outcome.
- Carry out needs assessments and draw up personal UCEM Additional Support Plans (ASPs) for current students and ensure adjustments are implemented.
- Advise prospective students on the support available for those with physical and sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorders and enduring mental or physical health difficulties.
- Liaise with staff across UCEM, medical professionals and external agencies to ensure the effective implementation and best practice of support for disabled students.
- Support the promotion of pastoral care of students across UCEM programmes (ensuring appropriate signposting of students to utilise additional student specialist services where appropriate).
- Develop and maintain relationships with external support agencies which may benefit UCEM students.
- Liaise and collaborate with academic and professional services colleagues to ensure individual students' needs are met and that an inclusive and holistic approach to provision is implemented.
- Collaborate with academic colleagues to advise on inclusive teaching and learning strategies for disabled students.

General

- Maintain accurate and up to date records in relation to the support required and provided to students, ensuring compliance with data protection legislation and auditing requirements.
- Keep up to date with Safeguarding, Prevent, disability and welfare legislation, funding eligibility and best practice in the sector to ensure effective compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and other professional guidelines.
- Keep up to date sector knowledge regarding how Safeguarding, Prevent, disability and welfare support is implemented across other higher education providers.
- Deliver excellent customer service in all aspects of the role and contribute to a student-centred specialist advice and guidance service.
- Fully engage with all required training for the role and embed this training within your daily practice as applicable.
- Contribute to UCEM maintaining its Matrix accreditation.
- Contribute to the creation and presentation of annual reports.

Line management responsibility:	No
Budget responsibility:	No
Other specific responsibility:	Supervisory responsibility for Disability Advisers and Disability and Welfare Administrators
In this role you will liaise with:	
Disability & Welfare Team, Safeguarding Team, Board of Trustees, Students, Apprenticeships Team, Professional Services, Digital	

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> Education, Finance Team, Admissions Team, Internal Tutors, External Associate Tutors, Learning & Teaching Enhancement Team and other UCEM staff

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Assessment Criteria: A = Application   I = Interview   T = Test

X denotes both essential and desirable requirements plus how these will be assessed

Qualifications and training	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
GCSE Maths and English Language Grade C or 4 or above	X		X		
Further education qualifications	X		X		
Evidence of CPD in the fields of mental health, non-medical help or disability	X		X		
Degree level qualification or equivalent		X	X		
NADP Accreditation		X	X		

Please be aware that as part of onboarding processes, we will seek original documentary evidence of the relevant academic and/or professional qualifications which you include within your job application

Previous experience	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Demonstrable experience of working in a disability support service, ideally in a higher education environment with students with a range of disabilities (including specific learning difficulties, sensory impairments and physical disabilities)	X		X	X	
Management of complex caseload of disabled students	X		X	X	
Providing and justifying reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010	X		X	X	
Providing support, advice, and guidance to individuals with disabilities	X		X	X	
Assessing students' needs and providing advice and guidance on the use of a range of assistive technologies	X		X	X	
Supporting students to access DSA funded support	X		X	X	
Supporting degree apprentices and the funding available through the ESFA	X		X	X	
Demonstrable experience of anticipating needs and designing and implementing an inclusive environment in adherence to the social model of disability	X		X	X	

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	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Individual and/or small group coaching and/or mentoring		X	X	X	
Development and delivery of training		X	X	X	
Working with external support agencies		X	X	X	
Experience of the Ofsted inspection process		X	X	X	
Providing support in the Education sector		X	X	X	
Leading on developments and team projects		X		X	
Experience of supervisory responsibilities within a team		X	X	X	
Skills, knowledge, and aptitudes	**Essential**	**Desirable**	**A**	**I**	**T**
Comprehensive understanding of the learning and communication needs of disabled students	X			X	
Knowledge and understanding of assistive technology	X			X	
Excellent digital skills (Microsoft Office) including ability to analyse data and produce reports. We use MS Office which includes Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint	X		X	X	
High level of organisation, drive, and excellent time management skills	X			X	
Excellent communication and presentation skills, especially the ability to communicate sensitive ideas effectively to people of all ages and levels	X		X	X	
Ability to adapt quickly to changing pressures and demands whilst maintaining accuracy	X		X	X	
Ability to make and build relationships with remote based students and internal staff	X		X	X	
Ability to manage difficult situations sensitively and in a timely manner	X		X	X	
Knowledge of statutory Safeguarding, Prevent and Disability legislation (including the Equality Act 2010 and QAA code of practice) and how these can be applied in a Higher Education setting	X		X	X	
Up to date knowledge and practical experience of the Disabled Students Allowances Process	X			X	
Strong sense of resilience and ability to listen and respond to students sharing distressing personal circumstance	X			X	
Knowledge of current legislation relating to data protection		X	X	X	

	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Understanding of specific issues relating to online learning and being part of an online community		X		X	
Knowledge of the operation and management of academic or apprenticeship programmes		X		X	
Other requirements or special requirements	**Essential**	**Desirable**	**A**	**I**	**T**
A strong commitment to the UCEM's vision and core Purpose and to the delivery of an outstanding student experience.	X			X	
Alignment to the UCEM core values of Passion, Integrity, Excellence and Support; all employees are expected to demonstrate our values at work: https://www.ucem.ac.uk/core-values/	X			X	
Commitment to delivering positive outcomes for our students; we want our students to be successful	X			X	
You must be prepared to undertake compulsory online training should you be appointed; this includes Data Protection, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Prevent, and Anti-bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct	X			X	

PAY & BENEFITS

- Salary up to £38,500 per annum (Full Time Equivalent).
- 26 days paid holiday (rising to 28 with service) plus paid bank/public holidays plus up to 5 paid closure days (typically between Christmas and New Year); all per holiday year Full Time Equivalent. Our holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July. We also have a holiday buy and sell scheme in place. Sometimes UCEM does not need to close for 5 days per year and any balance, for example 1 day, can be used as a paid Wellbeing Day to take time out for your own physical or mental health.
- Pensions auto-enrolment to the People's Pension salary exchange scheme (the term we use for salary sacrifice). You may opt out of salary exchange but remain in the scheme, or you may choose to opt out altogether.
- Policies in place for all types of family-friendly statutory leave with enhanced pay available from day one of employment (in addition to statutory pay, where applicable).
- Wellbeing support and full access to the Employee Assistance Programme, as well as the Thrive Mental Wellbeing app. Several UCEM employees are trained Mental Health First Aiders and can support staff.
- Cycle to Work and Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice schemes and access to Tax-Free Childcare (Government scheme).
- For Horizons based roles, we may in the future be able to offer parking on site however you must not assume this will be possible. Every now and then we may have a spare parking space become available and you can ask to join the waiting list. UCEM is keen wherever possible, to encourage staff to commute as sustainably as possible.
- Life assurance cover.
- Employer-funded Health Cash Plan (Simplyhealth) and voluntary dental insurance (Unum).
- Charity giving options available including one voluntary paid day, per annum.
- As a UCEM employee you will have access to Microsoft Office 365 applications for personal use. You will also have access to range of lifestyle discounts (savings on everyday purchases) and access to two learning platforms.

On the Join the team page of our website, you will find the full list of employee benefits at UCEM

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IMPORTANT! All job applications must be sent to recruitment@ucem.ac.uk and if you apply via a jobs board, please make sure you have sent all required documents otherwise we will be unable to consider your application. In addition, if you apply for this job on the recommendation of an existing UCEM employee, please make sure to mention their name within your application **and** that the recommendation was part of the Employee Referral Bonus Scheme.

To apply for this role, please send the following to recruitment@ucem.ac.uk (you will receive an auto-response):

1. Your up-to-date CV;
2. A covering letter or email message outlining your suitability* for the role; AND
3. A completed **Recruitment Check Form** which is available from the *Current vacancies* page of our website.

The above items constitute a **complete** job application.

*We hope you take time to consider the UCEM values when you prepare your job application. You may also wish to consult our vision and strategy document: https://www.ucem.ac.uk/our-vision/

We are committed to driving forward our sustainability agenda to secure a sustainable future and our long-term ambition is to be the world's most sustainable university. We recommend you visit our website to find out more about our **Sustainability Strategy**: https://www.ucem.ac.uk/sustainability/

If you are an existing UCEM employee, we request you inform your current line manager of your intention to apply for this role.

NO AGENCIES: We are not using agencies for this vacancy, and we cannot accept any CV submissions. Please do not contact us as we can only repeat this message.

Informal discussion

If you are unsure whether to apply, perhaps because you do not meet all essential criteria, we encourage you to call the hiring manager to discuss this further (details below). If you are excited by this vacancy do not rule yourself out; it still might be worth applying.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Richard Higgins on 0118 467 2036 or email r.higgins@ucem.ac.uk

For any other enquiries please contact HR on 0118 467 2454 / 2433 or email recruitment@ucem.ac.uk

Please note that UCEM is closed for the festive period from 24 December 2024 to 01 January 2025 inclusive. We will respond to any queries as soon as possible when we re-open in the New Year.

Closing date and next steps

03 January 2025 at noon

HR will screen all applications in person and all applicants will receive a response confirming the status of their application. We value the time taken to make a job application and the interest shown in UCEM.

Interview details

Dates for interview will be advised to you later in the process.

Please indicate on your Recruitment Check Form any dates that you cannot make, up to 4 weeks from the closing date. This helps us to plan interviews should you be shortlisted, prior to contacting you.

Applications may be reviewed prior to the closing date and occasionally, you may be invited to interview ahead of the closing date.

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Interviews are normally carried out over Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and we may invite you to visit our Reading office, especially when this is your place of work.

Please be prepared for a two-stage interview process, held on different dates. As part of the interview process, you will meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Sometimes we may conduct a telephone interview at first or second stage.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Here at UCEM we champion equality, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce. We celebrate diversity and the strengths it brings to our staff body, our student community and our Board of Trustees, recognising that people are key to our success. Our aim is to attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce, therefore we welcome and encourage applications from all backgrounds.

Pre-employment checks

UCEM undertakes thorough pre-employment screening as part of its recruitment process. Given we have contracts with Government offices, we make sure our checks comply with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). Checks will include identity, right to work, basic disclosure criminal record check, and three years of employment history.

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Attachment – homeworking environment

UCEM is a **flexible employer** and flexibility is built into different places of work location. As such, it is reasonable to ask employees to adhere to some **general principles and ways of working**, in order to make sure flexibility offers value to everyone, including UCEM.

In addition, if all or part of your working week involves working at home, your home environment must meet certain conditions. Otherwise you will be required to work in the office at Horizons.

General principles

- All employees regardless of place of work will be required to take an online Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment and repeat this at such intervals as may be instructed by the Facilities Management Team. The purpose of this is to look after your health and safety at work.
- All employees must adhere to UCEM IT Security and Data Protection policies in their place of work.
- All employees will be expected to be accessible to colleagues during their normal working hours and ensure their Outlook Calendars reflect the accurate place of work.
- All line managers will be expected to be accessible to their team and will be responsible for ensuring the performance of their team.

Remote (Home) requirements and conditions

- Where your place of work involves working at home, you must have suitable conditions in which to work.
- As a minimum, your UK home location must be able to accommodate the UCEM technology and equipment. What this means in practice is that you must have sufficient space in which to house the technology and equipment safely and securely.
- In all cases, UCEM technology and equipment can only be handled and used by you, the employee. It must not be accessible to any other household member, at any time.
- When you are working remotely as part of the DSE assessment, you will be required to provide evidence that your working environment meets DSE requirements, such as providing a photo of your workstation setup.
- You must also provide a secure and reliable internet connection which allows you to work as effectively as if you were in Horizons, **including undertaking video and audio calls and connecting permanently to the VPN**.
- In the case of known broadband outage you should plan to work at Horizons or elsewhere – noting that elsewhere must still meet the place of work requirements. Should you be unable to do either of these options, you will be required to take holiday. In the event of unexpected outage, you should discuss with your line manager whether you need to find an alternative place of work or take holiday.
- For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of the required broadband, will be self-funded.
- It is expected that you will house technology and equipment at a suitable work desk, which gives you the space needed to work safely and confidentially. This space in your home must be away from other household users, such as space in a room which is not frequented by other household members.
- Your work environment must remain professional at all times. This means you must be able to work remotely without interruption from household members and noise, and your surroundings should mirror what an office environment would look like (clean/tidy, free of clutter and distractions).
- It is not appropriate to work from a sofa or other location which is not in keeping with presenting a professional work environment. Opting to use the blurring function on Teams/Zoom is not an acceptable workaround.
- If you do not have space to accommodate these requirements or your circumstances change, you are not permitted to work at any location other than Horizons.