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| Last updated: | October 2023 |

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| Post title: | **Academic Skills Officer (pre-entry)** | | |
| School/Department: | Widening Participation and Social Mobility (WPSM) | | |
| Faculty: | Professional Services | | |
| Career Pathway: | Management, Specialist and Administrative (MSA) | Level: | 4 |
| \*ERE category: | N/A | | |
| Posts responsible to: | Academic Skills Manager (Pre-entry) | | |
| Posts responsible for: | N/A | | |
| Post base: | Office-based | | |

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| Job purpose |
| Working within the Enhancement team of Widening Participation and Social Mobility (WPSM), this expert practitioner role will contribute to the continued development of pre-entry academic skills support offered by the University of Southampton. The post sits within the award-winning Learn with US Transition programme that seeks to facilitate the access of students from underrepresented backgrounds into Higher Education, simultaneously fostering students’ smooth transition to a new style of learning and promoting their continued academic success and progression.  Whilst this role will primarily have a pre-entry focus, the University’s academic skills provision spans the entire student lifecycle, so the postholder will also contribute to a range of learning opportunities to support this. |

| Key accountabilities/primary responsibilities | | % Time |
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|  | To proactively promote and support Level 3 research-based learning qualifications such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), International Baccalaureate Extended Essay, Welsh Baccalaureate Individual Project and Scottish Baccalaureate Interdisciplinary Project both internally and externally through a variety of means. This includes developing and delivering HE Skills workshops for students, with a particular focus on skills linked to these Level 3 qualifications and transition to Higher Education. To foster and maintain effective working partnerships with EPQ supervisors and other school leaders in these schools and colleges and individuals within relevant educational bodies. | 55 % |
|  | To host on campus library visits to support students completing Level 3 research-based learning qualifications, allowing students to undertake undergraduate level work giving them a feel of what it is like to be a student at the University of Southampton. | 15 % |
|  | To develop and deliver age-appropriate multidisciplinary taster lectures, seminars and project days based upon your current research. This will illustrate and promote the process of undertaking academic research whilst also being reflective of the university’s offerings and specialisms. | 5% |
|  | To contribute to the development of a range of learning opportunities to support our academic skills offering across the student lifecycle. This will include the design and maintenance of learning objects and digital media production including, but not limited to, the university’s highly popular online course, “Developing Your Research Project” offered through FutureLearn. To contribute also to enhancing our academic skills webpages. | 10% |
|  | To develop and deliver our continuing professional development (CPD) offer for teachers in schools and colleges as they support their students undertake research. This will include, but is not limited to, our EPQ Teachers’ Conferences and external teacher conferences (e.g. UCAS). | 5% |
|  | To contribute to the proactive approach to the holistic evaluation that the Pre-entry Academic Skills Service models, to ensure it meets strategic objectives. To contribute to the development and implementation of systems for collecting quantitative and qualitative evaluation and monitoring data. To analyse and interpret data, drafting reports and deliver briefings and presentations, as required.  To contribute to the development of an appropriate targeting strategy and proactively approach schools and colleges that meet widening participation criteria. | 5% |
|  | Any other duties as allocated by the line manager following consultation with the post holder, including contributing to other widening participation initiatives within WPSM and occasionally supporting work of colleagues across the University e.g. Confirmation and Clearing, Open Days and Graduation. | 5% |

| Internal and external relationships |
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| Students (and their parents) in schools and colleges across the UK  Staff in schools and colleges across the UK  Students of the University of Southampton  Faculties and Professional Services  Exam boards  External conference providers (e.g. UCAS) |

| Special Requirements |
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| A full, clean driving licence and a willingness to travel within the UK with frequent overnight stays and out of hours working where necessary following consultation with your line manager.  Capacity to work such hours as are required during peak times to complete the job satisfactorily, following consultation with your line manager.  Post holder may be asked to contribute to evening or weekend working to support university or academic events and they are expected to work across our campus locations as required, following consultation with line manager  Flexibility to take leave outside peak periods, which usually occur in the summer and autumn terms.  Demonstrate Southampton Behaviours (see below Embedding Collegiality) |

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| Criteria | Essential | Desirable | How to be assessed |
| Qualifications, knowledge and experience | Skill level equivalent to achievement of HND, Degree, NVQ4 or basic professional qualification.  Experience of, or currently engaged in academic research.  Comprehensive knowledge and/or experience of the secondary school and/or sixth form sector, preferably gained from experience of working in an HE or FE environment.  Substantial experience in making presentations to a variety of audiences in an educational setting, including potential students, their parents and advisors.  Able to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the priorities of Higher Education and in particular the University’s commitment to widening participation, outlined by the Access and Participation Plan. | Postgraduate qualification.  Experience of teaching in the secondary or tertiary education sectors.  Experience in website editing/development and/or developing online educational resources for potential students, their parents and advisors in schools and colleges.  Experience of working towards fulfilling commitments of university Access and Participation Plans | Application, interview and presentation/task |
| Planning and organising | Proven experience in organising, scheduling and managing a busy schedule of events including large-scale activities. Capacity to set aims and objectives, plan and monitor own workload and establish time-lines and consistently review delivery against objectives.  Able to seek opportunities to progress a broad range of activities within professional guidelines and in support of University policy.  Able to demonstrate a high level of commitment to shaping and delivering services that add value for users. | Experience of successful project management. | Application, interview and references. |
| Problem solving and initiative | Proven ability to analyse issues and break them down into component parts. Make systematic and rational judgements based on relevant information.  Able to identify new initiatives that are supportive of the aims and objectives of the team and also reflective of both institutional policy and higher education policy in general.  Ability to seek and collate feedback and data from activities, analyse key findings and summarise recommendations for senior staff.  Able to develop understanding of long-standing and complex problems and to apply professional knowledge and experience to solve them.  Able to apply innovative or creative thinking to the resolution of problems. |  | Application, interview and references. |
| Management and teamwork | Able to solicit ideas and opinions to help form specific work plans.  Contribute to team behaviours and interact effectively and sensitively with peers. Build effective social networks across the Student Experience directorate and Professional Services; sustain productive workplace relationships for the long term.  Able to be flexible and adaptable in approach to work routines, be able to adapt quickly to change; be open to working with different teams/individuals as the business demands.  Able to proactively work with colleagues in other areas of the university as well as external stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes.  Able to positively contribute to team behaviours and interact effectively and sensitively with peers. |  | Application, interview and references. |
| Communicating and influencing | Effective partnership working and interpersonal skills are essential including:  Proven ability to draft written reports in a clear way that addresses key issues in a succinct manner.  Ability to convey accurate information to stakeholder groups in an appropriate, professional and concise manner.  Capacity to speak fluently with individuals/groups and adopt a persuasive, empathetic and constructive style understanding and adapting to the stakeholders’ differing needs.  Demonstrate adequate preparation so that presentations are focussed, accurate and meet the needs of the stakeholder group.  Able to use influencing and negotiating skills to develop understanding and gain co-operation. |  | Application, interview and references. |
| Other skills and behaviours | Evidence of a commitment to the continuous enhancement of the quality standards of the Team’s outputs and development of a service ethic that adds value to the experience of potential students.  Pro-active approach to the setting of standards for staff to follow and the collection of feedback; engagement in finding appropriate tools and methods.  Capacity for calm, patience and understanding with stakeholders, always maintaining sensitivity to their needs, particularly at times of peak working under pressure.  Respect for cultural differences and awareness of how institutional ways of working need to adapt to suit the increasing diversity of student and staff groups.  An interest in Higher Education and desire to work in an education environment.  Proactive approach to following the standards set for all staff and engagement in sharing best practice across the team.  Maintain receptiveness to new ideas and approaches.  Engage in appropriate training and staff development to ensure knowledge and skills are always up to date in agreement with line manager.  Proficient database user; be fully conversant with Microsoft Office suite products.  Proficient in using web based I.T solutions. |  | Application, interview and references. |
| Special requirements | Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required. |  | Application, interview and references. |

**JOB HAZARD ANALYSIS**

**Is this an office-based post?**

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| Yes | If this post is an office-based job with routine office hazards (eg: use of VDU), no further information needs to be supplied. Do not complete the section below. |
| No | If this post is not office-based or has some hazards other than routine office (eg: more than use of VDU) please complete the analysis below.  Hiring managers are asked to complete this section as accurately as possible to ensure the safety of the post-holder. |

## - HR will send a full PEHQ to all applicants for this position. Please note, if full health clearance is required for a role, this will apply to all individuals, including existing members of staff.

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| **ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES** | **Occasionally**  (<30% of time) | **Frequently**  (30-60% of time) | **Constantly**  (> 60% of time) |
| Outside work |  |  |  |
| Extremes of temperature (eg: fridge/ furnace) |  |  |  |
| ## Potential for exposure to body fluids |  |  |  |
| ## Noise (greater than 80 dba - 8 hrs twa) |  |  |  |
| ## Exposure to hazardous substances (eg: solvents, liquids, dust, fumes, biohazards). Specify below: |  |  |  |
| Frequent hand washing |  |  |  |
| Ionising radiation |  |  |  |
| **EQUIPMENT/TOOLS/MACHINES USED** | | | |
| ## Food handling |  |  |  |
| ## Driving university vehicles(eg: car/van/LGV/PCV) |  |  |  |
| ## Use of latex gloves (prohibited unless specific clinical necessity) |  |  |  |
| ## Vibrating tools (eg: strimmers, hammer drill, lawnmowers) |  |  |  |
| **PHYSICAL ABILITIES** | | | |
| Load manual handling |  |  |  |
| Repetitive crouching/kneeling/stooping |  |  |  |
| Repetitive pulling/pushing |  |  |  |
| Repetitive lifting |  |  |  |
| Standing for prolonged periods |  |  |  |
| Repetitive climbing (ie: steps, stools, ladders, stairs) |  |  |  |
| Fine motor grips (eg: pipetting) |  |  |  |
| Gross motor grips |  |  |  |
| Repetitive reaching below shoulder height |  |  |  |
| Repetitive reaching at shoulder height |  |  |  |
| Repetitive reaching above shoulder height |  |  |  |
| **PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES** | | | |
| Face to face contact with public |  |  |  |
| Lone working |  |  |  |
| ## Shift work/night work/on call duties |  |  |  |

Appendix 1. Embedding Collegiality

Collegiality represents one of the four core principles of the University; Collegiality, Quality, Internationalisation and Sustainability. Our Southampton Behaviours set out our expectations of all staff across the University to support the achievement of our strategy.

