

Job Description

Post title: **Employee Relations Manager**

Date last updated/evaluated: June 2026

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Standard Occupation Code:	(visit Occupation Codes to help identify a SOC code)
School / Department:	Human Resources
Faculty / Directorate:	Professional Services
Job Family:	Management, Specialist and Administrative (MSA)
Grade:	Level 4
ERE Pathway (if applicable):	Not applicable
Post reporting to:	Employee Relations Team Manager
Post line report(s):	N/A
Post base location:	Hybrid: Campus / Home

Job purpose: To provide specialist Employee Relations (ER) expertise, supporting the proactive management of complex and high-risk casework. This includes delivering authoritative advice to managers, employees and stakeholders, and contributing to the development of ER capability and practice across the organisation, influencing managers to build confidence, capability and consistent application of ER practice.

The role requires the application of professional judgement to complex and sensitive people matters, balancing legal, organisational and reputational risk. The post holder uses highly developed communication and influencing skills to manage challenging situations effectively.

The role also contributes to the continuous improvement of ER frameworks and plays an active part in supporting organisational change through policy development, training delivery and project work.

Key accountabilities and indicative time allocation:

1.	60%
- Guide and support involved parties through complex and high-risk employee relations casework (e.g. disciplinary, grievance, absence, capability, redundancy, SOSR and organisational change cases) to conclusion, balancing organisational, legal and reputational considerations. - Provide authoritative advice and recommendations to managers on the application and interpretation of employment legislation, policies and procedures - Act as the escalation point for complex ER matters from HR colleagues (e.g. AskHR, HR Business Partners) - Assess risk and determine appropriate courses of action, identifying potential legal and organisational implications and seeking specialist advice where required (e.g. Legal Services) - Support managers to lead formal processes including hearings and appeals, ensuring procedural compliance and defensible decision-making	

- Build and maintain effective relationships with Trade Unions and key stakeholders to support the resolution of complex issues.

2. 10%

- Contribute to the development and review of ER frameworks, processes and HR policies & procedures, based on casework insight and legislative requirements
- Develop and maintain ER toolkits, guidance and resources to support consistent application of policies
- Ensure ER advice and practice align with employment law and organisational priorities
- Support implementation of policy changes across the organisation

3. 10%

- Analyse ER casework trends and management information to identify risks, inconsistencies and opportunities for improvement
- Interpret complex data and provide insight to inform decision-making and improve organisational practice
- Promote consistency and best practice across Faculties and Professional Services
- Contribute to organisational risk mitigation through proactive identification of emerging issues and trends

4. 5%

- Identify capability gaps and work with others to deliver targeted coaching, guidance and training to managers on HR policies and procedures
- Support managers to develop confidence and competence in managing people issues
- Contribute to wider HR and organisational development initiatives

5. 5%

- Contribute ER expertise to HR and organisational projects, including organisational change and consultation processes
- Support delivery of change initiatives involving workforce implications (e.g. restructures, redundancies)
- Ensure ER considerations are embedded into project planning and delivery

6. 5%

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of employment law and HR best practice
- Actively promote the Southampton Behaviours and equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of ER practice
- Contribute to continuous improvement of ER service delivery

7. 5%

- Any other duties as allocated by the line manager following consultation with the post holder.

Internal and external relationships:

- Senior leaders, managers and employees across the organisation
- Departmental management and other HR colleagues
- Trade Union representatives
- Legal Services and external advisors

Special requirements: N/A

Person Specification – Skills and Competencies

All essential and desirable criteria outlined in this Person Specification will be assessed through a combination of recruitment application and CV, and where applicable numerical or written assessment.

Knowledge, Experience and Qualifications

Essential

- Substantial and authoritative practical knowledge and experience in Employee Relations/People Matters, supported by general theoretical understanding.
- The required level of knowledge and understanding will normally have been gained through some or all of the following:
 - Substantial experience of managing complex Employee Relations/HR casework within a large or complex organisation
 - Vocational training
 - Formal qualification(s) equivalent to Level 5 or 6 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework e.g. foundation degree or degree with honours, or Level 5 or 6 award, certificate, diploma, NVQ.
 - In-depth knowledge of employment legislation and its practical application
 - Experience advising and influencing managers on complex ER matters
 - Experience interpreting and applying HR policies and procedures
 - Experience supporting consultation processes and organisational change

Desirable

- CIPD membership
- Experience working with Trade Unions
- Experience of a job evaluation methodology (preferably Hay).
- Understanding of working within Higher Education.
- Experience of supporting a multi-site customer group.

Teamwork and Communication

Essential

- Collaborates and/or delegates effectively, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of colleagues.
- Works proactively with colleagues and other stakeholders, within and beyond the University, to achieve outcomes.
- Communicates effectively to develop understanding and achieve cooperation on complex, sensitive and contentious employment issues.
- Provides clear specialist advice, guidance and recommendations on complex employment issues.
- Builds credibility and influences senior stakeholders and Trade Union representatives
- Manages challenging conversations and resolves conflict constructively
- Supports training and/or coaching to managers

Planning, Organisation and Resource Management

Essential

- Plans and progresses a range of complex ER casework within broad professional guidelines and established University policies and procedures to meet required deadlines.
- Coordinates multiple stakeholders across complex activities.
- Manages competing demands and ER caseload by prioritising activity based on risk and business impact, ensuring appropriate allocation of time, and aligning stakeholder expectations with these priorities.

Problem Solving and Initiative

Essential

- Develops detailed understanding of long-standing and/or complex problems and applies professional knowledge and experience to resolve them.
 - Demonstrates an awareness of principles, trends and legislative updates in the Employee Relations field and an awareness of how this effect activities/casework in the University.
 - Analyses complex issues, identify root causes and develop effective solutions
 - Applies professional judgement to non-routine and ambiguous situations to assess and manage risk.
 - Analyses data or casework information to identify trends
 - Takes a proactive approach to resolving problems and improving processes.
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Job Hazard Assessment

A full health clearance is required for this role where any hazards marked “^”, using the agreed Occupational Health referral template [available from here](#). Where a full health clearance is required, this will apply to all role holders, including existing members of staff.

Physical Environment

Working outside ^	Not applicable
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Exposure to noise levels >80dbA ^	Not applicable
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Working with dust or fumes ^	Not applicable
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Working with skin irritants ^	Not applicable
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Working with chemicals (industrial or cleaning) ^	Not applicable
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Working in a confined space ^	Not applicable
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Working at height ^	Not applicable
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Working with sewage ^	Not applicable
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Contact with cytotoxins ^	Not applicable
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Exposure Prone Procedure (EPP) work ^	Not applicable
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Contact with clinical specimens or pathology work ^	Not applicable
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Direct patient care or patient contact	Not applicable
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Exposure to temperature extremes	Not applicable
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Frequent hand washing	Not applicable
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Ionising radiation	Not applicable
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Psychological and Social Environment

Working shifts ^	Not applicable
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Working nights ^	Not applicable
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Lone working	Frequently 30-60% Time
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Working with children	Not applicable
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Exposure to persons with challenging behaviour	Occasionally <30% Time
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Working with larger groups	Not applicable
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Equipment, Tools and Machines

Working with vibrating machinery or tools ^	Not applicable
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Driving duties e.g. LGV, PCVs, forklift trucks ^	Not applicable
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Food handling	Not applicable
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Contact with latex	Not applicable
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Physical Abilities

Prolonged physical movements or actions e.g. walking ^	Not applicable
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Prolonged Standing or Sitting ^	Frequently 30-60% Time
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Moving or handling heavy loads ^	Not applicable
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Repetitive pulling or pushing ^	Not applicable
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Repetitive climbing (steps, stools, ladders, stairs) ^	Not applicable
Repetitive crouching, kneeling or stooping	Not applicable
Repetitive lifting	Not applicable
Fine motor grips (e.g. pipetting)	Not applicable
Repetitive reaching below shoulder height	Not applicable
Repetitive reaching at shoulder height	Not applicable
Repetitive reaching above shoulder height	Not applicable
