

## **Role Profile**

<b>Role title:</b>	Basic Needs Assistant
<b>Salary:</b>	£13.45 per hour + holiday pay
<b>Full/Part Time:</b>	Part-Time
<b>Contract term:</b>	Fixed-Term until 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2027
<b>Accountable to:</b>	Basic Needs Project Coordinator
<b>Hours:</b>	Zero-hour contract (approximately 6-10 hours per week during term-time dependent on service need)
<b>Location:</b>	Essentials, Thorncliffe House, Oxford Road, M13 9NQ, and other sites across the Student's Union and University of Manchester campus as needed.
<b>Eligibility:</b>	Open to applicants with relevant skills and experience who are eligible to work in the UK, a current student at University of Manchester, and graduate in 2027 or later.
<b>Benefits:</b>	We offer a great range of benefits. You can see them <a href="#">here</a> .

## **Our Organisation**

We are Manchester Students' Union, the biggest SU in the country, supporting over 48,000 students throughout their time at university. We help to make student life the best it can be by supporting students to campaign for change, creating opportunities to meet new people, providing employment opportunities, providing advice and support and being a safe place on campus.

We are a values-centred organisation that employs around 90 permanent, full-time members of staff. We recruit a wide range of roles throughout the year within all our departments from our Commercial team operating Manchester Academy Venues, 13 Media, Bar 532 & Kitchen and Corridor Coffee to our Student Activities, Student Engagement, Marketing and Communications, Finance, HR and Facilities teams. Our team of around 400 part-time, studying staff are instrumental in providing to support to all departments as well as leading major projects like Student Angels. When you join UMSU, you'll be immersed in an environment that empowers staff to make great things happen and we're always on the lookout for innovative, passionate, and proactive people to join us.

Our staff team is led by our senior leadership team who are instrumental in driving our strategy at UMSU. It's made up of our CEO, COO, 3 Directors and 2 Associate Directors. We are governed by our trustees and Exec Officers, you can find out more about that [here](#). All our permanent, full-time roles are graded (Grade A-E) which means that there is a clear path to your development and progression whilst at UMSU.

## **Our Organisational Values**

Our values are really important to us and shape the work that we do every day. As part of our recruitment process, we want you to demonstrate how your experiences, behaviours and skills align with our values.

Our values are

- We put students at the heart of what we do
- We provide a 'great experience' service
- We believe in improvement and progression
- We are a community
- We are open and transparent
- We are inclusive

You can find more detailed explanations of our values on [our website](#).

### **Role Overview**

Basic Needs Assistants sit within the Basic Needs team, which supports students with food, finances, and other essential needs. As students face increasing challenges around the cost of living, financial wellbeing, and food security, this role will play an important part in helping ensure they can access practical support and feel welcomed at Essentials, the University of Manchester Students' Union's Basic Needs Centre.

As a Basic Needs Assistant, you will be the first point of contact for students accessing the service. You will help create a welcoming and supportive environment, answer questions about available support, and provide appropriate signposting to other services where needed. Strong communication skills are essential, as you will engage with a diverse student population, including students who may be experiencing distress or crisis. You will also be responsible for identifying and escalating concerns where necessary to support effective safeguarding.

A key part of the role will involve staffing the Basic Needs Pantry, supporting students to access a range of non-perishable food, cleaning supplies, and personal hygiene products. This includes explaining how the pantry works, responding to questions, and completing administrative tasks that help ensure a smooth and positive experience for students.

Basic Needs Assistants will be expected to work flexibly. Most shifts will take place during the day, Monday to Friday, with occasional evening or weekend work where required. You will receive foundational training across the Basic Needs service to equip you to respond to straightforward queries and signpost students to the most appropriate support.

We are looking for people who can build positive relationships, work effectively both independently and as part of a team, and stay organised in a busy environment. Excellent communication skills, a proactive approach to identifying improvements, and a genuine commitment to supporting students are all essential for success in this role.

### **Key Result Areas**

<b>Responsible for</b>
Act as a first point of contact for the Basic Needs Centre, welcoming students, responding to questions, and helping them understand and access available support in a friendly, professional and empathetic manner.
Staff the Basic Needs Pantry and Wardrobe, supporting students to access food and essential items, explaining how the service works, managing stock levels, carrying out weekly stock checks, and restocking shelves as needed.
Undertake administrative and operational tasks including monitoring the shared inbox, maintaining accurate records, responding to student enquiries, and completing routine administrative duties to support the smooth running of the service.

Help maintain the Basic Needs Centre as a safe, welcoming and supportive environment, responding calmly and sensitively to students experiencing difficult circumstances and escalating wellbeing or safeguarding concerns through appropriate channels.
<b>Contributor to</b>
Support a high-volume student-facing service, engaging with approximately 400 students per week, managing competing queries and demands through effective prioritisation and time management to ensure a positive student experience.
Promote awareness of the Basic Needs Centre among current and prospective students, clearly communicating information, advice and guidance about available support.
Work collaboratively as part of the Basic Needs team, building positive working relationships and contributing to shared objectives to ensure the service runs effectively.
Use initiative and creative thinking to identify gaps in provision, suggest improvements, and contribute to the ongoing development of support services to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to student need.
<b>Career Development</b>
Student support and safeguarding practice
Communication and frontline service delivery
Service operations and project improvement

*This is not an exhaustive list of responsibilities and you may be asked to carry out other duties appropriate to the role.*

### **Organisational Stewardship & Leadership Responsibilities**

- You'll participate in team planning days.
- You'll assist in key Students' Union events & activities throughout the year including Welcome Week, elections and supporting the officers in delivering their plans.
- You'll perform duties in line with the Union policy & procedure framework.
- To contribute to maintaining communal areas and team stores

### **Person Specification**

Criteria	Assessed at:			
	Application Form	Interview	Interview Task	All
<b>Education</b>				
We accept candidates from any educational background.				
<b>Skills</b>				
Time management skills – you will efficiently manage your time through different queries/demands by prioritisation	✓	✓		

Teamwork – demonstrated ability to work as part of a team, working together to make sure objectives are met		✓		
Customer service - understanding how to respond to sensitive or difficult situations in a calm manner*				✓
Communication - ability to convey information/advice/guidance to a diverse range of customers*				✓
Creative thinking – willing to ask questions, identify gaps in the service and not afraid to try new ideas to improve support.		✓		
<b>Personal Attributes</b>				
Growth minded- Demonstrates a strong interest in improving support services for students				✓
A friendly yet professional manner, with the ability to provide empathy and support to students facing difficult circumstances				✓
Dedicated – committed to the role and reliable when attending shifts.	✓	✓		
Driven – motivated to identify what activities need to be completed, working using initiative				✓
<b>Values &amp; Behaviours</b>				
Align with the SU's values and behaviours both personally and professionally				✓
Insight driven – always looking for ways to collect data from a range of sources to measure the impact of your work on the student community or to inform your work				✓
Collaborative – great at working collaboratively with team members, seeks ways to ensure all voices are heard, works with colleagues to problem solve		✓		
Active Bystander – continually seeks to dismantle barriers, ensures all working practises are accessible, seeks to ensure all voices are heard and factored in when making decisions				✓

Please note that all of the above criteria are desirable unless marked with an asterisk (\*), which indicates essential requirements.

## **Training & Development**

We don't expect you to meet every single requirement listed above. When you join us, you'll be part of a supportive team where learning is encouraged and built into everyday work.

### **• On-the-job learning**

Most training will happen naturally as part of your role, with colleagues and managers supporting you to build confidence and develop new skills. Through the role, you'll gain practical experience in areas such as student support, customer service, safeguarding awareness, service administration, stock management, and responding to sensitive situations with empathy and professionalism. You'll also develop transferable skills in communication, prioritisation, teamwork and problem-solving.

### **• Independent and formal learning**

If you enjoy learning independently, you'll have access to guidance, resources and e-learning to build your understanding of topics linked to the role, such as student wellbeing, financial hardship and support services. We also offer staff development opportunities, including training sessions and workshops to help you build confidence in supporting students, strengthen professional skills, and learn from colleagues across the Students' Union.

### **• Role-specific qualifications and development opportunities**

As part of this role, you'll receive foundational training in safeguarding, signposting and basic needs support to prepare you for responding to student queries and escalating concerns appropriately. There may also be opportunities to access additional development such as mental health awareness, first aid, or other relevant training linked to student support and wellbeing. This role offers valuable experience for anyone interested in careers in student support, social impact, charities, public services or related fields.

## **Working Arrangements**

The Basic Needs team is based in Essentials (Thorncliffe House, Oxford Road, M13 9NQ).

*This role is fully on-site due to the nature of the work. Shifts will typically be scheduled in advance, but there may be occasions where flexibility is needed to support evening or weekend events. Core hours are usually 9-5.*

## **Our Recruitment Process**

The way that we recruit is designed to be fair, transparent, and inclusive as well as being an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. You should expect to receive great communication and a warm, welcoming experience.

Every member of staff is recruited the same way, by submitting an application form and attending an interview. We use a recruitment platform called StaffSavvy where you'll submit your application and book interviews, if successful.

Our process allows you to show us your authentic self, gives you a platform to display your skills and knowledge in relaxed and welcoming setting. We'll never put you under any necessary pressure on you, ask you trick questions or interrogate you in an interview and we'll support you all the way through our process.

You can find more information about our recruitment process on [our website](#).