

Job Description & Person Specification

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post title:	Head of Advice Service Transformation (Maternity Cover)
Salary:	£34,650 - £38,850 (plus a cost of living award will be added from August). Negotiation is possible and expected, but will result in enhanced expectations below
Full/Part Time:	Full-Time (open to part time working requests of 0.8 FTE)
Contract term:	Fixed-Term, ending 31 st August 2025
Date of Writing:	April 2024
Accountable to:	Director of Student Engagement
Accountable for:	Advice Service Manager, Senior Advisor, Finance Advisor (from September 24 onwards)
Hours	Standard hours are 35 hrs per week – these hours can be worked flexibly we are happy to discuss alternative working patterns
Location:	Usually located at the main Students' Union Building, and there is an option for some home working where duties do not need to be delivered on site (60% in person)
Eligibility:	Open to applicants with relevant skills and experience who are eligible to work in the UK
Benefits	We offer staff many benefits including <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual leave 30 days + Christmas close (or equivalent) + bank holidays• Employer pension contribution matched up to 8%• Hybrid / flexible working (where possible)• Enhanced sick/maternity/paternity/adoption pay• Needs based compassionate leave• Travel loan scheme• Free Manchester Academy gig tickets

Purpose of the Role

The Head of Advice role is specifically geared towards leading change over 12 months to kickstart service development and ensure the advice service is in the best position possible for the future. If you love improving things, bringing excellence to the way services operate and can do that centring student need and in an empowering way with staff, we want you in this role. The SU Advice Service is a core part of the support offer from the union (and works closely with university support services) to ensure 50,000 students at the University of Manchester are supported when they need it. "Support" is a key strategic theme in our new organisational strategy so a thriving advice service that is sustainable for the future is key to achieving our strategic goals.

Job Description & Person Specification

Current context and background

Over the years, the Advice Service has expanded its service offering (outlined below). The service has been awarded funding by the University to expand its offer of financial advice to include debt advice over the next three years. You will be required to recruit a Finance Advisor to manage the registration with the financial conduct authority and develop a plan for offering this new service.

The service is struggling with increasing student demand, as well as increasingly complex requests and high staff turnover. Over several years, this has created significant intermittent capacity gaps and left little room for service development. Nevertheless, the service delivers good student outcomes, quality advice to students and prioritises casework to ensure its meeting its core purpose.

The day to day running of the service is handled capably by the Advice Service Manager (line management of advisors, file reviews, consulting on complex cases, safeguarding) and the team is made up of a Senior Advisor (casework, developing proactive advice support, line management of intern and student staff triage service), two Advisors (casework) and a Graduate Intern (leading on triage and referrals) and a wider studying staff team (triage and non-complex cases).

A 2-year transformation outline has been developed. Further developing and delivering on a transformation plan is critical to free up capacity in other roles and ensure the service is sustainable longer-term. Below is the range of advice we currently offer.

- **Academic issues** → mitigating circumstances, academic appeals, complaints to the University, academic malpractice, and university disciplinary issues.
- **Housing** → private tenancy rights, dealing with disrepair, tenancy agreement checks, council tax, tenancy deposits, eviction, landlord harassment and problems in halls of residence.
- **Student Finance** → financial support options, Advice Service Emergency Loan, queries with student finance, money guidance, government benefits and consumer issues.
- **Student life** → sexual violence and harassment, domestic abuse, fraud or scams, free drug testing kits and drug support, homesickness, social isolation, concern for a friend, help after experiencing a crime and mental health difficulties. This area of advice involves providing students with practical and emotional support and signposting or referring to specialist services and providing advice on their options when facing a difficult personal situation. Practical support can entail supporting them with wider academic, housing and money issues related to their initial enquiry.

Typical Working Day

The role is a mixture of desk-based work and meetings with colleagues, our student leaders, and the University. There can be a mix of working from home and being in the office, however we'd like the postholder to ensure there are good relationships developed with the direct team, and colleagues from other teams so it may be there is more in person working at the beginning of the role to support that – we are open to hearing from candidates on their approach to this. You will need to be able to use the Microsoft 365 suite.

Principal Duties

Role specific activity

- Develop and implement the transformation plan for the service. Example activity:
 - Work with other teams (such as operations, digital, insight) to review key team processes and identify efficiency improvements.
 - Create a digital first approach ensuring that all key processes are transitioned to reduce the burden of administration
 - Reviewing and making inbound workflow management effective
 - Reviewing and improving use of database and systems
 - Embedding a restructuring of roles and responsibilities (in progress by the current Head of Advice). Provide advice, guidance and support to Advice Service Manager to enable internal staff to progress into the roles available in the new structure
 - Ensuring service reporting and evaluation approach is data driven and insight led
 - Ensuring the quality assurance approach being developed is fit for purpose and proportionate to task
 - Reviewing the service offer and make recommendations as to expansion or contraction
 - Develop plan for expanding into debt advice and recruiting and onboard a Finance Advisor role to develop this area
 - Line managing the Advice Service Manager, Senior Advisor and (vacant) Finance Advisor in line with the union's organisational framework
 - Any other activity required after your initial review of the transformation plan
- Maintaining strong links with key University and community stakeholders to ensure shared best practice and a partnership approach where possible.
- Ensuring that relevant data, policy and external factors are influencing our advice work and the work of other teams.
- Other duties of a similar nature as required by manager

Organisational stewardship & leadership

- To guide the work of the team, participating in the development of annual operating plans to support the achievement of strategic aims, holding teams accountable for delivery against these plans
- To contribute to the development and delivery of risk mitigating strategies as they relate to departments area of work

Job Description & Person Specification

- To ensure all team are assisting in key students' union events throughout the year such as Welcome week and elections and proactively identify opportunities to support the officers in delivering their plans
- To lead teams acting as an exemplar of the Union behaviours ensuring all staff are given appropriate support in line with the Union management framework and teams are consistently held accountable for delivering against expected performance standards (both role performance and behaviours)
- To be accountable for the financial performance of area of responsibility taking prompt action where financial targets are at risk. Contribute to the forecasting & budgeting exercises in line with the organisational framework
- To own the policy as it relates to departmental activity, have good working knowledge of the Union policy and procedure framework as it relates to the teams function and ensure that all teams activities are conducted in line with this framework
- To proactively contribute to maintaining the communal spaces and ensuring whole team share responsibility for managing team stores and keeping areas clean and tidy

Job Description & Person Specification

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria	Essential or desirable	Assessed Via	
		Application form	Interview
Qualifications			
We consider applications from all education backgrounds	n/a		
Experience			
Demonstrate experience of managing and coaching staff and holding them accountable for performance standards	Essential	✓	
Demonstrate experience of improving processes & systems in a service with evidence of impact made	Essential	✓	
Demonstrate experience of change management and leadership in a team	Essential		✓
Experience of working in information, advice, guidance services	Essential	✓	
Knowledge & Skills			
Ability to analyse data, using insight to respond to feedback and trends, write reports and create delivery plans	Essential	✓	
Extensive knowledge of the regulatory framework within which an advice service should operate	Desirable		
Demonstrate how would embed principles of effective advice service management	Essential		✓
Ability to use Advice Pro or equivalent advice software	Essential		✓
Ability to use digital tools to improve processes e.g. Microsoft Power Automate, digital workflows	Desirable		
Personal Attributes			
Ability to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with a range of stakeholders (university, community services, other teams in the union) on behalf of the service.	Essential		✓
Ability to think strategically and proactively to meet the long-term needs of service users.	Essential		✓
Self-motivated individual demonstrated through a commitment to continuing professional development, confidence in making day to day decisions and ability to set and prioritise work of a team.	Essential	✓	
Values & Ethics			

Job Description & Person Specification

Understanding of and commitment to the principles of equality & diversity and the Union values (see following section)	Essential	✓	
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What are our values?

We put students at the heart of our work

We believe that student experiences are a priority and that we need to help students make the most of their journey while studying at University of Manchester. We are committed to supporting our students in their education, employment and activities by integrating student opinions into our work. We will seek to empower and represent our students as we believe we know our students better than anyone else.

We provide a 'great experience' service

We believe that in order to have a lasting positive experience, we need to provide the best levels of service to students, colleagues and external stakeholders. We endeavour to provide the best support and service while promoting positivity and friendliness.

We believe in improvement/progression

We believe that to be the best we can be as a union we should be striving to develop new ideas and improve existing services to support the diverse and fast-changing needs of our students. By continually reflecting and reviewing what we do and acknowledging areas for improvement and growth we can become a sector-leading organisation. We are committed to listening to our students and our stakeholders to gain useful feedback and ideas that we can use to constantly improve every aspect of our business.

We are a community

We believe that seeking opportunities to work with students, colleagues, and external stakeholders is necessary to develop ideas and deliver activities as we recognise the passion, knowledge and creativity of Manchester. This is important as we look at the bigger picture – we gain multiple perspectives which leads to better planning and more inclusivity. We will try and foster communities to create a sense of belonging as we continually seek to learn from our communities.

We are open and transparent

We believe that a great union should communicate openly and provide a clear reasoning in its decision making in order to earn the trust from students, staff and stakeholders. We must maintain active communication with students, making sure that they are a part of our decision-making process and being transparent about both our successes and failures. We need to deliver on the outcomes of our democratic processes, never diverting from the truth or creating false narratives.

We are inclusive

We believe that our work and priorities should reflect the whole of the diverse community we serve in way that recognises and celebrates our differences. To do this we are seeking to include a diverse range of voices, beliefs and values in all of our work. We will identify the barriers and structures in

Job Description & Person Specification

place that are limiting students, staff and stakeholders; seek to bring these barriers down; and examine our role in creating them.

Liberation, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

What is Liberation, equality, Diversity & Inclusion at the Students' Union?

The purpose of the Students Union is to ensure that we are supporting and advocating for the 40,000 students of the University of Manchester.

We aim to ensure that the Students' Union is a welcoming and accessible space where all of our students are treated with dignity and respect. We do this by ensuring that we are consciously removing barriers to students' participating in our many activities. As such it is an essential part of all of our staff team's roles to be conscious of the kind of barriers encountered by different groups and to proactively take steps to remove them from all activity.

[Collective Liberation Guide](#)

Who & how does this role support?

This role supports the students of the University of Manchester. There are around 50,000 students and around a third of the student body are international students. Students present with diverse support needs and requests to the service from all years of study from foundational degree level to postgraduate research level.

How does liberation impact on this role?

We don't yet know who is accessing the advice service, and whether this is in line or different to the shared understanding we have with the university about underserved groups of students. In designing effective processes and embedding sustainable solutions, it is important to identify and mitigate against barriers minoritised students might face in accessing the service.