

Job Description

Position:	Interim Head of Student Services
School/Service:	Student Services and Experience Directorate
Reference:	SSE-079/P
Grade:	Grade 9
Status:	Fixed Term
Hours:	Full-Time (36.25 hours per week) – usually 8.45am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, however some flexible working will be required outside of standard working hours.
Reporting to:	Director of Student Services and Experience
Responsible for:	Student Services, (including International Student Support, Student financial support, Student Experience) Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Services (including CBT, Counselling, Mental Health Services, Disability Services), Reception and Chaplaincy

Main Function of the Position:

- As a senior member of the Student Services & Experience Directorate, the post holder will lead the delivery of high-quality, holistic student support that enhances the student experience and contributes to student continuation and retention.
- Provide strategic management across Student Services functions, working collaboratively with key stakeholders across the University and externally.
- Line management of senior colleagues (e.g., Student Services Manager, Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Manager), supporting high performance and service excellence.
- Act as the University's Safeguarding Officer and Prevent Coordinator, leading on compliance, reporting, and policy implementation in line with the duties of the role.
- Ensure services align with regulatory requirements and sector best practice (e.g. OfS, Ofsted, Prevent, UKCISA).
- Drive service excellence through continuous improvement of systems, policies, and processes that are student-centred and efficient, value for money and have impact.
- Deputise for the Director of Student Services and Experience as required, including oversight of the Library Service in their absence.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Provide strategic leadership and oversight of Student Services operations including the Student Centre, Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Services (Life Lounge), Reception, and Chaplaincy, ensuring high-quality, inclusive, and student-centred support services.

2. Lead, coach, and manage senior staff (e.g., Student Services Manager, Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Manager), supporting them to implement effective service delivery, manage staff performance, and deliver against strategic goals.
3. Act as Safeguarding Officer and Prevent Coordinator, ensuring institutional compliance with statutory safeguarding and Prevent duties. Coordinate safeguarding responses, assess risk, and make appropriate referrals. Report regularly to internal and external bodies.
4. Working closely with the Student Services Manager to support international students and develop support services including induction, orientation, attendance monitoring, and financial support, working collaboratively with other departments to ensure compliance with relevant UKVI regulations. To develop systems to streamline processes and ensure front line service delivery is of high quality, effective and accessible to all students. To support the Student Services Manager in the administration of the University's Student Support Funds.
5. Working closely with the Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Manager to maintain oversight of the Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Services in the Life Lounge, ensuring appropriate staffing levels, monitoring of waiting times, identification of service gaps, risk management, and timely access to support for students.
6. Champion equality, diversity and inclusion supporting the development of targeted initiatives for underrepresented student groups (e.g. LGBTQ+, care-experienced, disabled students) and representing Student Services on relevant groups and committees.
7. Collaborate across the University, including with Heads of School, senior leaders, and the Students' Union, to drive a whole-institution approach to student support, student wellbeing, retention, and success.
8. Lead on service evaluation and use of data to inform decision-making, ensure impact, and report to internal and external stakeholders (e.g. Executive Board, Board of Governors, OfS, Ofsted)).
9. Manage departmental budgets, including financial planning, audit preparation, and authorisation of spend, ensuring services provide value for money and are aligned with strategic priorities.
10. To develop guidance to assist University staff providing support to students in a variety of situations. To lead and contribute, as required, to the development and review of relevant policies and procedures ensuring they are effective, compliant and that there are clearly explained arrangements for student support.
11. To lead on delivering Student Services' contribution to the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP), supporting targets to reduce outcome gaps for under-represented students. Represent Student Services on relevant steering and operational groups, and oversee quality assurance and evaluation using institutional frameworks, including TASO, to measure impact and effectiveness.
12. Oversee the development, review, and implementation of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with legislation, institutional priorities, and evolving sector requirements.

13. To recruit, train, develop, coach and appraise professional services staff within the Student Services department, ensuring strong performance, clarity of purpose and ensure that staff are achieving their objectives and operating efficiently and effectively. To undertake PR, Appraisals as appropriate.
14. Foster external partnerships to enhance support for students, influence sector development, and raise the profile of the University's support services.
15. Working with the Director of Student Services & Experience to develop annual operational plans and local strategies to provide personalised, impactful support for students, ensuring services adapt to new legislation, sector practice, and emerging student needs.
16. Develop and promote opportunities for co-creation and student voice across service planning and delivery, embedding the Students as Partners framework into day-to-day practice.
17. Represent the Directorate on University committees, steering groups, and task and finish groups, and deputise for the Director of Student Services and Experience as required.
18. To ensure that robust systems, processes, and resources are in place for effective delivery of services and strategic projects within agreed timelines.
19. To build and maintain partnerships with external organisations to enhance support for students and raise the profile of the University's student services.
20. Commit to ongoing professional development and stay abreast of sector developments by engaging with external networks, conferences, and training opportunities.
21. Work flexibly, including during evenings and weekends, particularly during key periods, student crises, or safeguarding matters.
22. Ensure a safe working environment and abide by the University health and safety policies and practise and to always observe the University's Equal Opportunities policy and Dignity and Work policy.
23. Ensure and maintain integrity and confidentiality of data and associated data protection requirements in line with statutory and corporate requirements.
24. Awareness of environmental and sustainability issues and a commitment to the University's associated strategy with respect to the performance / delivery of key responsibilities of the role.

Note:

This is a description of the position requirements as it is presently constituted. It is the University's practice to periodically review job descriptions to ensure that they accurately reflect the position requirements to be performed and if necessary, update to incorporate changes were appropriate. The review process will be conducted by the relevant manager in consultation with the post holder.

Please note that this appointment may be subject to Disclosure and Barring Clearance

Person Specification

Position: Interim Head of Student Services		Reference: SSE-079/P	
School/Service: Student Services and Experience		Priority	
Criteria		(1/2)	Method of Assessment
1 Qualifications			
1 a)	Honours degree	Priority 1	Application Form/ Documentation
1 b)	Higher degree and/or equivalent experience working in Student Support in Higher Education	Priority 2	Application Form/ Documentation
1 c)	Professional qualification in a relevant area or equivalent continuous professional development	Priority 2	Application Form/ Documentation
1 d)	Safeguarding Adults and Children level 3 or higher qualification	Priority 1	Application Form/ Documentation
1 e)	Member of AMOSSHE	Priority 2	Application Form/ Documentation
2 Skills / Knowledge			
2 a)	Competent in the use of Microsoft Office, data systems, and digital tools to enhance service delivery	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
2 b)	Strong understanding of widening participation, Access and Participation Plans (APP), OfS Conditions of Registration and regulations, and relevant legislation	Priority 2	Application Form/ Interview
2 c)	Demonstrated leadership and team management skills with skills and abilities to manage crisis and sensitive issues	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
2 d)	Strong knowledge of safeguarding legislation and the Prevent Duty, and experience of managing complex safeguarding cases	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
2 e)	Ability to lead strategy/development, operational planning and evidence of service delivery improvements	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
2 f)	Excellent communication, interpersonal and influencing skills	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
2 g)	The ability to define service standards that reference the expectations of users and stakeholders and to manage resources efficiently and effectively to deliver these standards and outcomes.	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
2 h)	Ability to use, interpret and present data and reports effectively	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
3 Experience			
3 a)	Successful management of leading services through service transformation and periods of change	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
3 b)	Experience in managing complex safeguarding cases in a Deputy Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Officer capacity, including assessing risk, coordinating responses, making referrals to external agencies, and ensuring compliance with statutory and institutional safeguarding policies and procedures	Priority 1	Application Form/ Interview

3 c)	Financial and resource management, including departmental budget oversight and monitoring	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
3 d)	Experience of managing multi-disciplinary teams within HE or FE	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
3 e)	Leading or contributing to strategically significant projects	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
3 f)	Extensive experience managing diverse student support services	Priority 1	Application Form/Interview
4	Personal Qualities		
4 a)	Self-motivated, pro-active and able to inspire others	Priority 1	Interview
4 b)	Flexible, organised and able to priorities competing demands ensuring all objectives meet targets and KPIs	Priority 1	Interview
4 c)	Resilient and calm under pressure	Priority 1	Interview
4 d)	Committed to continuous improvement and innovation	Priority 1	Interview
4 e)	Sensitive to individual needs and cultural differences	Priority 1	Interview
4 f)	Ability to work on multiple projects, effectively and concurrently	Priority 1	Interview
4 g)	Digitally confident, with an appreciation of the range of IT systems that can support those aspects of the student journey that the team provides	Priority 1	Interview
5	Other		
5 a)	Commitment to ongoing professional development and willingness to undertake staff development and external training	Priority 1	Interview
5 b)	Awareness of the principles of the Data Protection Act, Health and Safety, UKVI, Freedom of Information Act, Prevent and Bribery Act	Priority 1	Interview
5 c)	Commitment to the University's policy on equal opportunities and diversity	Priority 1	Interview
5 d)	Willingness to work flexibly, including evenings/weekends	Priority 1	Interview

Note:

1. **Priority 1** indicates **essential** criterion – an applicant would be unsuccessful if unable to satisfy all Priority 1 criterion.

2. **Priority 2** indicates **desirable** criterion - applicants failing to satisfy a number of these are unlikely to be successful.

3. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure any professional accreditation/membership remains current

4. Employees are expected to have access to suitable IT equipment and broadband internet access at home to work remotely if require.