UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER
LEADING THE WAY

Note: This job description does not form part of the employee's contract of employment but is provided for guidance. The precise duties and responsibilities of any job may be expected to change over time. Jobholders should be consulted over any proposed changes to this job description before implementation.

Job Title: Student Counsellor

Reports to: Counselling Service Manager

Grade: NG7

Purpose:

To provide individual and group counselling to students with a wide range of personal difficulties in support of their learning progression. To undertake an area of specialism/service project within the counselling team to develop services for students.

Principal Accountabilities:

1. To provide consultation, assessment and short-term counselling to individual and groups of students. To adapt and target interventions to fit into a busy student service where brief therapy is the norm.

2. To assess and manage risk, liaising with appropriate internal departments and external agencies. To offer crisis intervention at short notice and where necessary to make appropriate referrals inside or outside the university.

3. To present examples of counselling work for monitoring and supervision on a regular basis and participate in regular case discussion meetings to discuss crisis intervention, prevention and management of severe psychological disturbance.

4. To maintain appropriate electronic and written records on counselling cases, including session notes and records of contact with other relevant parties, both in the University and externally.

5. To be pro-active in liaising with academic staff, to support them in their role as personal tutors, to be involved in staff training and to act as a source of expert knowledge. To liaise with staff and external services as appropriate to facilitate student well-being, within the bounds of client confidentiality.

6. To collaborate with members of the Counselling Service and other student support services in shared projects such as workshops, conferences, joint publicity, induction for new students, university wide staff training, representation on university committees and to initiate projects which will meet the changing needs of students and staff.

7. To maintain professional counselling accreditation as set out by BACP or equivalent professional bodies

September 2023

8   Where appropriate and in consultation with the Counselling Service Manager Service, to promote the University and the Counselling Service, by giving talks outside the University and by being active in professional associations such as the British Association of counselling and Psychotherapy Universities and Colleges (BACP UC).

9   Take responsibility for managing and co-ordinating the development of specific specialisms as designated by the Counselling Service Manager. Specialisms in the Service, at the time of writing, include: Associate/Trainee Counsellors programme; Staff and student Training; Therapeutic Groups.

10   Other duties appropriate to the grade as required by the Counselling Service Manager.

Dimensions

The post holder will be part of a team consisting of Counselling Service Manager, 3.9 FTE permanent counsellors, trainee/associate and sessional counsellors, and Administrators. The team works closely alongside Mental Health Service colleagues, including a full time Senior Mental Health Practitioner and Mental Health Adviser.

The Counselling Service operates on two sites (Marylebone and Harrow) offering support through appointments, duty cover and group sessions.

Counselling is delivered face to face and both online via Microsoft Teams. Student and Academic Services, including the Counselling Service, operate in a hybrid way, working on-site and remotely. Details will be discussed and agreed with the postholder.

This post has no specific line management or budgetary responsibilities.

Context

The post-holder will be part of the Student Support and Residential Life area within Student and Academic Services (SAS).

Student and Academic Services (SAS) provides professional, efficient, effective and consistent researcher and student-focused support and services across the University's main sites in the West End and at Harrow. It leads on professional support for a wide range of governance, research, learning and wellbeing interventions that enhance the experience of students, staff and alumni throughout their relationship with the University.

The service components of SAS are:

- Advice and Funding
- Careers and Employability Service
- Disability Learning Support
- Interfaith Advice
- Learning Innovation and Digital Engagement
- Library Services
- Research and Scholarly Communications
- Research Office

September 2023

- Student Residences
- Student Counselling
- University Records and Archives
- Wellbeing Advisers

The University requires all staff to have an understanding of individual health and safety responsibilities and an awareness of the risks in the work environment together with their potential impact on both individual work and that of others.

Person Specification

<u>**Qualifications**</u>

Essential

a. MSc/Post-Graduate Diploma or equivalent in counselling

b. An accredited practitioner with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy or equivalent professional body

c. Degree or equivalent relevant experience

<u>**Training and Experience**</u>

Essential

d. Significant work experience (3+ years) as a counsellor in Higher or Further Education
e. Experience of personal therapy or analysis
f. Proven interest in the emotional aspects of learning and the needs of a diverse student body
g. A high level of competence in crisis intervention and managing severe emotional and mental health difficulties
h. Evidence of working independently to high professional standards and meeting tight deadlines
i. Demonstrate a track record of working with students, staff and managers at different levels on counselling activities.
j. Demonstrate a sound understanding of current legislation in relation to counselling and student well-being.
k. Confident and effective when communicating with people at all levels i.e. building effective relationships; facilitating discussions with individuals and groups; dealing sensitively, patiently and diplomatically with complex and emotionally charged situations.
l. Competence in the use of computerised systems and applications such as Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint.

Desirable
m. Experience of supervising trainee counsellors
n. Experience of running workshops and training to both students and staff.

<u>**Aptitudes and Abilities**</u>

- Ability to effectively deliver conflicting priorities and challenging workloads by maintaining focus on agreed objectives and deliverables whatever the circumstances and monitoring progress against targets.

September 2023

- Ability to use own initiative and consider the wider context and implications when problem solving.
- Able to identify customer needs and expectations and keep them in mind when taking actions or making decisions. Proven ability to maintain a long-term perspective when tackling short-term issues and problems and ensuring that resources are directed towards strategic priorities.
- Ability to work flexibly by taking account of new information or changed circumstances and modifying understanding of a problem or situation accordingly.

Personal Attributes

- Flexibility and resilience to work well under pressure
- Willing to meet the challenges of increasing demands within limited resources
- Must share and exemplify the University's values.
- Professional and positive and flexible approach to work
- Proactive, facilitates change and development and shows initiative.
- Drive and enthusiasm to make a real change, taking on personal responsibility for the role
- Commitment to personal and professional development, identifying development strategies needed to achieve work and career goals.
- Comfortable with ambiguity and rapidly changing agendas

Other

Whilst it is not mandatory for holidays to be taken at a certain time, the particular nature of the work makes it desirable that the counsellors take holidays during the University vacations and not during term time.

September 2023