

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| **Job Title** | **SMART Adviser (Vulnerable Groups)** |
| **School /Service** | **Student services** |
| **Grade** | **E** |
| **Location and Hybrid working status** | **Docklands/Stratford – Hybrid** |
| **Reporting to** | **Debbie Lindsay – SMART Manager** |
| **Line management for** | **N/A** |
| **Key working relationships: Internal** | **Students and colleagues from Student Services, Finance, External Relations Directorate** |
| **Key working relationships: External** | **Student Loans Company, Local Authorities, Citizens Advice** |
| **Contract type/ Hours** | **Permanent, Full time – 1.0 FTE** |

Build your career, follow your passion, be inspired by our environment of success

**#BeTheChange**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

If you are seeking a career that combines innovative education with a passion for crafting positive change, look no further than the University of East London. Founded in 1898 to meet the skills needs of the 2nd industrial revolution, we’re now in Year 5 of our ground-breaking [10-year Vision 2028 strategic plan](https://www.uel.ac.uk/about/vision-2028), orchestrated by our Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Amanda Broderick.

Our goal is to advance industry 5.0 careers-first education and provide a clear path to the jobs and opportunities of the future. We are committed to driving diversity in the 5.0 talent pipeline, working in partnership to promote talent wherever it is found and creating a sustainable, inclusive, and green future.

But we can't achieve this goal alone. We need forward-thinking, innovative, and curious individuals like you to join our community and help us shape the future. As part of our team, you'll have the opportunity to work with a diverse range of people who share your passion for generating positive change. We’re an inclusive and welcoming community that is constantly moving forward, never satisfied with the status quo.

If you're ready to join a team that values your outstanding skills and perspectives and is dedicated to making a difference, we invite you to explore a career with us. We are excited to welcome versatile individuals who are committed to advancing their careers while making a positive impact on the world.

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SERVICE/SCHOOL: Student Services**

We are Student Services and are responsible for nurturing wellness, supporting individual needs, helping students in crisis, improving retention, and enabling positive experiences through residential life and extra-curricular activities. Working in partnership across academic schools and professional services, our teams seek to provide a network of support throughout the student journey and aim to optimise student success.

The Student Services directorate is led by the Assistant Chief Operating Officer, Health Gain & Student Experience. Our department incorporates a number of professional and support teams including Student HUB, Student Conduct, Academic Tutoring, Residential Life, Student Disability and Dyslexia, Student Life, Student Money Advice and Rights Team, Student Engagement, Retention and Success and Student Wellbeing.

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT / TEAM**

The Student Money Advice and Rights Team (SMART), part of the Student Services directorate, provides students with financial advice and support in areas such as scholarships, bursaries, international funding, and targeted assistance for vulnerable student groups. UEL is celebrated for its inclusivity, ranking highest on the CIVITAS 2023 Care Leavers in Higher Education League Table.

**JOB PURPOSE**

The role holder will be responsible for the design and delivery of effective and appropriate provision of support for young students who are vulnerable (including; care experienced, estranged, young adult carers and refugees) throughout the University and will seek to develop new approaches to the provision of student welfare support; bearing in mind growth in the numbers and diversity of students and the finite resources available. These groups of students have been identified as disadvantaged and at a greater risk of non-completion of their degree.

The role holder will be responsible for developing a holistic provision of support to assist them at every stage of their HE journey (access, success and employability). This includes co-ordinating the support for individual cases with colleagues across the institution and external agencies.

**KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Be the first point of contact for students from a vulnerable background; including students from a care background, estranged from their family, and refugee status students.
* To provide specialist and confidential advice, guidance and representation to vulnerable students and casework on a range of student welfare issues and financial support.
* To undertake advice, student support fund assessments and casework covering a range of student welfare issues and financial support. To follow up individual cases, as appropriate, to ensure enquiries have been satisfactorily resolved for students and to prepare additional paperwork such as supporting statements, letters on behalf of a student, or make a referral, as appropriate.
* To ensure that all casework is recorded in an accurate and timely manner and in line with SMART service requirements. To ensure all fund assessments are consistent with funding council regulations and with the policies and procedures of the University.
* To routinely monitor and review casework to ensure compliance with professional ethics and standards, and to take responsibility for deciding when to invoke peer or management supervision to address difficult ethical dilemmas or exceptionally complex cases.
* To liaise with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that vulnerable students are receiving the right support (both academic and pastoral) to impact success, retention and progression. Liaising with academic advisors, colleagues and other professional and support services to ensure a smooth transition when entering higher education.
* To provide specialist advice to staff working with vulnerable students, including promoting bursaries available and to deliver in-house training to academic and support services.
* To keep up to date with all aspects of national student support and welfare provision, considering the impact of changes in legislation and funding arrangements. To be aware of good practice in the sector.
* To undertake regular training and continuing professional development to keep abreast of changes and developments in the field of student funding, advice and guidance, and to ensure compliance with professional competency frameworks.
* Be responsible for submitting all proposals and bids related to young vulnerable students in line with the Access and Participation Plan, adhering to set deadlines for submission, monitoring and evaluation. This will include leading on the University’s application for any identified sector Quality Marks such as: Stand Alone Pledge.
* Be responsible for managing and prioritising own workload, setting priorities, solving problems, using own initiative, delegating effectively and positively.
* To manage and supervise the work of interns recruited to support project work.
* To contribute to the design of a range of university events and initiatives for specific cohorts of students (for instance care experienced and estranged students) to ensure a high-quality experience is enjoyed by all. To participate fully in open days and other visit days, the first-year experience of new entrants, widening participation and retention initiatives and any other university initiatives.
* Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the support for vulnerable groups of students. To commission data analysis and research relating to the transition, retention and graduate outcomes of students from vulnerable groups. To monitor student trends and report relevant social policy issues to the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing.
* To contribute to the writing and production of a range of publications and guidance for students and staff, including material for the university website and intranet, to ensure the availability of relevant and accessible information on a range of student welfare issues.
* To work in accordance with UEL's equality and diversity policies as well as ensuring policies regarding confidentiality, equal opportunities and conflict of interest are always adhered to.
* To undertake special project work as required by the Director of Student and Academic Services and the Head of Student Money Advice and Rights Team to support Student and Academic Services strategic plans.

The duties and responsibilities outlined above provide a general overview of the range of tasks that a SMART Adviser at the University of East London may be required to perform. Please note that this job description is not exhaustive, and additional tasks aligned with the role's grade may be assigned as needed.

The job description may also be updated to reflect changes in circumstances, and employees will be consulted if any amendments are required.

**All employees must adhere to all UEL policies and regulations, demonstrating a commitment to equal opportunities within a diverse and multicultural environment. Employees are also expected to actively contribute to building and maintaining a positive reputation for UEL in all their professional activities.**

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The University's Core [Values](https://www.uel.ac.uk/about/governance/ethical-framework) are **Passion, Inclusion, Courage**, and they are at the root of everything we do and everyone in our community is expected to demonstrate them.

The table below outlines the essential and desirable criteria required to perform the role effectively. Candidates will be shortlisted based on how closely they meet these criteria.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Education and Qualifications | Essential | Desirable | Criteria assessed by |
| Degree or equivalent experience |  |  | **A/C** |
| CAB or equivalent advice training qualification |  |  | **I** |
| Experience/Knowledge |  |  |  |
| Experience working as an advisor in a student funding capacity |  |  | **A** |
| Knowledge of current relevant legislation for vulnerable student groups in relation to student funding and local authority statutory obligations and the ability to keep up to date with changing legislation and policies |  |  | **A/I** |
| Understanding of and ability to maintain confidentiality |  |  | **I** |
| Knowledge of HE sector and issues affecting students specifically related to access, success and progression to employment |  |  | **I** |
| Expertise in developing and delivering high quality student/customer care services which positively impact on student learning, retention, welfare and achievement |  |  | **A** |
| Experience of supporting young vulnerable students (care-experienced, estranged, refugees) |  |  | **I** |
| An understanding of the requirements the University needs to develop service provision for young vulnerable students |  |  | **I** |
| Skills/Abilities |  |  |  |
| Excellent IT skills, particularly in MS Office, CRM and SITS (I) |  |  | **I** |
| Ability to write clear reports and to make recommendations for future actions (I) |  |  | **I** |
| Other Competencies required |  |  |  |
| Experience of planning, prioritising and organising the work of yourself and others (within own area), whilst ensuring the effective use of resources. Proven ability to work to targets and tight deadlines |  |  | **A** |
| The ability to work collaboratively and supportively with internal and external stakeholders |  |  | **I** |
| A confident self-starter with the determination to make an impact on the lives of some of the University’s most vulnerable students |  |  | **I** |
| The ability to build relationships and contacts with colleagues both internally and externally to ensure the effective support of students |  |  | **A** |
| Attend stakeholder conferences and build relationships with external partners (local authorities, nurseries, charities) that will be of benefit to young vulnerable students |  |  | **I** |
| Ability to receive, understand and construct clear concise communications to present to audiences’ covering information that needs careful explanation or interpretation e.g. procedures and regulations relating to the student funding process and money management issues |  |  | **A/P/I** |
| Well-developed interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively with both students and staff |  |  | **I** |
| Experience of giving customers a positive and satisfactory service, and of being able to adapt the service to meet customer expectations and to improve standards |  |  | **A** |
| Commitment to the welfare of students at UEL and experience of using initiative and creativity to resolve problems, identifying practical and suitable solutions (A) |  |  | **A** |
| Ability to interpret legislation / policy and maintain an awareness of its complexity |  |  | **I** |

Criteria assessed by Key:

A = Application form/CV C = Certification I = Interview P = Presentation task Other Activity = (please specify e.g

Micro teaching, test etc.)

**Further Information:**

UEL is an inclusive equal opportunities employer and are proud of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity achievements. We expect all employees of UEL to accept our EDI policy and will not tolerate discrimination in any form. As an employee of UEL, we expect you to follow all relevant Health & Safety policies.

We're a disability confident employer and value all applications. Please let us know if you require any reasonable accommodations throughout the recruitment process.

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):**

This post is subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions Order) 1975 and as such it will be necessary for a submission for Disclosure to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly known as CRB) to check for any previous criminal convictions.