

Job Description

Engagement Support Officer

Salary:	Grade 6
Contract:	Full time ongoing
Location:	Canterbury
Responsible to:	Engagement Support Manager
Responsible for:	Engagement Support Coordinator(s)
Job family:	Administrative, professional and managerial

Job purpose

The Engagement Support Officer is responsible for the delivery of professional and wide-ranging pastoral support to students ensuring that they have access to prompt, consistent and practical advice, support and guidance to enable them to engage with their programme of study.

The role holder works as part of a professional services team, which provides student-facing pastoral services and signposts to other professional services where this is a more appropriate course of action. They will be responsible for the day-to-day delivery of various support and intervention mechanisms, including Support to Study, Attendance and Engagement, Inclusive Learning Plans, and other strategic initiatives, as necessary.

Key accountabilities

The following are the main accountabilities for the job. Other duties, commensurate with the grading of the job, may also be assigned from time to time.

- Provide support, advice and guidance to both undergraduate and postgraduate (including HDA) students requiring non-academic advice, including drop-ins, regular support meetings and follow-up as required.
- Build and maintain relationships with other University departments that offer support services to students to enable the development of a seamless student support experience.
- Progress and monitor student referrals to other University support services and engage in relevant communications with students and other services as required.
- Collate, assess and circulate the initial concessionary evidence to ensure that the relevant committees and Boards are able to make informed and evidence-based decisions in relation to mitigating actions.
- Provide supervisory support to Engagement Support Coordinators on a day-to-day basis on a range of appropriate tasks.
- Maintain and update the records of interactions with students, ensuring sensitive data is handled in accordance with university guidelines and Data protection legislation.

- Assess, approve and process ad hoc requests for mitigation relating to late coursework submissions, extensions, intermissions, and exam delays throughout the year. Review the relevant evidence and contribute to the decision making Committee or Board as appropriate.
- Manage, monitor, and report on student attendance and academic engagement producing regular reports for the Senior Tutor and Engagement Support team to help identify those students who are a cause for concern.
- Identify and monitor ILPs and recommend amendments in liaison with Student Support and Wellbeing, where applicable, through student meetings
- Contribute to the development of a collaborative working environment and improved processes in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the support provided to students.
- Contribute to the delivery of events and activities e.g. during Welcome Week, induction and Open Days as required.
- Support the creation of a culture that is highly performance and contribution focused, built on a foundation of equality, diversity, belonging and inclusivity, and that inspires people to bring their best every day.

Key challenges and decisions

The following provide an overview of the most challenging or complex parts of the role and the degree of autonomy that exists.

- This is a student-focused role, and the role holder will need to work closely and collaboratively with colleagues across the University and within the Division to ensure the best possible support for students. It is important to be able to identify when or if signposting or referral to a more specialist service is needed.
- Some exchanges with students can be challenging, either because of the nature of the problem the student faces, or because issues can feel sensitive and/or confrontational. Students may drop in with no notice and judgements will need to be made about the state of their mental wellbeing and an assessment of how to move forward with supporting the student will need to be made, particularly which service to signpost them to, or whether to support them in-house.
- The role holder will need to have a good knowledge and understanding of appropriate services, regulations and codes of practices needed to efficiently carry out the role. They will be expected to liaise, build and maintain relationships with central professional services departments where students may be referred to support.

Facts & figures

The role holder will provide student support services to all students and staff within the division. As such, caseloads may be high and demand for services may increase at certain times of the academic year.

The role holder will provide day-to-day supervision to junior team members as directed by the Engagement Support Manager.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Students, academic and professional services staff within the Division(s); professional services staff across the University; Kent Union

External: Public; parents; relatives and guardians of students; external examiners; other institutions; emergency services

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

This job involves undertaking duties which include the following health, safety and wellbeing considerations:

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Repetitive limb movements
- There may be a requirement to work evenings and weekends

Person specification

The person specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Applications will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in an application, or cover letter (where applicable), which back-up any assertions made in relation to each criterion.

Essential Criteria:

- Educated to A level standard or equivalent, including GCSE Maths and English (grade C/4 or above) or equivalent (A)
- Substantial experience of working in a student facing role in Higher Education (A, I)
- Excellent IT skills particularly MS Office packages and the ability to learn systems quickly (I, T)
- Excellent communication skills (written and verbal) and the ability to deal confidently and diplomatically with a range of people at all levels, modifying your approach when necessary (I, T)
- Strong judgement and initiative with the ability to effectively interpret and apply policies and procedures, understand, and solve problems and make suggestions for improvements (A, I, T)
- Ability to advise on a wide range of student pastoral issues and the ability to judge when to refer to specialists (I, T)
- High level of accuracy and attention to detail (I, T)
- Ability to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, and insights into the range of issues they may face, especially if living abroad for the first time (A, I)
- Excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to show empathy with students who face difficulties, whatever their background or circumstances (I)
- Highly organised - able to prioritise work (self and others) to ensure key deliverables are achieved on time and to required standards (I)
- Ability to work independently and effectively as part of a team by collaborating and

developing close working relationships with colleagues at all levels (I)

- Good numeracy skills and ability to gather and analyse data/information and then make recommendations for action (I, T)
- Ability to handle issues of great sensitivity with discretion and with complete confidentiality (I)
- Ability to remain resilient in difficult and sensitive situations (I)
- Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for a transformative student experience and multidisciplinary, impactful research (I)
- Commitment to deliver and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day to day work of the role (I)

Desirable Criteria:

- Good understanding of University of Kent policies and procedures (I)
- Good understanding of student attendance and engagement processes (A, I)
- Working towards relevant professional qualification e.g. coaching/counselling skills, IAG qualification (A)
- Experience of supervising and motivating others (A)

Assessment stage: A - Application; I - Interview; T - Test/presentation at interview stage