

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION: ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES MANAGER



Job description

Role:	Academic Communities Manager
Grade:	Grade C - £35,860 to £39,429
Full/Part time:	Full time
Contract term:	Fixed term to 31/07/2029
Responsible to:	Director of Engagement
Hours:	Standard hours are 37 hours per week. These can be worked flexibly, and we are happy to discuss alternative working patterns
Location:	The Union, Manchester
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">+ 26 days annual leave plus at least six discretionary days (four at Christmas and two at Easter) and bank holidays+ Employer pension contribution matched up to 6%+ We support a hybrid working in line with business needs+ Supportive, needs-based compassionate and other leave+ Supportive maternity, parental, adoption and partner's leave+ Cover the cost of your eye test and £100 towards new glasses+ An employee assistance programme to support your wellbeing+ Plenty of opportunities for learning and development+ Access to student discounts online and in the city

Purpose of the role

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a brand-new pilot project at The Union, shaping and delivering a network of 'academic communities' for students at Manchester Met.

At The Union, we're proud of the vibrant and diverse communities we already support, from societies centred on hobbies and interests to groups focused on campaigning, faith, and cultural identity. But we know that students are also looking for meaningful ways to connect with others who share their academic journey.

Many students value opportunities that complement their studies while helping them build friendships, expand networks, and feel part of something bigger - particularly across different year groups. However, we also recognise that busy schedules and competing priorities can make this difficult. That's where we come in. Creating spaces where students can connect, belong, and thrive is at the heart of what we do.

This pilot project will explore new and flexible ways of building communities connected to academic life, moving beyond traditional society structures. You'll work closely with students and academic colleagues to design, test, and grow inclusive, accessible opportunities for connection and engagement.

With funding secured for three years, this role will play a key part in developing, testing, and refining a model that can be embedded and scaled across the Union, supported by meaningful evaluation and insight.

We're looking for a confident and creative project manager who is passionate about bringing people together. You'll be someone who can build strong relationships, inspire student involvement, and champion outstanding student experiences that support both success and a genuine sense of belonging.

Principal duties

- + Lead the development and delivery of the academic communities pilot, shaping an approach that connects students through shared academic interests.
- + Work with students to co-create inclusive, engaging opportunities that reflect their needs and experiences.
- + Use insight, evidence, and best practice to design and refine a model that meets the needs of Manchester Met students.
- + Oversee the day-to-day delivery of the project, ensuring activity is well planned, coordinated, and delivered effectively.
- + Monitor progress, proactively managing risks and embedding a culture of learning and continuous improvement.
- + Provide regular updates and insight to senior colleagues, supporting the long-term embedding and growth of the model.
- + Ensure the project is developed with sustainability in mind, creating a scalable and resource-conscious approach.

- + Build strong relationships with academic colleagues and identify opportunities to connect community activity with the curriculum.
- + Collaborate with teams across the Union and engage Student Officers to maximise impact and alignment with wider priorities.
- + Design and deliver flexible, accessible programmes that encourage connection, participation, and a strong sense of belonging.

Organisational stewardship and leadership:

- + Contribute to departmental planning processes and hold teams accountable for performance against key goals and indicators.
- + Understand key risks for area of work and ensure risk assessments are conducted against relevant activities
- + Assist staff in supporting in key students' union events and activities throughout the year including Welcome week, elections and supporting the officers in delivering their plans
- + Lead teams acting as an exemplar of The Union's behaviours ensuring all staff are given appropriate support and teams are consistently held accountable for delivering against expected performance standards (both role performance and behaviours)
- + Ensure that team activities are delivered in line with budget envelope and ensure any risks to financial targets are highlighted. Contribute to the forecasting and budgeting exercises in line with the organisational framework.
- + Hold good working knowledge of policy and procedure as it relates to the team's function, ensure that the team is knowledgeable in the policy and procedure that affects them and provide guidance to staff on application of the policy framework.
- + Proactively contribute to maintaining the communal spaces and ensuring the whole team share responsibility for managing team stores and keeping areas clean and tidy.

The duties described above are not an exhaustive list but are intended as being illustrative of the level and type of work required. The Job Description may be subject to amendment from time to time after discussion with the post holder. This job description does not constitute part of the contract of employment.

Person specification

Criteria	Essential or desirable
Qualifications	
We accept candidates from any educational background	Essential
Experience	
Experience leading projects or initiatives end-to-end, operating within agreed budgets and resources.	Essential
Experience of working on community development initiatives, driving engagement and participation	Desirable
Experience working with a range of internal and external stakeholders to progress shared objectives.	Essential
Experience managing multiple workstreams or projects concurrently, maintaining pace, focus and follow-through.	Essential
Experience working in a students' union, higher education, policy, public or membership-based organisation.	Desirable
Knowledge and skills	
Excellent organisational and project management skills, with strong attention to detail and follow-through.	Essential
Ability to scope work clearly, define outcomes and milestones, and manage interdependencies.	Essential
Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to adapt style and format for different audiences.	Essential
Understanding and commitment to equity and inclusion in programme development	Essential
Personal attributes	
Highly organised, proactive and detail-focused, with strong follow-through and the ability to keep multiple strands of work moving at pace.	Essential
Confident operating at manager level, using sound judgement and initiative to balance operational delivery with problem-solving within own area of expertise.	Essential

Highly effective interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trust and form productive relationships at all levels of the organisation and with external partners.	Essential
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Motivated, positive and adaptable, with a commitment to continuous learning, embracing new opportunities and making a meaningful contribution to the organisation.	Essential
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Values and ethics

Understanding of and commitment to the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity, and The Union's values .	Essential
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