

Role Specification

Title:	Project Officer - Learner Support Unit (Temporary, 3 Years)
Grade:	08
Unit:	Learner Support Unit (LSU)
Division:	Support
Reporting to:	Assistant Manager/ Manager
Ref:	551

Role Summary

SOLAS is a statutory agency that operates under the aegis of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). SOLAS has responsibility for providing strategic leadership to the Further Education and Training sector and to implement a significant transformation programme to deliver 21st century high quality education and training programmes to a diverse range of jobseekers and other learners.

Future FET: Transforming Learning is a strategy based around the three core pillars of building skills, fostering inclusion and facilitating pathways. The central premise of the Strategy is that Further Education and Training (FET) is for everyone and that it serves as a major driver of both economic development and social inclusion. FET is a valuable enabler of social cohesion. FET is committed to ensuring that necessary supports are available so to afford any individual, regardless of background and formal education level, an opportunity to access and engage in learning. The Learner Support Unit (LSU) plays a key role in this regard.

SOLAS is seeking to recruit a Project Officer (SOLAS Grade 8), on a temporary basis, 3 years in duration, to support the work of the LSU regarding:

- Fostering inclusion and widening access to opportunities in Further Education and Training (FET).
- Enhancing access and increasing participation, completion and achievement in FET for all learners/students, with an added emphasis on those from underrepresented communities and those at risk of social exclusion.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL), with an added emphasis on embedding UDL in FET.
- SOLAS Grant aided agencies.
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting.

Key Tasks/Responsibilities

- Support LSU activities related to fostering inclusion for all learners / students in FET, with reference to learners from underrepresented communities and those at risk of social exclusion, which includes:
 - Assisting with transforming provision and supports (including financial supports) in FET through up-to-date system-wide policy and practice.
 - Assisting in shaping equitable funding, including setting relevant inclusion-related funding parameters and guidelines.
 - Providing inputs on matters in relation to access, participation, completion and achievement in FET.
- Support the preparation, development and review of a range of reports, briefing documents and other key inputs relating to:
 - Learner Support.
 - Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
 - ESF+ related equality and human rights horizontal principles (to support and enable an effective and high standard of reporting on the contribution of the EU Funds to equality and human rights, as pertinent to FET).
 - SOLAS grant-aided agencies.
 - ESG reporting.
- Collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders to support the implementation of the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy (*Future FET: Transforming Learning*) and any subsequent FET Strategy.
- Assisting with provision of regular updates for the SOLAS Senior Leadership Team and meeting all relevant reporting requirements.
- Assisting with analysis and preparation of responses to queries - stakeholder queries and queries from other Government departments / agencies (including response to parliamentary questions).
- Ensuring a high level of stakeholder focus is maintained in the unit both for internal and external stakeholders.
- Engaging and liaising with internal and external stakeholders as required.
- Assisting with the interaction with external agencies, including assisting with commissioning of external contractors and engaging with third parties and procurement processes.
- Carrying out desk-based research on various matters / areas to support the work of the LSU.
- Supporting the delivery of projects through the development and maintenance of relevant processes and documentation, templates, project budgets and appropriate financial reports as required etc., to support the work of the Unit / Team.
- Carrying out administrative duties, as required, to support the Team and the Organisation.
- Representing the Learner Support Unit, SOLAS and the FET sector, as required, on relevant stakeholder fora, including working and advisory groups.
- Any other duties consistent with the role / post, which may be specified and assigned by Management.

Requirements

Essential

- A relevant third level qualification – an honours bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in relevant field / fields of education - in social science / education / business or similar field (NFQ Level 8 or equivalent).
- Excellent project management skills and experience of generating, using and updating project documentation and project activity monitoring systems.
- Demonstrable experience in report writing, including evidence of:
 - Report compilation / writing and proofreading skills.
 - Proven ability to independently plan, conduct and produce high-quality documents / inputs into documents.
 - Ability to synthesise and summarise information and data (qualitative and quantitative), including experience in collating and analysing qualitative and quantitative data, data visualisation / generating charts and other graphics to depict results and findings.
- High level of ICT competence / digital proficiency, including a proven ability to apply technology in the workplace and excellent working knowledge of Microsoft Office suite (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) and / or equivalent packages.
- Three years of relevant working experience.
- Strong communication and presentation skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work to measurable objectives and deadlines.
- Ability to interpret, analyse and manage a range of information sources.
- Ability to synthesise, summarise and convey research, policy and related documents.
- Skilled in collaborative work and able to interact effectively with a diverse range of stakeholders, including government departments and state agencies, non-profit / not for profit / NGOs and special interest groups.
- Ability to research and interpret policies and strategies at both national and European levels.
- Ability to manage own work and associated timelines including ability to handle various tasks and meet deadlines and to manage changing priorities with a strong quality focus on own work and outputs.
- Self-starter capable of working on own initiative with the ability to adapt to different work practices and responsibilities.
- Strong interpersonal and team-working skills.
- Ability to innovate, problem solve and apply critical thinking.

Desirable

- Post graduate qualifications in a relevant discipline / field, including a postgraduate degree in social science / business or related field relevant to the requirement of the post.
- Qualification in Project Management.
- Experience in active inclusion in a further education and training or higher education environment.
- Experience in a role focused on addressing the needs of underrepresented communities and those at risk of social exclusion, including promoting social inclusion and equality through supporting communities and individuals to engage with education and training.
- An interest in fostering inclusion in Further Education and Training.
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of the policy and legislative framework relating to access and participation in FET/ An understanding of national regulatory/governance framework.
- An understanding of policy and good practice relating to enhancing access to, and widening participation in, education and training.
- Evidence of commitment to continuing professional learning and development in the relevant areas/fields.
- Excellent IT competence and evidence of using technology to enhance efficiency or effectiveness within the role, team, and organisation.
- Well-developed interpersonal skills with the ability to build relationships with many different stakeholders and demonstrate negotiation and influencing skills.
- Experience in engaging with and contributing to policy discussions of relevance for FET.
- Experience of working on and delivering projects involving multiple stakeholders.