

# Welfare Officer

## Job Specification

Date created: December 2024

### JOB DESCRIPTION

Employment status: Permanent, full time

Hours: Full time hours at UCEM are 35 per week, Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and this role follows this pattern

Location flexibility: The place of work for this role is **Split** between the Horizons office in Reading and your home; the exact split of days/hours is negotiable but must include a minimum of **two** working days per week spent at Horizons (you may work more in the office should you wish)

Please note the following:

- When you work at Horizons you must attend on core office days only
- Core office days are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- The building is closed to staff on Fridays
- On a Split contract you cannot attend the office on a Monday, unless you have worked a minimum of 3 other core days in the office
- Working at home is only possible if your environment meets certain conditions – see the **Attachment** to this Job Specification document – and if not, you need to work at Horizons

Department: Student and Registry Services

Line manager: Safeguarding and Welfare Manager

### Role summary

The Safeguarding and Welfare team provide information, advice, and guidance to all students to ensure they are safe and well supported throughout their studies. As the Welfare Officer, you will not only provide assistance to the team, but also liaise with Academic and Professional Services teams to deliver high quality support to meet the needs of students on a range of study, personal and welfare issues. You will have a strong foundation in compassion and support for others and have strong communication skills to build rapport with others in the online world. You will be able to navigate complex situations in a calm and professional manner and value teamwork and collaboration to ensure the best outcomes for UCEM students.

As a Welfare Officer, you will provide support to the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager to deliver effective and timely interventions for students with a range of welfare issues and will work collaboratively to champion student wellbeing. This may require you to provide information, advice and guidance to students, make referrals to external agencies, develop and deliver initiatives and training for staff and students, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions made by the wider Safeguarding team. You will be the primary point of contact for safeguarding and welfare queries in the absence of the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager. You will be expected to stay up to date on all university procedures and wider legislation to ensure safeguarding and welfare provision is effective and UCEM is ready for Ofsted inspection.

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## Role accountabilities and responsibilities

- Take an outcome focussed approach to manage a case load of students with complex welfare needs.
- Provide high quality information, advice and guidance on a variety of student issues.
- Provide administrative support for UCEM's SilverCloud provision and be a point of contact for students on the supported pathway.
- Make decisions in Safeguarding Cases and follow cases through to conclusion with support of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Monitor student queries and cases, ensuring responses are communicated in a timely manner.
- Support the promotion of pastoral care across UCEM programmes (ensuring appropriate signposting of students to utilise additional student specialist services where appropriate).
- Educate and update relevant parties including students/staff/employers as appropriate on issues relating to Safeguarding, Prevent and welfare.
- Assist with the development of online resources to help staff and students with welfare support and guidance.
- Provide the main administrative support and monitoring for the Fitness to Study process.
- Support with the delivery of UCEM's Mental Health Strategy.
- Manage and build relationships with partner organisations such as Lionheart.
- Keep thorough, accurate and up-to-date records in relation to the support required and provided, ensuring compliance with data protection legislation.
- Help the Disability and Welfare team comply with institutional reporting requirements, when required.
- Keep up to date with Safeguarding, Prevent, and welfare legislation, funding eligibility and best practice in the sector to ensure effective compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and other professional guidelines.
- Deliver excellent customer service in all aspects of the role and contribute to a student-centred specialist advice and guidance service.
- Fully engage with all required training for the role and embed this training within your daily practice, as applicable.
- Complete regular, role appropriate, continuous professional development.
- Provide ad-hoc support to other teams within Student and Registry Services as and when needed.
- Contribute to UCEM maintaining its Matrix accreditation.

Line management responsibility:	NONE
Budget responsibility:	NONE
<u>In this role you will liaise with:</u> Students, Safeguarding and Welfare Manager, Disability Support Team, Safeguarding Team, Apprenticeships Team, Digital Education, Finance Team, Admissions Team, Lecturers, Academic Support and Enhancement Team and other UCEM staff	

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Assessment Criteria: A = Application I = Interview T = Test

X denotes both essential and desirable requirements plus how these will be assessed

Qualifications and training	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
GCSE Maths and English Language Grade C or 4 or above	X		X		
Undergraduate degree		X	X		
Designated Safeguarding Lead Qualification		X	X		

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*Please be aware that as part of onboarding processes, we will seek original documentary evidence of the relevant academic and/or professional qualifications which you include within your job application*

Previous experience	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Experience of working in Safeguarding in FE/HE	X		X	X	
Relevant experience of paid/voluntary work of delivering pastoral student support with the aim of helping students succeed	X		X	X	
Maintenance of safeguarding records to required standards including knowledge of legislation relating to data protection	X		X		
Experience of delivering pastoral support online		X	X	X	
Working with external support agencies		X	X	X	
Experience of the Higher Education sector		X	X	X	
Working with people with disabilities or learning difficulties		X	X	X	
Skills, knowledge, and aptitudes	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Digital skills: We use MS Office which includes Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint	X		X	X	
Ability to manage difficult situations sensitively and in a timely manner	X		X		
Interpersonal skills; the ability to communicate with people with a wide range of needs	X		X	X	
Ability to adapt quickly to changing pressures and demands whilst maintaining accuracy	X		X		
Knowledge of current legislation relating to Safeguarding and Prevent	X		X	X	
Ability to build relationships with remotely based students and staff	X		X	X	
Ability to think independently and problem solve	X		X	X	
Knowledge of current legislation relating to data protection	X		X	X	
Other requirements or special requirements	Essential	Desirable	A	I	T
Alignment to the UCEM core values of Passion, Integrity, Excellence and Support; all employees are expected to demonstrate our values at work: <a href="https://www.ucem.ac.uk/core-values/">https://www.ucem.ac.uk/core-values/</a>	X			X	
Commitment to delivering positive outcomes for our students; we want our students to be successful	X			X	
You must be prepared to undertake compulsory online training should you be appointed; this includes Data	X			X	

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Protection, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Prevent, EDI, and Anti-bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct					
A commitment to CPD and a desire for a career in Safeguarding and Welfare Support	X		X	X	

## PAY & BENEFITS

- Salary up to £28,000 per annum.
- 26 days paid holiday (rising to 28 with service) plus paid bank/public holidays plus up to 5 paid closure days (typically between Christmas and New Year); all per holiday year Full Time Equivalent. Our holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July. We also have a holiday buy and sell scheme in place. Sometimes UCEM does not need to close for 5 days per year and any balance, for example 1 day, can be used as a paid Wellbeing Day to take time out for your own physical or mental health.
- Pensions auto-enrolment to the People's Pension salary exchange scheme (the term we use for salary sacrifice). You may opt out of salary exchange but remain in the scheme, or you may choose to opt out altogether.
- Policies in place for all types of family-friendly statutory leave with enhanced pay available from day one of employment (in addition to statutory pay, where applicable).
- Wellbeing support and full access to the Employee Assistance Programme, as well as the Thrive Mental Wellbeing app. Several UCEM employees are trained Mental Health First Aiders and can support staff.
- For Horizons based roles, we may in the future be able to offer parking on site however you must not assume this will be possible. Every now and then we may have a spare parking space become available and you can ask to join the waiting list. UCEM is keen wherever possible, to encourage staff to commute as sustainably as possible.
- Cycle to Work and Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice schemes and access to Tax-Free Childcare (Government scheme).
- Life assurance cover.
- Employer-funded Health Cash Plan (Simplyhealth) and voluntary dental insurance (Unum).
- Charity giving options available including one voluntary paid day, per annum.
- As a UCEM employee you will have access to Microsoft Office 365 applications for personal use. You will also have access to range of lifestyle discounts (savings on everyday purchases) and access to two learning platforms.

*On the Join the team page of our website, you will find the full list of employee benefits at UCEM*

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**IMPORTANT!** All job applications must be sent to [recruitment@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@ucem.ac.uk) and if you apply via a jobs board, please make sure you have sent all required documents otherwise we will be unable to consider your application. In addition, if you apply for this job on the recommendation of an existing UCEM employee, please make sure to mention their name within your application.

To apply for this role, please send the following to [recruitment@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@ucem.ac.uk) (you will receive an auto-response):

1. Your up-to-date CV;
2. A covering letter or email message outlining your suitability\* for the role; AND
3. A completed **Recruitment Check Form** which is available from the *Current vacancies* page of our website.

The above items constitute a **complete** job application.

\*We hope you take time to consider the UCEM values when you prepare your job application. You may also wish to consult our vision and strategy document: <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/our-vision/>

We are committed to driving forward our sustainability agenda to secure a sustainable future and our long-term ambition is to be the world's most sustainable university. We recommend you visit our website to find out more about our **Sustainability Strategy**: <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/sustainability/>

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If you are an existing UCEM employee, we request you inform your current line manager of your intention to apply for this role.

**NO AGENCIES:** We are not using agencies for this vacancy, and we cannot accept any CV submissions. Please do not contact us as we can only repeat this message.

## Informal discussion

If you are unsure whether to apply, perhaps because you do not meet all essential criteria, we encourage you to call the hiring manager to discuss this further (details below). If you are excited by this vacancy do not rule yourself out; it still might be worth applying.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Richard Higgins on 0118 467 2036 or email [r.higgins@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:r.higgins@ucem.ac.uk)

For any other enquiries please contact HR on 0118 467 2454 / 2433 or email [recruitment@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@ucem.ac.uk)

***\*Please note that UCEM is closed for the festive period from 24 December 2024 to 01 January 2025 inclusive. We will respond to any queries as soon as possible when we re-open in the New Year.***

## Closing date and next steps

Monday 06 January 2025 at 5.00 p.m.

HR will screen all applications in person and all applicants will receive a response confirming the status of their application. We value the time taken to make a job application and the interest shown in UCEM.

## Interview details

Dates for interview will be advised to you later in the process.

Please indicate on your Recruitment Check Form any dates that you cannot make, up to 4 weeks from the closing date. This helps us to plan interviews should you be shortlisted, prior to contacting you.

Applications may be reviewed prior to the closing date and occasionally, you may be invited to interview ahead of the closing date.

Interviews are normally carried out over Zoom or Microsoft Teams, however we may invite you to visit our Reading office, especially when this is your place of work.

Please be prepared for a two-stage interview process, held on different dates. As part of the interview process, you will meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Sometimes we may conduct a telephone interview at first or second stage.

## Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Here at UCEM we champion equality, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce. We celebrate diversity and the strengths it brings to our staff body, our student community and our Board of Trustees, recognising that people are key to our success. Our aim is to attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce, therefore we welcome and encourage applications from all backgrounds.

## Pre-employment checks

UCEM undertakes thorough pre-employment screening as part of its recruitment process. Given we have contracts with Government offices, we make sure our checks comply with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). Checks will include identity, right to work, basic disclosure criminal record check, and three years of employment history.

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## Attachment – homeworking environment

UCEM is a **flexible employer** and flexibility is built into different places of work location. As such, it is reasonable to ask employees to adhere to some **general principles and ways of working**, in order to make sure flexibility offers value to everyone, including UCEM.

In addition, if all or part of your working week involves working at home, your home environment must meet certain conditions. Otherwise you will be required to work in the office at Horizons.

### General principles

- All employees regardless of place of work will be required to take an online Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment and repeat this at such intervals as may be instructed by the Facilities Management Team. The purpose of this is to look after your health and safety at work.
- All employees must adhere to UCEM IT Security and Data Protection policies in their place of work.
- All employees will be expected to be accessible to colleagues during their normal working hours and ensure their Outlook Calendars reflect the accurate place of work.
- All line managers will be expected to be accessible to their team and will be responsible for ensuring the performance of their team.

### Remote (Home) requirements and conditions

- Where your place of work involves working at home, you must have suitable conditions in which to work.
- As a minimum, your UK home location must be able to accommodate the UCEM technology and equipment. What this means in practice is that you must have sufficient space in which to house the technology and equipment safely and securely.
- In all cases, UCEM technology and equipment can only be handled and used by you, the employee. It must not be accessible to any other household member, at any time.
- When you are working remotely as part of the DSE assessment, you will be required to provide evidence that your working environment meets DSE requirements, such as providing a photo of your workstation setup.
- You must also provide a secure and reliable internet connection which allows you to work as effectively as if you were in Horizons, **including undertaking video and audio calls and connecting permanently to the VPN.**
- In the case of known broadband outage you should plan to work at Horizons or elsewhere – noting that elsewhere must still meet the place of work requirements. Should you be unable to do either of these options, you will be required to take holiday. In the event of unexpected outage, you should discuss with your line manager whether you need to find an alternative place of work or take holiday.
- For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of the required broadband, will be self-funded.
- It is expected that you will house technology and equipment at a suitable work desk, which gives you the space needed to work safely and confidentially. This space in your home must be away from other household users, such as space in a room which is not frequented by other household members.
- Your work environment must remain professional at all times. This means you must be able to work remotely without interruption from household members and noise, and your surroundings should mirror what an office environment would look like (clean/tidy, free of clutter and distractions).
- It is not appropriate to work from a sofa or other location which is not in keeping with presenting a professional work environment. Opting to use the blurring function on Teams/Zoom is not an acceptable workaround.
- If you do not have space to accommodate these requirements or your circumstances change, you are not permitted to work at any location other than Horizons.