



JOB DESCRIPTION

Senior Advisor

Grade C: Senior Coordinator

Reports to: Advocacy Manager

About Us

Our vision

A place for everyone, we inspire and empower students to change the world.

Our mission

At Reading Students' Union, we strive to help students be their most authentic selves. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences that make up our student body, and pride ourselves on creating spaces and opportunities where everyone feels they belong and are empowered to grow, thrive and achieve their goals.

Our strategic focus

We will:

- ✓ make data-informed decisions that reflect and respond to our students' realities and their evolving needs.
- ✓ deliver consistent, safe, and supportive services for students.
- ✓ provide opportunities for students to achieve balance and build meaningful connections.
- ✓ champion student futures and skills development.

Our 4 pillars of performance

1. ENTERPRISE & DEVELOPMENT
2. CLEARLY SIGNPOSTED STUDENT JOURNEYS
3. OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
4. DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

Our Values

- ★ **AMBITIOUS**
we are trailblazers
- ★ **DELIBERATE**
we focus on the right things
- ★ **DISRUPTIVE**
rebellious spirit; pragmatic mind
- ★ **RESPONSIBLE**
a force for good
- ★ **OPTIMISTIC**
obstacles are the path

The role of a Grade C Senior Coordinator

Leads delivery of projects and complex services, improving processes, working with stakeholders and supporting team performance.

This job description is not an exhaustive list and may be subject to change. The post holder is expected to demonstrate flexibility, undertaking additional reasonable duties to support our mission and enhance the student experience.

Job Title: Senior Advisor



Role purpose: *why the role exists*

To provide high-quality, independent and confidential advice, helping students understand their options, navigate University processes and achieve the best possible outcomes. Senior Advisors manage casework across academic and housing matters, using professional judgement and expertise to provide effective support. The role empowers students to take informed action, connects them with specialist support where needed, and uses casework insight to inform service improvements, campaigns, outreach and preventative activity.

Role Responsibilities:

what the role 'does' within our strategy (the golden thread)

1. Enterprise & Development

(Brand, strategy, sector leadership, income generation, partnerships, innovation)

Service Development & Partnerships

- Provide professional expertise and insight to support the continuous development of the Student Advocacy service.
- Identify opportunities to improve advice provision, student access and the effectiveness of support.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of service plans, projects and improvement initiatives.
- Develop effective working relationships with relevant University departments, external agencies and specialist organisations to support positive outcomes for students.
- Maintain awareness of developments in relevant legislation, regulation, University policy and sector practice and contribute to appropriate service responses.
- Contribute advice expertise to organisational projects and initiatives where relevant.

2. Student Journeys <i>(Advocacy, campaigns, democracy, belonging, events)</i>	Advice & Casework • Provide independent, confidential and impartial advice across the service's full remit, including academic and housing. • Manage a varied caseload from initial enquiry through to resolution. • Support students to understand their rights, responsibilities and options and make informed decisions about their circumstances. • Advise and support students navigating complex University procedures, including complaints, appeals, disciplinary processes and other relevant academic matters. • Support students with housing issues, including rights, responsibilities, disputes and contract checking. • Support students to prepare for and navigate meetings, hearings and formal processes. • Recognise where students require additional or specialist support and make effective referrals to appropriate services. • Adapt advice and support to reflect students' individual circumstances, communication needs and potential barriers to accessing services. • Signpost students to external support services where matters go beyond the specialist areas of our service. Proactive Advice & Student Support • Contribute professional expertise to proactive advice, outreach and engagement activity responding to identified student needs. • Work with the Representation & Insights team to develop and support campaigns, initiatives and interventions informed by advice trends and recurring student issues. • Contribute to workshops, guidance, resources and outreach activity that help students understand their rights, avoid common problems and access support earlier.
3. Operational Excellence <i>(Governance, leadership, people management, delivery, compliance, systems, efficiencies)</i>	Casework Quality & Compliance • Maintain accurate, timely and complete case records in accordance with service standards, data protection requirements and relevant regulatory obligations. • Manage casework effectively, ensuring students receive timely communication and cases progress appropriately. • Apply policies, procedures, legislation and professional standards consistently while exercising appropriate professional judgement.

	• Identify and escalate safeguarding concerns, significant risks, complex complaints and matters outside individual authority in accordance with agreed processes. • Contribute to case reviews, quality assurance and reflective practice to maintain high standards across the service. • Support with retaining the Advice Quality Standard certification. • Maintain the knowledge and professional competence required to provide advice across the service remit. • Contribute to the development and maintenance of advice resources, guidance, processes and standard operating procedures. Team Delivery • Work collaboratively with other Senior Advisors to manage demand, share workloads and maintain effective service delivery. • Provide peer support and professional input on complex cases and areas of expertise. • Contribute to team planning, service meetings and continuous improvement activity. • Contribute to training and knowledge-sharing across the Students' Union where advice expertise is relevant.
4.Data Driven Insights (Strategic planning, research, innovation, impact evaluation, engagement, communication)	Casework Insight & Impact • Identify recurring issues, emerging trends and systemic barriers through casework and student contact. • Record casework consistently to support accurate analysis of student needs, service demand and outcomes. • Share relevant trends, evidence and professional expertise with the Student Advocacy Manager and Representation & Insights team. • Contribute to the interpretation of advice data, helping explain what emerging patterns mean for students and where further action may be needed. • Support the development of campaigns, outreach, proactive advice and organisational responses based on evidence from casework. • Contribute to reporting on service demand, student outcomes and the impact of advice provision. • Evaluate relevant proactive advice and outreach activity and use learning to improve future support.

Role KPIs	1. Students receive high-quality, independent and timely advice, with positive outcomes and strong service feedback. 2. Casework is managed effectively, with accurate records, timely progression and compliance with service standards, data protection and relevant regulatory requirements. 3. All Senior Advisors maintain the knowledge and professional competence required to deliver a consistent generalist advice service. 4. Casework trends and emerging student issues are consistently identified and shared, contributing to organisational insight, campaigns, outreach and service improvement. 5. Effective relationships with University colleagues and external organisations support positive case outcomes and improvements to student experiences.



Competency Matrix: what good performance looks like (by grade)

Guide: this Core Competency Matrix below defines *how success is demonstrated* –across our pillars of performance- for all Grade C Senior Coordinator- regardless of role specifics.

CORE COMPETENCY MATRIX (Grade C Senior Coordinator)				
LEVEL	Experienced			
WHAT THIS LEVEL DOES	COORDINATES			
HOW THEY OPERATE	"Applies expertise and judgement to deliver effectively and improve outcomes"			
Reporting line	D			
HOW THE ROLE CREATES VALUE	Leads delivery of projects and complex services, improving processes, working with stakeholders and supporting team performance.			
CULTURE	All activities must demonstrate our values and Culture Code in how we act and deliver			
Pillar 1: ENTERPRISE & DEVELOPMENT		Pillar 2 CLEARLY SIGNPOSTED STUDENT JOURNEYS	Pillar 3 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE	Pillar 4 DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS
Leads improvements		Improves student journeys using insights	Coordinates delivery and improves processes	Uses data to identify trends and improve services
Supports delivery of plans and initiatives		Supports delivery of smooth, joined-up student experiences	Coordinates day-to-day delivery and keeps work on track and within governance frameworks	Uses data to understand performance and identify issues
Contributes to improving how work is delivered		Puts student impact first. Always.	Follows processes consistently and supports improvements	Uses insight to support improvements in services
Identifies opportunities for improvement and development		Support elected Student Leaders to achieve their goals and reduce friction	Communicates clearly to support effective delivery - no silos, no gatekeeping, no gossiping	Focuses on meaningful outcomes, not just activity
Builds relationships to support delivery and outcomes		Helps reduce confusion and improve clarity across services	Works within governance and flags risks or issues early	Tracks progress and raises issues early
Shares ideas and contributes to team discussions and change			Supports efficiency, quality and consistent ways of working in a modern SU	Shares information clearly to support improvement
KPIs to measure success				
1. Strong compliance and leadership on governance, policies, and procedures				
2. Delivery of coordinated work/projects to time and quality standards				
3. Demonstrable improvements to services or processes				
4. Strong team relationships with good professional boundaries				
5. Effective coordination and stakeholder support				



Person Specification: what to hire for

Senior Advisor

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS	• Relevant advice qualification or equivalent professional experience • Commitment and ability to undertake required training and maintain professional competence across the service remit	• Relevant qualification in advice, law, housing, welfare or a related field
EXPERIENCE	• Experience providing advice, advocacy or complex casework support • Experience managing a varied caseload from initial enquiry through to resolution • Experience supporting individuals to understand complex information, consider their options and make informed decisions • Experience interpreting and applying policies, procedures, legislation or regulatory requirements • Experience handling sensitive, complex or challenging situations using professional judgement • Experience maintaining accurate and confidential case records • Senior administration/coordination experience in a fast-paced environment • Experience delivering projects and/or events.	• Experience providing advice in academic, housing, money or debt matters • Experience delivering regulated debt advice • Experience supporting individuals through formal complaints, appeals, hearings or other complex processes • Experience contributing to proactive advice, outreach, workshops or preventative activity • Experience within a Students' Union, Higher Education, charity or advice organisation

KNOWLEDGE	• Health and safety basics • Inclusion, data protection and sustainability practices • Understanding of the principles of independent, impartial and confidential advice • Understanding of effective casework management and professional boundaries • Understanding of safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection in an advice environment • Understanding of equality, inclusion and the barriers that may affect access to advice and support • Understanding of how casework evidence and recurring issues can inform service improvement and wider organisational action	• Knowledge of Higher Education policies, procedures and student casework • Knowledge of housing rights and common issues affecting student renters • Knowledge of debt advice principles and relevant regulatory requirements • Knowledge of the Students' Union and Higher Education sectors
SKILLS	• Strong casework and problem-solving skills, with the ability to assess complex situations and identify appropriate options • Ability to interpret complex policies, procedures and information and explain them clearly to students • Ability to manage a varied caseload, competing priorities and deadlines effectively • Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate sensitively and clearly in difficult circumstances • Ability to advocate effectively and make appropriate representations on behalf of students • Ability to exercise professional judgement, recognise the limits of own authority and escalate appropriately • Strong attention to detail and ability to maintain accurate, timely and confidential records	• Data analysis • Process improvement/SOP development • Experience developing advice resources, guidance or training • Experience contributing professional expertise to campaigns, research or outreach activity

	• Ability to identify patterns and emerging issues from individual casework and communicate their wider significance • Ability to work collaboratively, share expertise and contribute to a consistent generalist advice service • Ability to build effective professional relationships with colleagues and external stakeholders • Strong admin and time management/organisational skills • Multi-tasking and prioritisation • Teamwork and collaboration • Problem-solving • Tech savvy (M365) and digital tools • Strong numeracy and literacy (spoken and written)	
APPROACH	• Student focused and committed to helping students understand their options and achieve the best possible outcomes • Student focused • A champion of our brand and values driven Culture Code • High standards • Proactive, collaborative and solutions-focused • Resilient • Flexible (including occasional evenings and weekends to support events)	• Passionate about the SU sector and our charitable purpose