

# **Student Advisor (Maternity Cover) Job Pack**

**Summer 2019**

# Introduction from our Welfare and Rights Officer

Dear Candidate,

I am delighted that you are interested in joining the SUAS Team at this exciting time. I've just started my term as the CUSU and GU Welfare and Rights Officer, and as part of my role I work closely with SUAS to ensure that students at Cambridge get the support they need. I really look forward to welcoming a new member to the team and to work together to make a real difference for students.

Student-led and student-focused, the goal of our students' unions is to create the best possible environment for students wanting to study and achieve here. We campaign on the issues students care about, stand up for student rights, and ensure that Cambridge is an environment where all students are given the opportunity to flourish. SUAS, as an impartial advice service, undertakes the individual casework which enables us to continue with our work.

In this role you will be one of the professional advisors within the Students' Unions' Advice Service, providing confidential and impartial advice, support and information to students. If you are interested in working as part of an independent team within a change-making, student-led organisation, then we would love to hear from you.

Best wishes, and good luck!

**Stella Swain**

*Welfare and Rights Officer 2019/20  
Cambridge University Students' Union and  
Graduate Union*



# About the Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS)

The Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS) provides free, confidential, and independent advice, information and representation to all Cambridge University students, undergraduate and postgraduate, from all 31 Colleges. Students can come to the Service with any issues they might experience during their time at Cambridge University.

**The SUAS is a shared service, provided by Cambridge University Students' Union and the Graduate Union.** The Service has grown in its 9 years of operation and now includes two full-time staff members (the Head of Advice and Welfare and a Senior Advisor) and two part-time staff members (a Senior Advisor and Advisor). The CUSU-GU Welfare & Rights Officer is the lead elected sabbatical officer for the SUAS and works closely with the team. The SUAS team also meets regularly with all the elected sabbatical officers of the CUSU and the GU to ensure they have an awareness of the types of issues on which service-users are seeking support.

The SUAS is open **Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, all year round**. Students can make an appointment or attend a drop in session on Mondays and Tuesdays from 12pm-2pm where they can raise quick questions with an Advisor. **Members of the team are expected to be approachable and friendly, and to give every student a warm welcome.** The SUAS generally gets very positive feedback from students as well as the staff it works in partnership with to support students, and every effort is made to ensure that each person's experience with the Service is positive regardless of the complexity or sensitivity of the matter.

## **Students often come for advice on:**

- Academic-related issues
- Homesickness and culture shock
- Personal issues
- Disciplinary matters
- Bullying/harassment
- Welfare concerns
- Mental health issues
- Taking time out from studies (intermission)
- Managing working relationships
- University and College regulations

As generalist advisors, the SUAS complements other more specialised University service providers such as the Counselling Service and the Disability Resource Centre. The SUAS works closely with these and other University service providers as well as Tutors in colleges, nurses, GPs, the City Council and local charities and organisations to ensure students have access to a range of sources of advice, information and support.

During the academic year 2018-19, the Service worked with nearly 500 service-users providing support to students ranging from simple queries to complex casework requiring in depth research, advice and support.

# About CUSU

Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) is the representative body for all 23,000 students at the University of Cambridge and its constituent Colleges; it is a registered charity within the University community that exists to represent, campaign for, and support students at the University. Its charitable purposes are two-fold: i) to advance the educational, social and cultural experience of its members, alongside supporting the welfare of its members; and, ii) to promote equality of opportunity within students' experiences at Cambridge and widening access to Cambridge for applicants from non-traditional backgrounds and our representational work in the University. CUSU is a registered charity.

The Union achieves these purposes by promoting members' interests within the institution and promoting agendas that aim to affect policy relating to the student experience; by providing services to students; and by supporting activities - e.g. projects, events and groups/forums - that engage students in the various strands of work of the union.

Each year students elect from the membership six members who take up employment in the union as "Sabbatical Officers"; these officers are the most prominent officers within the union and they lead the representative work of the union on behalf of members. Their roles exist to lead and direct priorities for each academic year for which they are elected to serve.

The sabbatical team is supported by a range of staff roles in the students' union and their activities are overseen by the CEO on behalf of the charity's trustee board. Staff also coordinate projects, services and student activities; as well as operations, facilities and fundraising all of which contributes to the long-term development of the union and its role in the University community.

CUSU runs a variety of campaigns that reflect the priorities of the elected officers or of CUSU Council, which can range from trying to resolve student issues within a course or department, through to trying to raise awareness of an issue affecting students or even addressing a structural barrier to equality of opportunity perceived by the members. The Students' Union provides a variety of services, from individual support for students who are experiencing problems through to providing free sexual health supplies and cut-price photocopying for Cambridge students.



# About the GU

The University of Cambridge Graduate Union is a small and specialist Students' Union representing the postgraduate students at the University of Cambridge. It is a registered charity.

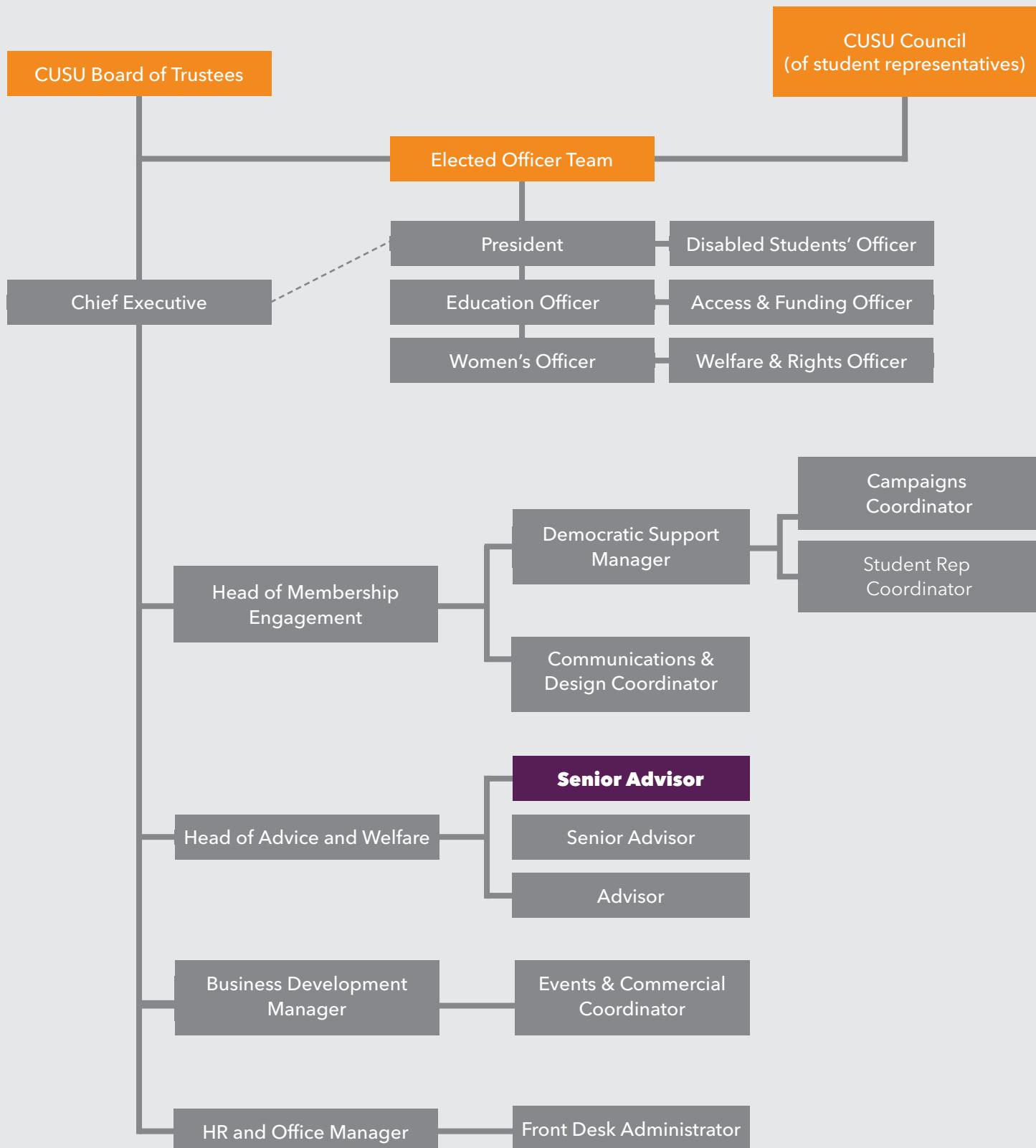
The Graduate Union was founded in the 1950s by humanitarian Greta Burkhill, essentially as a combined soup kitchen and social hub for postgraduate students and their spouses, whom she felt were neglected as a consequence of the University's focus on undergraduates. Over the years, the Union has evolved from a University-run members' club into a student-lead representative organisation, becoming first in the late twentieth century a modern Students' Union and then in 2012 a registered charity. It is officially recognised by the University, and is responsible for providing postgraduate student representation to a large number of University bodies, including the University Council and the General Board of the Faculties.

The Union operates within a complex and diverse institutional environment, a consequence of the Collegiate structure of the University and the natural evolution of students' unions at the institution over its long history. Every student of the University is also a member of one of the 31 autonomous, fiercely independent Colleges – and each College has its own students' unions (usually one for undergraduates called the JCR and one for postgraduates called the MCR).

Students are represented at University-level by two central Students' Unions to which College unions may affiliate: the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU), which represents all Cambridge University students, and the Graduate Union, which specifically represents postgraduate and mature undergraduate students. Members of the Graduate Union are therefore also members of CUSU and their college union, and the Union works closely with these institutions to ensure the best outcomes for their shared membership. The Union's relationships with CUSU and the MCRs are critically important. CUSU is a much larger organisation than the Graduate Union (although still small by the standards of the sector), and the two unions share many resources, including office space and an increasing number of joint staff employed to support both unions. Although the two unions are politically independent and organisationally autonomous of one another, their shared goals and values are laid out in a memorandum of understanding between the two which commits each to a constructive working relationship with the other. The Graduate Union is better able to achieve its objects with the aid of CUSU's organisational infrastructure, and CUSU is better able to fulfil its representational duties towards postgraduate students through collaborating with the specialist Graduate Union.

The Graduate Union relies upon the MCRs in order to effectively represent postgraduate students – generally speaking, MCRs have a more direct relationship with their members while the Graduate Union is best placed to effect changes in policy at the University-level. A strong relationship between the Union and MCRs helps ensure postgraduate voices are heard by the central University. Fostering a strong relationship with MCRs based on mutual trust and interdependence is therefore imperative to the success of the Graduate Union.

# CUSU Organisational Chart



# About Cambridge

The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and celebrated universities. It is widely acknowledged as a global leader in the Higher Education sphere, and consistently ranks highly among the best universities in the world for teaching, research and student outcomes.

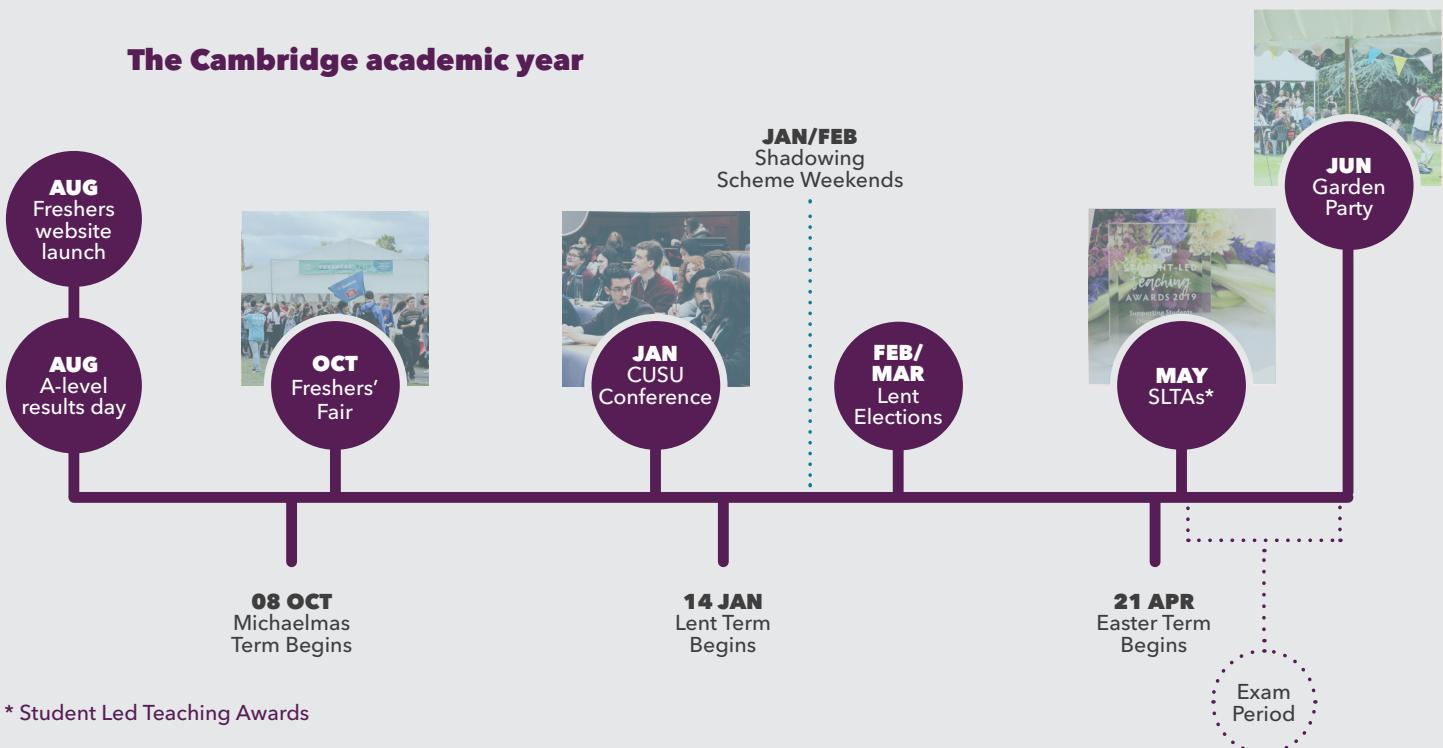
It is a collegiate institution: there are 31 independent Colleges, each of whom share with the central University the responsibility of each students' educational experience. The mix of College and University as key agents in a student's experience is part of what makes the university model so successful.

There is a widespread culture of autonomy within the institution, which facilitates layered, consensus-driven collective governance alongside competition and complexity. This culture presents challenge to students: the study experience is pressure-laden and intense; and bureaucratic and considered pace of the institution, can present barriers to student-led change.

Whilst the Union feels student representatives could be better supported, our representatives are mostly considered equals and their views taken seriously in University governance. The Union has incredible access to decision-making across the Collegiate community, representing members interests on most major committees. The University has adopted many agendas promoted by the Union in recent years, from changing assessment methods to increase flexibility for students, to committing to address sensitive cultural challenges at the institution such as sexual harassment and unconscious bias.

Key challenges for the University centre on Widening Participation efforts to increase participation from students from less traditional backgrounds, and in navigating the current funding challenges facing the Higher Education sector. For students, many wish to see a more progressive approach applied to the student experience by modernising the best of what Cambridge already offers.

## The Cambridge academic year



# Who are Cambridge students?

**46**

average  
hours spent  
per week  
on studies



**30%**

of students  
volunteer

CLUBS &  
SOCIETIES

**88%**

of students  
engage in  
society  
activity



**22,548**  
**STUDENTS**



**9,313**

**TYPE OF  
STUDY**



**12,385**

**UNDER  
GRAD**



**10,164**

**POST  
GRAD**



**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**  
**140+ COUNTRIES REPRESENTED**

# Application Information

## Key Dates

**Application deadline:** Sunday, 1st September at 23:59

**Interview date:** Monday, 9th September 2019

*Applicants should notify us in advance if they foresee any dates being problematic.*

## Apply!

To apply, please submit a CV and supporting statement (the supporting statement should be a maximum of two sides of A4) that clearly outlines your suitability for the role by addressing the criteria focused on experience within the person specification, giving examples.

Applications should be submitted electronically to **vacancies@cusu.cam.ac.uk**.

Upon receiving your application we will request you complete an equalities monitoring form.

## An inclusive process

*Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) is committed to creating an organisation in which all members and employees are respected, discrimination is not tolerated and diversity is encouraged. All members and employees will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.*

**We welcome candidates from diverse backgrounds.** We particularly welcome applications from those from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, as they are under-represented within Cambridge University Students' Union at this level.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, please email [vacancies@cusu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:vacancies@cusu.cam.ac.uk) with your contact details and a selection of times when you may be available. Lisa, the Head of Advice and Welfare, will be happy to contact you to discuss the role.

# Job Description

<b>Job title</b>	Student Advisor (maternity cover)
<b>Primary location</b>	Cambridge
<b>Contract</b>	Fixed-term maternity cover for twelve months
	<i>NOTE: Successful appointment will be subject to satisfactory passing of a Disclosure and Barring Service check (as considered by CUSU) and terms will also be subject to a probationary period</i>
<b>Salary</b>	£22,000 - £25,000

Responsible to: Head of Advice and Welfare

Place of Work: Students' Union offices (Students' Unions' Building, CB2 1RX)

Functional Relationships: CUSU Staff and Student Officers, University staff and external stakeholders.

Hours of work: Part time; 20 hours per week; to be carried out over 3-4 days between Monday and Friday (exact days and times to be discussed with candidates)

## Job Purpose

The Student Advisor will provide professional, confidential and impartial advice, support and information to all students of the University of Cambridge; the provision of casework to student users, in line with procedures and best practise as advised, will be the primary focus of the role. The role will work alongside the Head of Advice and Welfare and other Advisors as a non-elected employee of the Students' Unions' Advice Service. They will work with, and assist, the Head of Advice and Welfare and Advisors in the coordination and exemplary service-delivery of the Student Unions' Advice Service.

## **Specific Duties**

### **Student Support**

- Provide students with non-directive, confidential advice and guidance via telephone, email, Skype and face-to-face. Be the primary point of contact and referral for all CUSU/GU student support enquiries.
- Provide advice, as stated above, to a high quality, and always act in the interests of the user as guided by the user.
- Provide in-depth advice and information on relevant college, University and national regulations, procedures and policies.
- Maintain and share knowledge of national best practice, legislation and initiatives in higher education that are relevant to student support in Cambridge University.
- Participate in regular meetings to discuss relevant issues, ensure best practice; review student support at the institution, ensuring appropriate oversight from your line-manager, and with the CUSU-GU elected sabbatical officers. Maintain records of these meetings, ensure communication and circulation to relevant colleagues, and take forward and/or support actions arising.
- In consultation with your line-manager, identify regular or pertinent issues affecting students (that can be properly and reasonably evidenced), for use in planning for either a) development of the Students' Unions' Advice Service, led by the Head of Advice and Welfare, or b) development of campaigns, policies and/or initiatives by elected officers.
- In consultation with and under guidance from your line-manager, present information on regular or pertinent issues affecting students to the elected officers for their consideration in a clear, accessible, comprehensive manner; act on decisions made, or initiatives taken, by the elected officers and ensure appropriate communication with the entire Advice Service Team. In consultation with, and under the direction of, elected officers, produce or otherwise support action plans for Officer-led campaigns related to the development of campaigns, policies and/or initiatives arising from Advice Service business. Support officers in utilising information received via the Advice Service in order to enact positive change on behalf of students, ensuring appropriate Service oversight by the Head of Advice and Welfare via regular liaison and input.
- Provide assistance to the Head of Advice and Welfare in the development of the Advice Service as directed by the Head of Advice and Welfare.
- Undertake tasks and take responsibility for casework, in a prompt and communicative fashion and to a high quality, as directed by your line-manager.

### **Students' Unions' Advice Service**

- Manage sensitive and confidential information and maintain accurate, up-to-date and confidential records and statistics of casework.
- Produce reports, as required, on use of the Students' Unions' Advice Service and issues relating to advice provision, including contributing to the planning, design and delivery of Advice Service reports (or as otherwise requested by your line-manager).
- Contribute to the development and updating of policies relating to the Students' Unions' Advice Service (e.g. Confidentiality Policy). Maintain and uphold these policies, and undertake actions as may be required to effectively review policies or procedures as directed. Assist with the production of Students' Unions' Advice Service literature, as directed.
- Maintain up-to-date and accurate information in Service resources, positively contribute to information provided to students from the Service, including the Students' Unions' Advice Service website.
- Identify new publications, leaflets and information that might be of use or interest for students, and develop communications at request.
- Update relevant sections of the Students' Unions' Advice Service, CUSU and GU websites.

### **Supporting Sabbatical Officers**

- Coordinate the involvement of the whole sabbatical team in regular and/or pertinent issues concerning students arising from information received by the Advice Service (as arising from discussions with Advice Officers and guided by your line-manager), ensuring confidentiality is retained and sensitive information is protected.
- Prepare reports, briefing papers and relevant information for sabbatical officers and the Head of Advice and Welfare in preparation for relevant University and College committees and key meetings.
- Assist the Head of Advice and Welfare and/or elected sabbatical officers in the design, successful delivery and evaluation of training for student volunteers related to welfare or Advice Service work, ensuring the involvement of relevant colleagues.

### **University and External Liaison**

- Maintain links and working relationships with relevant student organisations (e.g. Nightline) and collegiate University bodies and staff (e.g. the Disability Resource Centre, the University Counselling Service, college nurses).
- Maintain contact with local GPs, Primary Care Trusts and other local health organisations as well as a thorough knowledge of support services, including charities that support students, in Cambridge and nationally.

### **Other Duties**

- Consent to any relevant checks required for the role such as Disclosure and Barring Service checks or equivalent.
- To abide by the Students' Unions' Advice Service's code of practice, procedures and policies at all times.
- To abide by the Unions' constitutions, procedures and policies at all times.
- To demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity, together with an understanding of how it operates within the responsibilities of the post.
- To have a flexible approach to duties and work, and, in particular, adopt and promote a teamwork style with departments and activities across the Unions.
- To maintain proper records and management.

### **General Duties**

- To deliver targets outlined in the Advice Service and Unions' strategic plans where appropriate.
- To contribute and assist in the Unions' planning processes and the review of performance and systems in relation to student support.
- To attend meetings and training events where necessary and appropriate.
- To liaise as required with University and college personnel and appropriate external organisations.
- To portray the Students' Unions in a positive, proactive and professional manner.
- To contribute to publications and informational materials.
- To be involved with Union wide events for both Unions.
- To undertake own typing, filing, photocopying etc.
- To provide cover, where appropriate, for other staff during holidays, sickness etc.



**SUAS Talk  
at the Garden  
Party**

# Person Specification

The following criteria are required to successfully fulfil the position of Student Advisor:

NB. E = Essential to the role. D = Desirable for the role.

<b>Education Qualifications &amp; training</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
A first degree or relevant professional experience	x	
A relevant professional qualification - NVQ level 3 or 4		x

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
One year's experience of advice work, preferably within the last three years	x	
Experience of working within a Students' Union, or similar charitable/third sector organisation, or within a University/Higher Education environment		x
Experience in handling sensitive and confidential matters	x	
Experience of designing and delivering training programmes relevant to student support		x

<b>Skills and abilities</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Communication: Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written	x	
Communication: IT literacy and excellent record keeping skills	x	

Communication: Report writing, including some basic statistical analysis		x
Interpersonal: Highly developed interpersonal and advice-giving skills, both face-to-face, by email and by telephone	x	
Interpersonal: Ability to work effectively in a team	x	
Interpersonal: Ability to develop and maintain good working relations with elected officers	x	
Advice Provision: Ability to understand complex systems and cases; and ability to identify the best course of action for specific cases	x	
Advice Provision: A diplomatic, sensitive, non-judgmental approach to students using the Students' Unions' Advice Service	x	
Advice Provision: Ability to listen to and communicate effectively with a diverse range of students, responding to differing needs and perspectives	x	

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
A demonstrable understanding of current guidelines, legislation and best practice relating to student support, advice and guidance	x	
A demonstrable understanding of themes/issues relevant to Cambridge students		x
An understanding of one or more of mental health, sexual health, eating disorders, disabilities, student safety, pregnancy, racism, harassment, bullying	x	

<b>Additional attributes required</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Able to work independently, without supervision	x	
Enthusiastic and flexible	x	
Self-motivated, innovative and positive about change	x	
Commitment to equality of opportunity with an understanding of issues related to diversity	x	
Commitment to working within a democratic, student led environment	x	
Able to show leadership	x	



**We look forward to hearing from you!**

**Students'  
Unions'  
Advice  
Service**



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