**PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT**

**Total rewards package in excess of £100k, including generous pension contribution and a guaranteed base salary of £70k - £80k per annum. 38 days leave entitlement. Additional benefits include membership of annual bonus scheme.**

The SUMS Group recognises the value that diverse backgrounds and experiences bring to our work and our organisation. Some identities are still typically under-represented in the workplace and we particularly encourage you to apply if that might be you.

**The SUMS Group**

The SUMS Group is made up of three divisions which include SUMS Consulting (SUMS), Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) and the Procurement Shared Services (PSS). We offer world-leading services to universities through membership packages which reflect our shared commitment to the sector and our values as a not-for-profit company and registered charity.

**SUMS Consulting**

SUMS Consulting is a specialist Higher Education management consultancy. We are passionate about the sector and proud of the pace, creativity and unrivalled expertise that we bring to our clients.

We represent more than half the UK’s student and staff population by FTE; large research-intensive universities like Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and UCL as well as a host of modern and specialist providers. Our work is not limited to institutions within the UK. We also have an active portfolio of projects in the EU and in Asia.

Our members and client institutions expect us to have the capabilities, strength-in-depth, and objectivity to support and advise them to continued success. They deserve to access those capabilities at a fair price point through an organisation which does not seek to profit from the engagement. Our work for universities ranges from subject-matter expertise in niche areas of provision, to wholesale changes to their operating model through major transformation programmes.

Our continued success is directly correlated with the investment we’ve made in our staff. We aim to recruit people who are at the cutting edge of innovation, relentlessly driven to deliver value to our clients, and who approach every engagement with confidence and energy. With a growing assignment portfolio spanning UK and overseas markets, we wish to strengthen the breadth of our internal capability and create a world class consulting community who we can deploy to the advantage of the universities we care so deeply about.

**Who we are looking for**

We want to recruit another Principal to our consulting division. All consultant roles at SUMS are senior appointments in their own right, but our Principals have greater responsibilities. Those in the role are expected to deliver high quality assignments at a level of excellence that requires minimal intervention. They are expected to effectively manage the workload of other consultants, and to contribute actively to SUMS’ continued success in business development. Our Principals are likely to lead communities of practice across the sector, be active in writing and publicising thought pieces, and to act as account managers for a selection of the institutions we represent. They play a vital role in the development of SUMS as a world-leading consultancy and in creating a supportive and kind environment where our staff feel able to be at their best.

Outstanding consulting skills are essential but prior experience of the higher education sector is not. The successful candidate will need to be an experienced, dynamic and skilled facilitator in both physical and virtual environments, who can quickly adapt to the different complexities of each institution whilst understanding the inherent limitations of what might be culturally possible. You should also recognise and understand the challenges and opportunities on the horizon in any of your specialist areas of expertise and be willing to proactively share how innovative practice from other sectors might be applied beneficially in the sector. No matter the project, you’ll have the skills to analyse the problem and put in place a process and solution which leaves our clients delighted.

You’ll be expected to build positive relationships with stakeholders that include boards of governors, Vice-Chancellors, executive teams, professional service functions and academic departments. As such, you’ll need to recognise the ways in which a facilitated session for a senior team might differ from one with front-line staff, and to be comfortable in either scenario.

As a Principal Consultant you will need to always exhibit the highest levels of professionalism. You will need to be energetic but cool under pressure; innovative but able to translate that into the politically complex work of HE; a people-person but comfortable with data and detail. We are looking for creative, dynamic thinkers with excellent interpersonal skills, an appetite for hard work and a commitment to excellence. You must be values-driven and thrive on complex problem-solving – and this should be allied with humility: it’s okay to know what you don’t know.

**Rewards Package**

You might think we are asking a lot. We are, because our clients deserve it. That is why our expectations are balanced with reward.

The total rewards package for this post exceeds £100k. Within that package, we offer a guaranteed, basic salary between £70k-£80k, which is exclusive of any annual bonus which may also be paid out depending on the division’s success. Our Principals also qualify for the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) which means that SUMS makes a generous contribution to your pension.

We do not mandate set hours of work; we operate fully flexible working arrangements and we are particularly supportive of opportunities for growth and professional development.

During our most recent staff survey, in October 2021, 94% of staff said they were ‘very happy’ or ‘happy’ to work for the SUMS Group.

**The Application and Assessment Process**

Please submit your CV and a cover letter via LinkedIn, Indeed or by emailing those documents to sums@reading.ac.uk. Your cover letter should evidence your suitability for the role, incorporating some specific examples of your experience where you think it most relevant. Applications will be scored separately by four different members of the recruiting panel and an average score calculated to inform which candidates will be taken forward to longlisting stage.

The assessment process and timescales are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Vacancy advertised via LinkedIn and Indeed | Closed no later than Wed April 13th at 13:00[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| Confirmation of Candidate Longlist | By Friday 15th April by 18:00 |
| Informal Discussions with SUMS Executive Team | By Thursday 21st April at 18:00 |
| Confirmation of Candidate Shortlist | By Friday 22nd April at 18:00 |
| Assessment Day[[2]](#footnote-2):* Presentation skills
* Problem Solving
* Facilitation
 | Wednesday 27th April  |
| Formal Offer to Candidate | By Thursday 28th April at 18:00 |

**Further Information**

Further information about SUMS Consulting can be found on our website: [www.sums.org.uk](http://www.sums.org.uk) and a role profile at <https://sums.org.uk/news/>

**If you would like an informal discussion about this role then please contact David Becker, Managing Consultant, at** **d.becker@reading.ac.uk****.**

1. If longlisting quota is met prior to this point then the listing will close early [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. We anticipate that the assessment day will be held in-person at SUMS HQ. If this is not possible it will be held using Microsoft Teams. All travel and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed. All reasonable adjustments can be accommodated upon request. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)