

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Consultant (Sustainability)
Grade/Salary:	£60,000 - £70,000 + benefits
Responsible to:	Managing Consultant

Job Purpose:

To work as part of our expert consulting team to improve our client universities' operations and provide support around their strategies and mission. This includes making insight-driven recommendations for impactful change and helping drive implementation of a range of projects.

The post holder will support our rapidly developing services in sustainability, as well as in other areas. Our work around sustainability spans environmental sustainability and wider definitions as reflected in the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on their dimensions for universities and the higher education sector, and the sector's role in the transition to a sustainable economy.

The post holder will manage the hands-on delivery of discrete assignments and work as part of a team of subject experts on larger transformation programmes, including with colleagues from our partner EAUC. They will develop strong and effective client relationships to underpin retention of our member universities and support our success in winning fee-based work. They will develop their expertise to be a specialist sustainability consultant, optimising synergies and learnings from linkages with other areas of our work across the higher education landscape as well as insights from other sectors where appropriate.

This role is home-based. There will sometimes be a requirement to travel to client organisations to deliver some aspects of projects, and this will involve occasional overnight stays.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1.	To work closely with the SUMS Leadership Team, Principal Consultants, Consultants, Associate Consultants and Insight Analysts in scoping, managing and delivering high quality assignments for universities and our other clients.
2.	To engage positively and energetically with clients and stakeholders through a range of means, including focus groups, workshops, interviews and virtual channels, to add maximum value to assignment delivery and membership of SUMS Consulting.
3.	To undertake a blend of generalist higher education consulting assignments, alongside more specialist work supporting our sustainability services.
4.	To carry out benchmarking, data analysis and other forms of desk research, to create an empirical evidence base for assignments.
5.	To identify issues, form hypotheses and recommend options for solutions across a range of areas.
6.	To ensure best practice in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion is incorporated as standard within all aspects of work, being a strong advocate for minimising barriers and advancing equality.
7.	To ensure sustainability runs as a golden thread through all assignments, regardless of subject matter. To provide support and advice to colleagues across the extended team to achieve this goal across our practice.

8.	To act as account manager for SUMS member institutions, helping to ensure their business needs are reflected in the SUMS work programme and that they have access to all the expertise they require.
9.	To work in partnership with university change teams and/or project managers, to ensure value is delivered, recommendations are implementable and facilitate skills transfer.
10.	To work with SUMS assignment managers and clients, to ensure that assignments are delivered on time and that resources are optimised to ensure value for money.
11.	To prepare high-quality documents, reports and presentations of findings and recommendations for assignments, confidently presenting these to clients.
12.	To work closely with our strategic partner, EAUC, to ensure that specialist sustainability expertise is delivered across the sustainability service line.
13.	To work with SUPC colleagues to ensure that sustainability is embedded in our frameworks as part of our approach to responsible procurement and that relevant sustainability advice and guidance is made available to SUPC members on a regular basis.
14.	To support identification and award of new business and profile-raising opportunities (notably but not exclusively supporting the sustainability theme), leveraging professional platforms such as LinkedIn to promote the SUMS Group and our work.
15.	To undertake other duties as determined by the SUMS Leadership Team.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Work Experience	<p>Experience of working in transformation, delivering change or for a management consultancy</p> <p>Experience of working in the sustainability sphere, either in the higher education sector or in other sectors</p> <p>Experience of project management</p> <p>Experience of client relationship management</p>	<p>Experience of programme and portfolio management</p> <p>Experience working with a range of software platforms</p> <p>Experience of strategy</p> <p>Experience of working in/with higher education institutions or other public sector organisations</p>
Education/Qualifications	Educated to degree level	<p>A second degree or professional qualification in a business or sustainability-related discipline</p> <p>Project or programme management accreditation</p>
Skills/Abilities	<p>Excellent communication, collaboration and facilitation skills</p> <p>Excellent written and presentation skills, including ability to prepare documents and presentations for a range of stakeholders</p> <p>Ability to assimilate, process and analyse complex data, with strong quantitative and IT skills</p> <p>Ability to problem solve, think creatively and rapidly integrate new models and approaches</p> <p>Ability to manage time and juggle a range of concurrent projects</p> <p>A passion for and knowledge of sustainability</p> <p>Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion</p> <p>An understanding of and empathy with the culture of the higher education sector</p>	<p>Strong research skills, with ability to integrate large amounts of qualitative information quickly and effectively</p> <p>Financial literacy and commercial understanding</p> <p>An understanding of the higher education policy landscape</p> <p>An understanding of global systems and sustainable development</p>

Please submit a brief CV and one-page cover letter to sums@reading.ac.uk by 13:00 on Monday 15 May 2024. We aim to shortlist within one week and anticipate holding interviews on 30/31 May. Alternative arrangements can be accommodated.

FAQS

1. How much travel is required?

This varies according to the preferences of each client and the demands of each assignment. Where the tools and technology exist for us to manage assignments remotely without compromising on quality, that is often the preference of our clients. It saves on expenses and provides added flexibility. However, we do manage assignments where it makes sense for both the client and the consulting team to be present on campus. All travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses are paid by SUMS.

2. What are the other benefits that go with the role?

In addition to the salary, our consultants receive 38 days annual leave per annum, inclusive of bank holiday entitlement. Consultants can also choose the point in the year at which they use their statutory entitlement. All our consulting team are eligible for our company pension scheme and our annual bonus scheme, which consists of an additional financial award depending on overall performance across the company. All essential IT equipment is provided. Fair travel or accommodation bookings required in the course of your work are bookable through our online travel portal so that you are never out of pocket, and we ensure our staff receive inflationary pay awards each year in line with the higher education sector's own settlement. SUMS Consulting contracts do not specify set hours of work, we simply ask that you put the client's needs first and foremost.

3. How do I progress through the pay scales?

We use a merit-based pathway at Consultant level, which allows for Consultant pay to progress between £60,000 and £70,000 per annum according to overall levels of performance and business contribution against a set of key performance parameters. Any increase within this salary range is linked to performance rather than an automatic increment. Increases are awarded in line with our informal and formal appraisal points that conclude in April each year and which are then implemented from 1st August that same year.

4. How much 'selling' is involved?

SUMS is unique as a management consultancy because we are a registered charity, a not-for-profit organisation that is driven by the values we share with the sector we serve. We have no commercial incentive to profit from our engagements and that is why we can keep our costs so competitive. Much of the work we do for our clients is commissioned through our membership model. In short, universities up and down the UK pay an annual subscription fee, upon which they can draw down up to 40 consultancy days per year from SUMS to direct towards any area they have a need. Some universities or other sector organisations may also go out to tender for particular pieces of work too. Where we believe that SUMS can deliver this work to a better quality than other consultancy firms, we may also choose to bid to win that work. In this kind of competitive process, SUMS consultants are expected to develop proposals and to participate in any 'pitch' to win the work.

5. What does a typical 'day in the life' of a consultant look like?

Each consultant at SUMS is likely to have a range of assignments in their portfolio at any one time. They will also have non-assignment responsibilities, such as writing thought pieces and articles in their area of expertise, contributing to internal developments within the SUMS Group, and ensuring our product offer is always at the forefront of innovation. With such a diverse array of commitments, this means no one day is ever quite the same! Within the course of a typical day, activities we might expect to see a consultant deliver include facilitation of an online workshop with a university client, delivery of well-planned meetings with clients at other member universities, the drafting and refinement of presentations and reports for completed assignments, responding to emails and Teams messages about internal developments, the planning of social media content, and attendance at a steering group for a project which the consultant is involved in delivering.

6. What is the overall staffing structure for the consulting division?

The consulting division is led by the Group Managing Director and three Managing Consultants. The Group Managing Director also has responsibility for the other two divisions within the SUMS Group, along with the Group CEO. We have a set of Principal Consultants, all of whom have significant prior experience as either a management consultant in the commercial sector or as a senior manager within a university. Our Principals are involved in both the hands-on delivery, and the quality assurance, of multiple assignments. The Consultants are the next tier of staff and are focused substantially on core delivery of assignments. The consulting division also includes a Business Insight Team, which includes skilled data analysts and visualisation experts. They play a vital role in supporting assignment delivery with top-of-the line, bespoke quantitative insight.

7. What do you consider to be the most important qualities in a consultant?

The job description and ad copy provide a view of the skill and attributes that we think are particularly important in this role. Beyond that, the successful candidate/s will need to be able to give our university clients a level of service which they can't get in-house. Each consultant's value-add differs in that regard, but some basic factors include being responsive to requests, consistently polished and professional in your communications, and happy to go the extra mile to deliver an outstanding service. The ability to prepare and confidently deliver presentations and to facilitate excellent workshops is essential. You'll also need to be sensitive to, and comfortable in navigating, each client's organisational politics and issues, able to continually balance and prioritise competing demands across projects, and to write and present clearly and persuasively. You'll also need to be comfortable with ambiguity. Finally, you'll need to be willing to learn and reflect on how to continuously develop your consulting skills. Feedback is an important part of striving for excellence.