



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Counselling & Mental Health
Team / Directorate	Counselling & Mental Health / Directorate of Student Life
Grade	RHUL 8
Hours	Full time, Permanent, Professional Services
Reporting to	Director of Student Life
Responsible for	Counsellors, Counselling Caseworkers, Trainees, Mental Health Practitioners, Mental Health & Wellbeing Supervisor, Counselling Supervisor & Counselling Co-ordinator.

Department Background

The role of Head of Counselling & Mental Health has been developed to lead our team of Counsellors, Counselling Caseworkers, Mental Health Practitioners, Supervisors and Administrative Co-ordinator in the Counselling & Mental Health teams within the Directorate of Student Life. The role holder will also be expected to work closely with staff in all our teams within Student Life. The teams provide a wide range of assistance to student to support their wellbeing and experience whilst at Royal Holloway including:

- Support to manage their own educational and personal progression.
- Assisting students with their transition and adjustment to university life.
- Empowering students by enabling them to fully engage with their studies.
- Supporting students to embrace all academic, personal, and social opportunities to make the most of their time at Royal Holloway.
- Encouragement to seek advice and guidance when needed and to share concerns about others.

Job Purpose

The Counselling & Mental Health team provide professional counselling support and mental health triage, assessment, and support to students at the University. The provision aims to support students successfully maintain engagement and attainment in their studies through periods of emotional difficulty.

The Head of Counselling & Mental Health will take the management lead for this aspect of our provision, linking them into key student-facing services across the University, supporting regular reporting to relevant internal committees and working groups, and lead the teams on following the strategy and aims of the Directorate. They will offer professional support to colleagues, promote the team, and support the management and / or de-escalation of risk. They will be committed to providing inclusive and accessible support, ensure delivery of best practice interventions and support, and be proactive in engaging with external organisations to enhance or develop the support we provide.

Key responsibilities and outcomes

People & Resource Management

1. Act as operational and clinical lead for the Counselling & Mental Health (C&MH) team ensuring professional standards of counselling with adherence to the BACP Ethical Framework and policies and processes of the University and day-to-day operations of the team are met in line with student, staff, and University requirements.
2. Oversee the process to retain BACP service accreditation and support staff development and maintenance of their required registrations and accreditations for professional specialisms.
3. Foster a culture of continual professional reflection and adaptation of service to meet student needs, respond to local or national developments and develop improvement in practice.
4. Use professional expertise and experience to provide clinical leadership for the C&MH team including group and individual supervision, research, and delivery of CPD training as required, one to one meetings, Performance Development Reviews, and operationalisation of HR processes.
5. Lead on delivery of counselling and mental health sessions being delivered in a flexible, accessible, and inclusive way for all students, with adaptability being in-built to respond to need and reasonable expectation.

Student Case Management

6. To be a participative member of the C&MH team helping to provide professional, ethical, and responsive counselling to students, including through initial assessment and risk assessment and deliver a co-ordinated, inclusive, and student focused approach. Manage a limited caseload of clients delivering flexible, solution focussed, one at a time counselling, brief and longer-term counselling where needed, and crisis support and intervention.
7. To promptly escalate safeguarding and vulnerability concerns relating to students assessed by the team where there is an immediate or very high risk to themselves or others and actively participate in weekly cause for concern meetings with key staff to manage complex student cases.
8. Work collaboratively with internal colleagues and external Mental Health, Crisis or other relevant teams to case manage students who are experiencing mental health crisis and who may require immediate intervention or referral, following relevant University policies and processes.
9. Ensure a high standard of real-time electronic practitioner record keeping, following professional and University expectations and GDPR requirements and supporting University efforts to digitise and simplify processes wherever possible.

Strategic Development and Implementation

10. Under the direction of the line manager contribute to the development and implementation of the strategic aims of the Directorate and University, representing the importance of student mental health and wellbeing and interpreting strategy into work priorities and objectives for the C&MH team.
11. Advance services in line with sector best practice and developments, with opportunity to evaluate performance and impact, and working to enhance student wellbeing and experience, and respond to student voice.
12. Identify and establish links to work collaboratively with local voluntary and statutory support teams to establish referral pathways to enhance student support options to external specialist teams.

Student & Staff Relationship Development

13. Participate in proactive outreach work across the University and provide advice and guidance to staff who may be concerned about a student ensuring prompt and effective signposting or escalation processes as required and the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing.
14. Maintain an ongoing awareness of the needs of under-represented student groups (including mature, international, Black & Global Majority, and LGBTQ+ students) in addition to students with disabilities. Ensure anti-discriminatory practice in line with the College's policies and cultural competency.
15. Lead the C&MH team and work with Directorate colleagues to develop Wellbeing on Weekday events and campaigns to enhance student wellbeing and experience, develop life skills and support mental wellness and resilience.
16. Work with colleagues to support the student journey at events such as student and staff engagement events, welcome week, recruitment events, and lifecycle events including Welcome Week and Graduation.

Compliance

17. To understand and comply with University policies and procedures including data sharing and management; health and safety, and use of emergency and trusted contacts. Comply with relevant legislative and other requirements (for example GDPR, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, UKVI) in all working practices.
18. Ensure service data is collected and maintained to demonstrate impact of the support provided, identify trends in the support provided by the team, to contribute to University or Committee reports, and to support FOI requests.
19. Contribute to and support business continuity requirements following a major incident including failure of, or damage to services and facilities of the university.

Personal Development

20. Commit to personal and professional development, including clinical supervision from an approved Supervisor and maintenance of professional accreditation.
21. Maintain and develop professional networks at a local and national level to inform service delivery and development including membership and attendance at HUCS (Head of University Counselling Services)

Miscellaneous

22. The duties listed are not exhaustive and may be varied from time to time as dictated by the changing needs of the university and the role holder will be expected to undertake appropriate duties as requested by their line manager and / or Director and Executive Director leads.
23. The post holder may be required to work at any of the locations at which the business of Royal Holloway is conducted.

Internal and external relationships:

The following list is not exhaustive, but the post holder will be expected to develop relationships with colleagues across the university including:

- All members of the Wellbeing & Experience teams in the Directorate of Student Life.
- All functions of the wider Professional Services team and Academic Schools
- Engagement with external networks and professional bodies (where required).

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Details on the qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge, and abilities that are needed to fulfil this role are set out below.

Job title:	Head of Counselling and Mental Health
Department/Faculty	Directorate of Student Life

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	Tested by (Application form, interview, test)
Knowledge, Education, Qualifications and Training			
Educated to first degree level or relevant equivalent experience	X		Application
PG Diploma or qualification in Counselling, Psychology or equivalent.		X	Application
Management or leadership qualification		X	Application
Accredited member of BACP	X		Application
Recognised professional qualification in Counselling Supervision	X		Application
Working knowledge of the legal and legislative frameworks for counselling and wellbeing support (e.g., GDPR, Equality Act, FoI)	X		Interview
Skills and / or Abilities			
Significant understanding & demonstration of working within the BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions.	X		Application & Interview
Skills to manage and deliver a time limited counselling / therapy provision within a university setting where sessions are flexibly delivered both in person and online.	X		Application & Interview
The ability to work with a diverse client base with complex presentations and the skills to ensure effective and safe risk assessment and management	X		Application & Interview

Skills to manage a complex and varied workload, including oversight of the team's caseload, whilst working under pressure, to strict deadlines, with diplomacy and discretion.	X		Interview
Skills and experience in developing and delivering interactive and inclusive workshops, webinars, or support groups to help mental wellbeing and develop emotional intelligence skills.	X		Application & Interview
Openness and ability to respond to student feedback and to develop, test and embed innovations to enhance service delivery and student experience	X		Interview
Strong communication skills with the knowledge and ability to adapt communication to appeal to different student audiences.	X		Application & Interview
High IT competency with strong knowledge of all Microsoft Office packages and ability to lead teams to be self-serving in the administration required as part of their roles	X		Interview
The ability to remain calm, professional, and resilient in difficult, challenging, and emotional circumstances with an awareness of your own limitations.	X		Interview
Ability to work flexibly outside of normal working, if required, to manage emergency situations	X		Interview
Experience			
Significant post qualification counselling experience – including one-at-a time sessions - preferably in a HE / FE setting - and a minimum of 50 hours of personal therapy experience.	X		Application & Interview
Significant experience of assessment of clients making sound professional judgments, identifying risk to self or others from clients and confidently determining and enabling appropriate support.	X		Application & Interview
Proven experience of management skills including staff & performance management, motivating & supporting staff, leading change, and strategic development	X		Application & Interview
Experience of working with and providing support to clients from underrepresented groups (including POC and LGBTQ+) and an understanding of the potential barriers to engagement to these groups.	X		Interview

Other requirements			
Commitment to professional development and continued achievement of full professional registration and accreditation.	X		Interview
Commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and demonstration of cultural competency.	X		Interview
Understanding of and commitment to our University values of being Daring, Innovative, Open and Respectful.	X		Application & Interview
In period of pressure (for example welcome week, assessment, and results times) when the Directorate is particularly busy there may be some restrictions on annual leave to ensure our student experience is appropriately supported by our teams.	X		Interview