

Evaluator of the STEM Subject Centres of the Higher Education Academy

Up to £30k is available for a one-year consultancy. It is anticipated that the successful candidate will spend, on average, two-and-a-half days per week working on the agreed deliverables.

Closing Date for Applications: 1700 on 27 June 2008

Date of Interview: 21 July 2008

Background Information

Since January 2000 the UK Higher Education Councils have supported a Network to promote and share good practice and innovation in learning and teaching in all subject disciplines. Originally this Network was called the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) before it became the Subject Network of the Higher Education Academy in 2004. The Subject Network consists of 24 Subject Centres and a central organisation based in York (Academy York), which manages and coordinates the Network in addition to leading on specific activities.

The Higher Education Academy Subject Network is the primary information and advice resource on learning and teaching matters for all staff involved in learning and teaching in HE, including students, academic staff, senior managers, learning technologists, educational development staff, and staff developers. The Subject Centres provide information on current teaching and learning practices, either subject specific or generic. They aim to promote high quality learning and teaching through the development and transfer of good practices in all subject disciplines, and to provide a 'one-stop-shop' of learning and teaching resources and information for the higher education community.

The STEM group of the Subject Network is composed of the following Subject Centres: Bioscience; Engineering; Information and Computer Science; Materials; Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research; and, Physical Sciences. Collaboration amongst the STEM group is strong, and there exists a natural overlap between the individual communities each Subject Centre represents. For 2008/2009, the STEM group is keen to appoint a joint Evaluator to evaluate the activities of each individual Subject Centre along with the activities of the STEM group as a whole.

Job Summary

The Evaluator will be appointed jointly by the six STEM Subject Centres and will be responsible for developing, undertaking and overseeing all evaluation activities of the Centres. The work of the STEM Evaluator will align with the framework currently being developed by Academy York, and the successful candidate will be expected to contribute to this process. The post will consist of several related components:

1. Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework that will include:
 - Methodology to determine the impact of core Subject Centre activities (for example, project funding; workshops and events; publications and resources; engagement with individuals, departments and professional bodies; websites) in collaboration with Academy York's impact evaluation strategy;

- The identification of key performance indicators for Subject Centre activity which will include 'value-for-money' measures;
 - Processes for identifying those who have not/do not engage with Subject Centres and suggested methods for engaging with hard to reach groups;
2. Apply the framework that has been developed to evaluate the impact of each Subject Centre upon its target community and make recommendations for increasing their impact and engagement;
 3. Evaluate the collective activities of the STEM Subject Centres upon the Higher Education STEM Community, and identify opportunities for collaborative working that will address any identified or perceived 'gaps' within the current provision offered.

Main Duties

Development of Evaluation Framework

1. Develop evaluation processes for determining the short, medium and long term impact of Subject Centre activity in the following areas:
 - Project funding;
 - workshops and events;
 - publications and resources;
 - engagement;
2. Identify mechanisms and processes for measuring the impact of Subject Centre activity upon the student learning experience;
3. Determine key performance indicators and measures for determining the impact of the Subject Centre upon learning and teaching practices at an individual and departmental level;
4. Develop processes and recommendations for obtaining direct feedback from key stakeholders:
 - New and experienced members of academic staff;
 - Heads of Department;
 - Key Departmental Contacts;
 - Students;
 - Learned societies and Professional bodies
5. Develop mechanisms and processes for identifying those who do not engage with Subject Centre activity and for collecting their views;
6. Develop mechanisms and processes to assist Subject Centres in the efficient and effective capture of data necessary for evaluations processes;
7. Develop a strategy, for application by Subject Centres themselves, for determining the value-for-money of specific activities;

Evaluation of Individual Subject Centres

1. Apply the evaluation framework (detailed above) to develop and implement an evaluation action plan for each Subject Centre in turn and ensure that these action plans are comparable in the final analysis;
2. Evaluate selected activities of each Subject Centre in relation to its strategic priorities and activities detailed within its operational plan;
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Subject Centre in terms of its operation and engagement with the community it serves;
4. Produce a comprehensive evaluation report for the Subject Centre including recommendations for future development and issues for consideration;
5. As appropriate present the evaluation report of each Subject Centre to its Advisory Committee/Board.

Evaluation of STEM Subject Centre Group

1. Based upon the evaluation of each Subject Centre:
 - Identify good practice within individual Subject Centres that should be shared amongst the STEM group;
 - identify opportunities and areas for collaborative working amongst the STEM group;
2. Identify any 'gaps' within the support offered by the STEM Subject Centres to the higher education STEM community as a whole and make recommendations for addressing these.

Knowledge, Skills, Qualifications & Experience Required

1. Substantial experience in developing evaluation processes and procedures (Essential);
2. Knowledge of a range of different frameworks and methodologies for undertaking evaluations (Essential).
3. Substantial experience of evaluating educational projects or resources (Essential);
4. Knowledge and experience of teaching and learning within the higher education sector (Essential);
5. Excellent team-working and communication skills (Essential);
6. A Competent IT user and the ability to analyse data (Essential);
7. A background in a scientific discipline (Desirable).
8. A willingness to travel (including potential overnight stays) to attend meetings of the STEM Subject Centre group, meetings organised by Academy York. The successful candidate will also be required to undertake visits to each Subject Centre and to attend, as appropriate, the events and activities organised by it. (Essential)

Reporting and Management

The STEM Evaluator will be appointed as a Consultant by one of the Subject Centres. The senior management team within this Centre will be responsible for the overall line-management of the STEM Evaluator on behalf of the STEM group, but the Evaluator will be expected to work with the senior management team of each Subject Centre.

As the six STEM Subject Centres are geographically distributed, the specific Subject Centre responsible for the line-management of the Evaluator will be determined upon appointment. It is anticipated that the Evaluator will primarily be based at their own premises but facilities for working at each of the Subject Centres will be provided as necessary.

A separate travel and subsistence budget will be provided and this will be overseen by the Subject Centre with line-management responsibility.

Application Process

To apply for this post, applicants are requested to submit a full CV along with a covering letter. The CV should list prior qualifications, experience, and contain details of at least two referees. The covering letter should detail the suitability of the applicant for this post, along with a summary of how they would approach the evaluation process detailed within the job description.

The CV and Covering letter should be emailed to: **heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk** or posted to:

**The Centre for Bioscience, the Higher Education Academy
Room 9.15
Worsley Building
University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview on the 21 July 2008. Informal enquiries may be directed to **Michael Grove (m.j.grove@bham.ac.uk)**