



DARE/HEAR Shared Operations Service Unit

Position: DARE HEAR Operations Officer (DARE Development)

Organisation:

The Irish Universities Association (IUA) represents, promotes and provides support services for the seven Irish Universities. The IUA is a non-profit making body with charitable status.

The IUA invites applications for the position of **DARE HEAR Operations Officer (DARE Development)**. Based at the IUA office on Merrion Square, the person appointed will report to the DARE HEAR Project Manager and will work in collaboration with the Project Steering Group and other key stakeholder groups.

This is a fixed term 2 year contract. A secondment arrangement will be facilitated where possible.

Overview of the Project:

Promoting wider and more equitable access to higher education is a key strategic objective of Government and higher education institutions alike. This IUA-led project, involving 18 institutions, seeks to address both strategic and operational challenges associated with increasing the numbers of students from under-represented groups entering higher education.

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) and Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) are third level admission schemes for students with disabilities and students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds respectively. In the course of the last four years, DARE and HEAR have established themselves as the primary vehicle through which participating HEIs reach institutional and national targets for the admission and progression of students with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged students to and through higher education.

Participating institutions are now establishing a **DARE/HEAR Shared Operations Service Unit (DHSOSU)**, that will manage all DARE/HEAR related activity for the period 2014-2016.

Further information about the DARE and HEAR Schemes can be found on www.accesscollege.ie

Overview of the role:

This officer will lead on DARE project development and operationally will manage the assessment of DARE and HEAR applications and will assist on all other tasks of the unit.

Operational Functions:

- Work with the DARE / HEAR Operations Groups to transfer work plans to the DHSOSU.
- Communicate changes to internal (operations staff, disability offices, etc.) and external stakeholders (applicants, parents, guidance counsellors, etc.).
- Oversee the assessment (including quality processes) of c. 15,000 DARE and HEAR applications.
- Assist other officers in the DARE/HEAR Shared Operational Service Unit to ensure the successful completion of all tasks relating to Recheck & Appeals and Communications.
- Work with the CAO to ensure effective day to day operations of the schemes.
- Assist with responses to the Ombudsman.
- Undertake any other tasks assigned by the project manager.

Development Functions:

- Develop and implement a project plan to review and develop eligibility criteria for DARE. Areas of responsibility include but are not limited to; the creation of a DARE screening principles document, the creation of a training manual for DARE screeners, the creation of an operations manual for DARE covering all operational processes detailed in the Eligibility & Quality Assurance, Recheck & Appeals and Communications Workplans.
- Develop and manage a pilot project to retro screen DARE applicants with proposed new criteria.
- Manage the revision of the draft DARE criteria based on the outcome of the retro-screening pilot and run the pilot again.
- Redesign data management tools (application form, screening sheet, recheck application form, recheck screening) and downloadable forms (evidence of disability form, school reference form, personal statement, etc).
- Redesign communications materials/tools based on DARE eligibility changes.
- Ensure the discussion of and implementation where necessary of recommendations from the DARE HEAR Independent Appeals Commission and/or the Ombudsman.

Profile of Candidate:

Already experienced in HE access and disability initiatives, the successful candidate will have excellent interpersonal and negotiating skills, combining a capacity for strategic thinking and hands-on delivery. Candidates will have a 3rd level qualification with strong project management experience preferably in an education environment.

Critical qualities for this role include:

- Effective and persuasive communicator with strong IT, organisational, planning and writing skills.
- In-depth knowledge of access policies, practices and programmes in the higher education sector in Ireland.
- Time and project management skills – analytical and methodical approach, and ability to plan, monitor progress, assimilate, interpret and apply information quickly.
- Possess relevant research and evaluation skills.
- Experience of similar complex projects in this or a related field would be an advantage.

Remuneration:

A salary commensurate with experience will be offered.

Applications:

Please forward a detailed CV and cover letter, demonstrating the competencies and experience listed above, by post or email by 28th February to:

Jennifer Cleary,
HR Manager,
IUA,
48 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2

E-mail: jennifer.cleary@iua.ie

Tel: (01) 676 4948

Interviews will be held on March 19th or 20th.

Applications submitted by or through third parties, including recruitment agencies will be rejected.

The IUA is an equal opportunities employer.

This project is co-funded by the HEA and participating institutions.