



JOB DESCRIPTION

**Outreach Officer (Regional Platform)
Administrative Assistant
Student Support & Development
One Year Full Time Fixed Term Contract**

Overview

Dublin City University (www.dcu.ie) is a research-intensive, globally-engaged, dynamic institution that is distinguished by both the quality and impact of its graduates and its focus on the translation of knowledge into societal and economic benefit. DCU prepares its students well for success in life, and in the workplace, by providing a high-quality, rounded education appropriate to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. As Ireland's University of Enterprise and Transformation, DCU is characterised by a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship and a track-record of effective engagement with the enterprise sector, including commercial, social and cultural enterprises. Excellence in its education and research activities has led to DCU's consistent position in the rankings of the world's top young universities.

Overview of the department

Student Support & Development (SS&D) provides professional, academic and personal support and development opportunities to students in DCU and is a busy and diverse Unit which includes the Student Advice Centre, the Careers Office, Counselling & Personal Development, the INTRA work placement Office, Student Learning, the Student Health Centre, the Disability & Learning Support Office, the Access Office and Chaplaincy. Further information on SS&D can be found at: <http://www.dcu.ie/students/index.shtml>.

The College Connect Programme

College Connect is a collaborative initiative between Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin City University, Dundalk Institute of Technology, and Maynooth University (the MEND Regional Cluster). College Connect aims to enhance educational aspirations for the most socio-economically disadvantaged people in the MEND region through a participative and sustainable suite of activities and resources to illuminate pathways and provide opportunities into, through and beyond higher education. College Connect will achieve this through a project management team and Community Connectors who will invigorate a regional network of stakeholders whose collective expertise will strengthen the knowledge base for effective engagement with target groups. The College Connect Programme is funded by the Higher Education Authority and the Midlands, East and North Dublin MEND Regional Higher Education Institutions.

College Connect comprises four innovative educational interventions which have been designed to address existing barriers and support the participation of marginalised groups in the MEND region:

- **Strand 1: Connecting the Cluster**

Connecting the Cluster brings together stakeholders to develop a regional strategy to increase access to higher education from the most marginalised groups. The strategy is rooted in participative, democratic, stakeholder engagement, recognising the wealth of expertise that exists across the region. This innovative organisational structure builds on MEND's foundational work and strong record of accomplishment of regional collaboration.

- **Strand 2: Connecting the Region**

Connecting the Region will develop a regional access strategy and community needs analysis to support MEND to strengthen its work with communities experiencing entrenched socio-economic disadvantage and to be more responsive to addressing inequality of access across the region. Four Community Connectors will connect MEND to stakeholders supporting access to education across the region and work alongside partner organisations to develop stronger relationships between the regional cluster and local communities.

- **Strand 3: Connecting the Learner**

Connecting the Learner will develop a single regional platform to connect to prospective students, families, and stakeholders, aimed at maintaining and raising aspirations for progression to higher education through the College Connect website. The College Connect website allows MEND to communicate the value of higher education and provide targeted support and guidance to learners. The platform assists learners to understand the pathways and supports available across the region, connect to a regional mentor and map their way to college.

- **Strand 4: Connecting to College**

Connecting to College will consolidate existing pathways and develop new pathways to support greater access and share learning about effective transition and post-entry supports. High-quality transition and post-entry supports result in greater academic engagement, achievement, retention and progression.

Role Profile

MEND wishes to appoint a Community Connector for the College Connect Programme. The successful candidate will be part of a team of four Community Connectors each based in one of the MEND Higher Education Institutions. The Community Connectors will be accountable for building sustainable, collaborative relationships with communities experiencing deep disadvantage to assist access to higher education. The role will require travel within the MEND area.

Each Community Connector will also lead one of the core strands of the College Connect Programme, assisting the regional manager to develop and deliver the MEND College Connect Plan. The Community Connector based in DCU will lead the ongoing development and delivery of the College Connect website to provide targeted advice and guidance on the pathways and assistance available across the region. This position will be based in DCU and will report to the Widening Participation Officer.

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the position include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Build sustainable, collaborative relationships with communities experiencing deep disadvantage to assist access to higher education.

- Assist the College Connect manager to implement the MEND College Connect Plan in partnership with communities with low participation rates in higher education.
- Work with the College Connect manager to engage community stakeholders and implement widening participation activities across the MEND region.
- Work with the College Connect Researcher on research projects related to the Programme.
- Broaden access to higher education across the MEND region by linking communities to pathways, transition and post-entry supports; promoting widening participation from the most marginalised groups; and delivering regional targeted events and workshops to provide information, advice and guidance to support access to higher education.
- Lead the ongoing development and delivery of a College Connect regional website to provide targeted advice and guidance on the pathways and supports available across the region.
- Assist the 1916 Bursary Fund to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the most marginalised groups through, promotion and engagement with regional partners.
- Prepare and analyse progress reports and presentations for the College Connect, MEND HEIs and other stakeholders on a regular basis.
- Contribute to the evaluation of the College Connect Programme assisting the evaluation frameworks, the building of baseline data and the dissemination of findings.
- Carry out any other duties related to the College Connect Programme.

Qualifications and Experience

The candidate must have:

- An undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline or an equivalent level 7.

In addition, the successful candidate will ideally have;

- A postgraduate qualification in Education, Community Development, Social Policy, Media Technology, Multimedia, or a closely related field would be an advantage.
- A minimum of three years' experience of working in the area of community development, widening participation, or social inclusion.
- An active, thorough knowledge of the Irish education system with specialist knowledge of Further and Higher education, educational disadvantage, evidence of building sustainable, collaborative relationships with communities experiencing disadvantage, and experience in active engagement with communities to progress social change;
- Excellent IT skills, including; experience of developing and delivering online platforms on time and within budget, the ability to manage DCU's online social media channels and monitor engagement and the skills to design and facilitate online learning
- Experience of project and budgetary management with high-level communication, writing, financial, and administration skills.
- Exceptional communication skills evidenced by the ability to build relationships and consensus.
- An ability to work as part of a team and on an individual basis.
- High levels of creativity, innovation, ambition, proactivity and flexibility.
- Full clean driver's license and access to a car.

Competencies required

1. **Knowledge of the Organisation/Sector:** shows an interest in learning about DCU; has a basic understanding of its remit;

2. **Team working:** willingly shares tasks and information with others; understands the team's goals and is committed to achieving these
3. **Communication:** Conveys information in a clear manner and actively listens and engages to gain understanding.
4. **Knowledge of Processes & IT Skills:** Demonstrates excellent IT skills. This includes an excellent knowledge and application of MS packages, Google apps, CRM and WordPress.