

# Equality Challenge Unit – recruitment for two Senior Policy Adviser (one full time and one maternity cover)

## Equality Challenge Unit

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) works to further and support equality and diversity for staff and students in higher education across all four nations of the UK, and in further education in Scotland.

ECU works closely with colleges and universities to seek to ensure that staff and students are not unfairly excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged because of age, disability, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or through any combination of these characteristics or other unfair treatment.

ECU is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.

ECU currently has 18 members of staff and is headed by David Ruebain, Chief Executive, and governed by a Board of Directors, whose joint-chairs are Professor Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor at Oxford Brookes University and Professor Chris Brink, Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University.

For further details about ECU, please visit our website: [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)

ECU welcomes applications from all candidates irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, or marital or civil partnership status.

The ECU office is currently based at Queens House, 55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3LJ.

## Recruitment

ECU is currently seeking to recruit for 2 posts:

### **1. Senior Policy Adviser (Gender and gender identity) maternity cover, one year fixed-term contract**

This post will provide the strategic and operational lead on ECU's gender and gender identity initiatives. The post is for one year fixed term contract, providing maternity cover.

### **2. Senior Policy Adviser (Religion and belief and sexual orientation)**

This post will provide the strategic and operational lead on ECU's religion and belief and sexual orientation initiatives. This will include considering the interplay between these areas.

Applications for both positions will be assessed against the requirements for the post as set out in the job descriptions.

# Senior Policy Adviser (Religion and belief and sexual orientation)

**Salary: £36,511 per annum**

35 hours per week

## General description of the post

This post will report to the Head of Policy and will provide the strategic and operational lead on ECU's religion and belief and sexual orientation initiatives. This will involve both meeting and anticipating the needs of the higher education sector in relation to equality for staff and students. The post involves contributing to other aspects of ECU's activities, as outlined in our current three-year strategy and the associated programme of projects.

The post holder should be able to work independently and to exercise sound judgment on complex issues and queries. Liaison and development with key external agencies will be a feature of the work.

The post will form part of ECU's policy team, which currently comprises the Head of Policy, six Senior Policy Advisers, a Research and Data Officer and an Athena SWAN officer.

ECU structures its work around projects. The Senior Policy Adviser role will involve working on a range of projects, primarily focussing on religion and belief and sexual orientation, but also in relation to other equality areas.

## Specific responsibilities

- = To provide strategic and operational leadership on religion and belief and sexual orientation related projects and to work with the policy team on other projects, pursuant to ECU's current three-year strategy. This may involve working across different protected characteristic and appointing and managing external consultants.
- = To be well-informed about equality legislation as it applies to the four nations of the UK, in particular on religion and belief and sexual orientation and relevant government proposals, case law, research and good practice; evaluating the implications for higher education and recommending appropriate action.
- = To respond effectively and swiftly to external and internal enquiries from higher education institutions and other organisations as appropriate, and from colleagues, in relation to religion and belief and sexual orientation, delegating where appropriate.
- = To represent ECU on stakeholder forums and advisory groups and provide expert equality and diversity input.
- = To prepare and give presentations and facilitate workshops within the higher education sector and externally, as appropriate.
- = To communicate with higher education sector audiences in a proactive, timely, effective and consistent manner and in accordance with ECU's communications strategy.
- = To ensure that the web pages for religion and belief and sexual orientation and associated projects are up-to-date.

- = To work with the Communications Manager regarding media coverage of religion and belief and sexual orientation related issues.
- = To undertake research and analysis into equality issues, and summarise findings in writing.
- = To prepare policy papers, briefing notes, guidance and produce consultation responses and other documents.
- = To develop and maintain contacts with external organisations in line with ECU's stakeholder engagement strategy.
- = To coordinate and assist with the management, planning and organisation of meetings, seminars and other events, including project steering groups.
- = To undertake commissioned work on behalf of ECU as and when required.
- = To deputise for the Head of Policy as required.

### **Other duties**

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. Such duties may vary from time to time, without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. In particular, reference to the higher education sector and areas of activity of ECU includes any new or different areas of work that ECU may undertake and reference to the policy team includes any new or different posts which may be established within the team. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post.

## **Person specification**

### **Educational requirements**

- = A first degree or equivalent evidence of analytical, communication and problem-solving ability.

### **Essential experience and attributes**

- = A demonstrable track record of working on and promoting equality and diversity issues in general and on religion and belief and sexual orientation equality in particular, at a strategic and senior level.
- = Experience of policy development within the higher education sector.
- = An up-to-date knowledge of equality legislation, practice and related issues, specifically on religion and belief and sexual orientation, preferably in a higher education context, and the ability to engage with complex queries.
- = Good analytical and research skills with the ability to collect and analyse complex material and data, and present it in accessible forms.
- = Excellent written communication skills with the ability to produce clear, focused and comprehensible documents and presentations for various audiences and purposes.
- = Confident public speaker, with excellent communication skills and the ability to interpret and explain policies and provide advice and assistance to a range of audiences, and the ability to persuade, influence and motivate others.
- = Understanding of project management processes and skills, including the ability to manage and deliver on schedule, several projects at once, and the ability to manage external consultants engaged to deliver projects.
- = Ability to foster cooperative working and learning relationships with external partners to meet shared objectives.
- = Ability to work cooperatively in teams, contributing to team decisions and maintaining team relationships by supporting others.
- = Ability to make appropriate decisions independently and work to deadlines with minimal supervision.
- = Ability to assume responsibility in the absence of senior staff when necessary.
- = Excellent IT skills with the ability to research on the internet and make full use of databases, and PowerPoint. ECU currently uses Microsoft Office 2007.

### **Desirable experiences and attributes**

- = The understanding and commitment to support organisational change.

## **Terms and conditions of employment**

- = The successful candidate will be appointed at £36,511 per annum
- = Normal hours of work are 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday. ECU operates a flexitime scheme which accommodates variations around core hours for lunch breaks and start and finish times. It is sometimes necessary to work outside normal working hours.
- = The post holder must be prepared to travel to participate in conferences, workshops and external partnership meetings and to visit higher education institutions in any part of the UK. This will sometimes involve weekends or an overnight stay.
- = Basic holiday entitlement is 27 working days per year. In addition, the office is closed for statutory public holidays and on four other days each year, including the days between Christmas and New Year. These days are paid in addition to the 27 days holiday entitlement.
- = There is a probationary period of six months during which the successful candidate will undergo a process of continuous assessment. The appointment will be confirmed once this period has been satisfactorily completed.
- = The post is superannuable including a personal contribution and an employer's contribution to Universities Superannuation Scheme.

## **Application and interview**

The deadline for applications is **Thursday 23 February 2012, 12 noon**.

Application forms should be returned to Deepty Harji, Unit Support Officer, Equality Challenge Unit, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Queens House, 55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3LJ, or by email to [hr@ecu.ac.uk](mailto:hr@ecu.ac.uk)

Interviews will provisionally be held in London on **Tuesday 13 March 2012**. We aim to notify candidates who have been shortlisted by **Monday 5 March 2012**.