



Aimhigher Associates

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Aimhigher

Aimhigher is the national widening participation initiative to encourage more people to enter higher education from underrepresented groups in order to narrow the gap in higher education between the social classes. The Aimhigher programme is jointly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). For information about the Aimhigher national programme, please look at the Aimhigher national website: www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner or go to www.actiononaccess.org. For information about widening participation in higher education, go to the HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk

Aimhigher activities aim to increase awareness of higher education and raise aspirations to progress to higher education in young people who may otherwise not consider higher education as an option for them. The key target groups for Aimhigher are young people from lower socio-economic groups, those taking vocational qualifications who may not consider higher education, and those in particular social or subject groups whose progression rates are low.

Across England, Aimhigher is organised through 45 area partnerships, of which Greater Manchester is the largest both in terms of the number of partners and in terms of the level of resource. There are ten local authorities in Greater Manchester with a borough coordinator in each reporting to the Aimhigher Area Partnership Committee (APC). There are also seven higher education institutions (HEIs) in Greater Manchester, within each of which are staff with responsibility for Aimhigher outreach projects. In addition, Aimhigher works closely with other organisations including workbased learning providers, Connexions, LSC and the Greater Manchester Lifelong Learning Network. For more detailed information about the work of Aimhigher in Greater Manchester, its structures and priorities, please visit the Aimhigher Greater Manchester website on www.aimhighergreatermanchester.com.

Aimhigher Greater Manchester is led by an Area Partnership Committee (APC) consisting of senior representatives of all partners in the area. Reporting to the APC are ten borough partnership groups, a Finance and a Monitoring subgroup, and four operational groups which plan and oversee activities.

The Open University in the North West is the lead institution for the Greater Manchester Aimhigher partnership. A team of eight staff are based in the Open University's regional centre in Sharston in South Manchester. This team includes the Aimhigher Director, Assistant Director, Project Managers and two support staff. This central team works with Aimhigher partners to define the strategic objectives, administer and monitor the programme and support all aspects of programme delivery. They report to HEFCE, organise partnership meetings and area-wide events and take leading roles in specialist areas including Information, Advice and Guidance, Workbased learning and Communications.

Aimhigher Associates Scheme

The Aimhigher Associates Scheme is a new strand of the national Aimhigher programme. The scheme has funding for three academic years from 2008 -2011 and Aimhigher Greater Manchester have recently submitted a successful bid to run a pathfinder scheme between now and July 09.

The aim of the scheme is to promote progression by learners from state schools and colleges to the full range of HE provision on offer. Undergraduates from a state school background will provide support and encouragement to learners as they progress from year 9 to year 13 and then onto HE. The scheme will provide training and support to undergraduates to fulfil their role as associate.

Aimhigher Greater Manchester are looking to recruit 125 associates from five partner universities; The University of Bolton, The University of Salford, The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and RNCM. Each associate will work in one school or college with around 5 to 6 learners providing up to 15 interventions. Much of the work will be conducted with small groups of learners but there will be the opportunity to speak to learners individually within the school or college and through mentoring systems.

Associates, learners and school co-ordinators will agree the content of the small group sessions which will be based on a programme of activities that associates will be trained to deliver. As an example associates may deliver sessions based around using the UCAS system, navigating useful HE websites, CV writing, student finance and so forth.

Learners involved in the scheme will be part of the Aimhigher target cohort and therefore will be from backgrounds currently underrepresented in HE, this will include those from low socio economic groups, looked after children and young people with disabilities.

We anticipate recruitment and training of associates will take place from September 08 to December 08 and delivery of the programme will commence in January, with the majority of the interventions being completed by June 09.

Aimhigher Associates

Overall purpose of job

Associates will be responsible for delivering a programme of IAG related activities to small groups of young people in schools and colleges and for delivering 1-1 support through email. They will seek to act as a role model for students in the Aimhigher cohort and ensure learners access formal sources of IAG as required.

Reporting

Associates will report on a day to day basis to the nominated school and college associate scheme co-ordinators.

Location

Associates' time will be spent delivering activities at schools and colleges with some additional support provided by email. 6 out of the 10 GM boroughs are involved in the scheme and placements will be available throughout Bolton, Salford, Tameside, Rochdale, Oldham and Bury. Each associate will be linked to one school or college within one of these boroughs.

Posts Available

We are looking to recruit 125 associates from HEIs across Greater Manchester. The majority of associates will work with learners in year 9 or 10 in across Greater Manchester with others working in colleges with learners in year 12 and 13. It will be of help if you could indicate in your application if you wish to be school or college based or whether you would consider either setting.

Duration of post

These posts are funded for until July 31st 2009 in the first instance, however we are anticipating continued funding will allow associates to remain in post for up to 3 academic years. Please note to remain in post associates must be current HE students.

Main Duties

- To work with small groups of young people to promote progression to HE and help them access further sources of support.
- To support learners to reflect on other Aimhigher experiences and assist them in completion of their learner log.
- To provide 1-1 support to learners through use of e-mentoring systems.
- To recognise the limits of their own knowledge and refer learners to existing sources of IAG.
- To promote local, regional and national sources of information about HE and provide feedback to Aimhigher Greater Manchester about additional resources needed by the cohort.
- To motivate students to participate in Aimhigher activities and act as a role model.
- To maintain records of activities delivered and support evaluation of activities as agreed.

- To develop and sustain effective working relationships with IAG providers, Aimhigher School and College Co-ordinators, members of the Aimhigher Borough Partnership and the Aimhigher Greater Manchester co-ordination unit.
- To use all learning opportunities to develop the knowledge and the personal skills necessary to effectively carry out the role.
- To work in a way that demonstrates commitment to equal opportunities and to promote non discriminatory practices in all aspects of the work.

Person Specification

Essential Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Currently studying on an undergraduate course
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Good presentation skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good IT skills including use of Email, Internet, Word and PowerPoint
- Ability to engage with and relate to learners in a range of settings
- Enthusiasm for learning and for the value of HE
- Reliable and punctual

Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Some understanding of the information and advice learners need to successfully progress to HE, for example:

HE student finance
 Vocational pathways into HE
 Support for disabled learners
 Support services for looked after children and care leavers
 Local IAG provision
 UCAS applications
 Useful website and resources

- Some experience of delivering information or advice to young people is desirable, for example as a Student Ambassador, Mentor or similar role.
- Involvement in Aimhigher or Widening Participation activities prior to or during your HE course.

In addition:

The post holder will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Whilst these posts will generally be for school hours, it is expected that postholders will be willing to work flexible hours from time to time in order to play an active role in events and activities which take place in the evenings or at weekends.

Training and Payment

Associates must successfully complete a mandatory two day training course, of which one day will be residential. Training will take place during November and will be designed to equip associates provide the programme of activities to young people in either schools or colleges.

Associates are able to earn up to a maximum of £1,000 for delivery of activities as part of the scheme, this is broken down below. Associates will also be reimbursed for travel costs and the scheme will pay for an up to date CRB check.

£100 for successful completion of the two day training session
(paid on completion of first school/college based activity)

£40 for attendance at initial meeting with school/college based co-ordinator

£30 per delivery of each school or college based session

£100 for provision of email support to learners throughout the scheme
(paid at the end of the scheme)

£250 completion bonus
(paid at the end of scheme on submission of session registers and associate evaluation form)

Payments may be subject to tax and NI contributions, for the majority of students with limited earnings completion of the correct tax office paperwork can provide exemptions. For more information on tax as a student go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/students/

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants who wish to discuss this post informally are invited to contact

Completing the application form

It is in your interest to show how your experience and personal qualities address each aspect of the person specification and the role requirements. To do this:

- Please ensure you complete all sections of the form in full.
- You are asked to include a covering letter setting out the background and skills you would bring to this post, in particular showing how your experience addresses the criteria of the person specification.

Your letter will form part of the selection process and will help us assess your ability to meet the criterion for effective communication. The letter is an important part of your application and if you fail to do this you will not be considered for shortlisting.

Completed application forms should be returned to:

Closing date for applications:

Interviews will be held at..... on.....