



Job Description: Head of Learning

Position Overview

Job Title: Head of Learning

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Direct Reports: 4 (Assessors, educators and administrator)

Contract Type: Full-time, Permanent, Term Time

Location: Manor Farm, North Marston, Buckinghamshire

Salary: Competitive, commensurate with experience

About Different Steps CIC

Different Steps CIC is a Community Interest Company and subsidiary of Animal Antiks, specialising in post-16 education for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). We provide transformative educational experiences through nature-based learning, combining therapeutic farm environments with accredited qualifications in animal care and personal development.

Our mission is to enable every learner to achieve their potential and progress towards meaningful employment or further education through innovative, person-centred educational approaches.

Role Purpose

The Head of Learning is responsible for the strategic leadership and operational delivery of all educational programmes at Different Steps CIC. This pivotal role ensures the highest standards of teaching, learning, and assessment across our City & Guilds and ASDAN qualifications whilst overseeing the development and implementation of our supported internships programme.

The successful candidate will combine leadership expertise with a deep understanding of SEND provision, driving curriculum development, quality assurance, and learner outcomes whilst maintaining our distinctive therapeutic farm-based approach to learning.

Different Steps CIC, Manor Farm, St John's Lane, North Marston, Bucks MK18 3PU

Tel: 01296 670996

www.differentsteps.org.uk

Key Responsibilities

1. Educational Leadership and Strategy

Curriculum Leadership:

- Lead the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of all learning programmes
- Ensure curriculum design meets City & Guilds and ASDAN requirements whilst addressing individual EHCP outcomes
- Drive innovation in curriculum delivery, integrating farm-based learning with formal qualification frameworks
- Oversee the academic calendar, timetabling, and resource allocation across all programmes

Quality Assurance:

- Maintain and enhance learning standards across all programmes
- Lead internal quality assurance processes, including lesson observations, work sampling, and student progress monitoring
- Ensure compliance with awarding body requirements and external quality assurance processes
- Implement continuous improvement strategies based on student outcomes, employer feedback, and external requirements

Student Outcomes:

- Drive student achievement, progression, and satisfaction across all programmes
- Analyse and report on student performance data, identifying areas for improvement
- Lead interventions to support underperforming students and maximise success rates
- Oversee destination tracking and progression planning for all students

2. Team Leadership and Management

Staff Development:

- Line manage 4 direct reports, providing leadership, support, and professional development opportunities
- Conduct performance management processes including appraisals, target setting, and development planning
- Lead recruitment and selection of educational staff, ensuring appropriate qualifications and experience
- Foster a collaborative, supportive team culture focused on student success

Professional Development:

- Coordinate and deliver staff training programmes, ensuring compliance with CPD requirements
- Support staff to achieve and maintain appropriate qualifications and awarding body standards
- Create opportunities for peer learning, collaboration, and knowledge sharing
- Ensure all staff maintain current knowledge of SEND best practices and legislative requirements

Capacity Planning:

- Plan staffing requirements to support student growth projections (30-120 students by 2030)
- Develop succession planning strategies for key educational roles
- Manage workload distribution and ensure effective deployment of teaching resources

3. Qualification Delivery and Assessment

City & Guilds Provision:

- Oversee delivery of Level 1 and Level 2 Animal Care qualifications
- Ensure compliance with City & Guilds standards, assessment requirements, and quality procedures
- Manage relationships with City & Guilds representatives and external quality assurers
- Lead annual centre reviews and respond to external quality assurance feedback

ASDAN Provision:

- Lead delivery of Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) and other ASDAN qualifications
- Ensure assessment practices meet ASDAN requirements and maintain center approval
- Develop innovative delivery methods that engage students with diverse learning needs
- Coordinate moderation activities and internal verification processes

Assessment Management:

- Oversee the work of 2 qualified Assessors, ensuring consistent and fair assessment practices
- Implement robust internal verification systems to maintain assessment quality
- Coordinate external assessment activities and examination periods
- Ensure timely submission of assessment evidence and certification claims

4. One File Management and Digital Learning

Learning Management System:

- Provide strategic oversight of One File implementation and utilisation across all programmes
- Ensure effective use of digital portfolios for assessment, progress tracking, and evidence collection
- Lead staff training in One File functionality and best practices
- Monitor system effectiveness and implement improvements to enhance student and staff experience

Digital Integration:

- Drive the integration of technology into teaching and learning practices
- Oversee digital accessibility provisions for students with additional needs
- Coordinate with IT support to ensure robust technical infrastructure
- Develop policies and procedures for digital learning and assessment

5. Supported Internships Programme

Programme Development:

- Lead the delivery of Supported Internships and apprenticeships from September 2026
- Develop partnerships with external employers and placement providers
- Create assessment frameworks and progression pathways for internship participants
- Ensure compliance with supported internship standards and funding requirements

Employer Engagement:

Working with our Senior Team to:

- Build and maintain relationships with local employers offering placement opportunities
- Coordinate employer briefings, training, and ongoing support
- Monitor placement quality and address any issues or concerns
- Develop employer feedback systems and continuous improvement processes

Learner Support:

- Oversee job coaching provision and support strategies for internship participants
- Coordinate with therapy and support staff to ensure holistic student support
- Monitor learner progress and implement interventions where needed
- Lead transition planning for learners moving into employment or further learning

6. Regulatory Compliance and External Relationships

Quality Assurance:

- Ensure compliance with Ofsted requirements and prepare for inspections
- Maintain center approvals with all awarding bodies
- Lead annual self-assessment processes and quality improvement planning
- Coordinate external reviews and implement recommendations

Stakeholder Management:

Work with our Senior Team to:

- Build and maintain relationships with local authorities, commissioners, and funding bodies
- Represent Different Steps CIC at educational and professional networks
- Coordinate EHCP reviews and annual review processes
- Communicate regularly with parents, carers, and other professionals

Professional Standards:

- Ensure compliance with education legislation and safeguarding requirements
- Maintain professional registration and development as appropriate
- Lead policy development and implementation for educational provision
- Champion inclusive practice and equality of opportunity

Person Specification

Essential Requirements

Education and Qualifications:

- Degree-level qualification or equivalent professional experience in a learning or training environment
- Level 4 qualification in Internal Quality Assurance or commitment to achieve within 12 months
- Evidence of continuing professional development in education and SEND

Experience:

- Minimum 3 years' experience in an education, training or learning environment
- Proven experience working with young people with SEND, particularly those with EHCPs
- Experience of curriculum development and quality assurance processes
- Demonstrated success in improving young people's outcomes and educational standards
- Experience of line management and team leadership

Knowledge and Skills:

- Understanding of post-16 education landscape and funding mechanisms
- Knowledge of awarding body requirements (City & Guilds/ASDAN experience preferred)
- Understanding of SEND legislation, EHCP processes, and inclusive practice
- Strong analytical skills with experience of data analysis and performance monitoring
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

Personal Attributes:

- Commitment to inclusive education and supporting vulnerable young people
- Strong leadership abilities with the capacity to inspire and motivate teams
- Problem-solving mindset with the ability to implement creative solutions
- Resilience and adaptability in a dynamic educational environment
- High levels of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills

Desirable Requirements

Additional Experience:

- Experience of working in alternative or specialist educational settings
- Knowledge of therapeutic or outdoor education approaches
- Experience of developing supported internship or employment programmes
- Understanding of farm-based or land-based learning environments
- Experience with digital learning platforms (One File experience preferred)

Working Conditions

Location and Environment

- Based at Manor Farm, North Marston, Buckinghamshire
- Working farm environment requiring appropriate dress and safety awareness
- Mix of indoor classroom and outdoor farm-based locations
- Travel occasionally required for meetings, training, and professional development

Working Hours

- Full-time position (37.5 hours per week)
- Core hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday to Friday
- Flexibility required for evening events, family meetings, and emergency situations
- Some weekend working may be required for events and activities

Additional Requirements

- DBS Enhanced check with barred list (required before commencement)
- Commitment to ongoing professional development and training
- Willingness to be flexible and adaptive in a growing organisation

- Understanding of health and safety requirements in educational and farm environments

Benefits Package

- Competitive salary based on experience and qualifications
- Generous holiday allowance (25 days plus bank holidays, increasing with service)
- Professional development budget and support for further qualifications
- Free parking and rural working environment
- Opportunity to make a real difference in young people's lives
- Career progression opportunities within the growing Animal Antiks Group

Application Process

How to Apply

Please submit the following documents:

1. **Covering letter** (maximum 2 pages) addressing how you meet the person specification
2. **CV** including full employment history and qualifications
3. **Contact details for two professional referees** (including current or most recent employer)

Selection Process

- **Shortlisting (HR):** Based on application against person specification
- **Assessment (CoSEC):** Including presentation, learner interaction, and interview
- **Final Interview:** With CEO and senior leadership team
- **References and Checks:** Before final offer confirmation

Contact Information

For informal discussions about this role, please contact:

Amanda Foister, Company Secretary Email: amanda@animalantiks.co.uk

Completed applications should be sent to:

Email: hello@six-hr.com

Post: Head of Learning Recruitment, Different Steps CIC, Manor Farm, North Marston,
Buckinghamshire MK18 3PU

Different Steps CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS clearance and satisfactory references.

We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

Different Steps CIC is part of the Animal Antiks Group