



## JOB DESCRIPTION: HEAD OF DIFFERENT STEPS

### Position Overview

**Job Title:** Head of Different Steps

**Reports to:** Chief Executive Officer

**Direct Reports:** 4 (1 Administrator, 3 Teaching/Assessment Team)

**Contract Type:** Full-time, Permanent

**Location:** Manor Farm, North Marston, Buckinghamshire MK18 3PU

**Salary:** 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 Different Steps** is the operational and business leader responsible for the day-to-day management and strategic development of Different Steps CIC as a successful training provider. This is a **business management role** requiring someone with a training background who excels at process, systems, and operational excellence.

You will oversee all aspects of running a compliant, efficient training company—from awarding body relationships and apprenticeship development to learner journey management and team coordination. While you'll manage educators and develop curriculums with your team, your primary focus is **operational leadership, systems management, and business growth**.

The successful candidate will combine practical training sector knowledge with strong business acumen, ensuring Different Steps operates efficiently, meets all regulatory requirements, and delivers exceptional outcomes for learners while supporting sustainable growth.

## Key Responsibilities

### 1. Business Operations & Process Management

#### Operational Leadership:

- Lead the day-to-day operations of Different Steps CIC as a training provider
- Develop and implement operational processes, systems, and procedures across all functions
- Ensure efficient workflow management from learner enquiry through to certification
- Create and maintain standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all business processes
- Identify process improvements and implement solutions to enhance efficiency
- Oversee health & safety, safeguarding, and compliance across all operations

#### Systems Management:

- Take ownership of **One File** learning management system as the primary operational tool
- Ensure effective use of One File across the learner journey (enrolment, ILPs, assessment tracking, certification)

- Train and support staff in One File functionality and best practices
- Generate reports, analytics, and management information from One File
- Coordinate with IT support and One File technical team to optimise system performance
- Implement and manage other operational systems (CRM, databases, booking systems)

### **Business Planning:**

- Contribute to strategic business planning and growth targets
- Monitor and report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and business metrics
- Manage operational budgets and ensure cost-effective delivery
- Plan capacity and resource allocation to support growth (30-120 students by 2030)
- Coordinate timetabling, resource allocation, and space planning

## **2. Apprenticeships & Programme Development**

### **Apprenticeship Creation & Management:**

- Research, design, and implement new apprenticeship programmes aligned with market needs
- Navigate apprenticeship funding rules, levy requirements, and ESFA regulations
- Register Different Steps as an apprenticeship training provider
- Build apprenticeship frameworks, learning plans, and assessment strategies
- Develop employer partnerships and coordinate work placement logistics
- Manage apprenticeship levy claims, evidence requirements, and compliance

### **Programme Portfolio:**

- Oversee delivery of City & Guilds and ASDAN qualifications

- Identify new qualification opportunities aligned with learner needs and market demand
- Lead bid writing and applications for new programme approvals
- Coordinate supported internships programme launch
- Ensure all programmes meet funding body requirements and contractual obligations

#### **Awarding Body Relationships:**

- Manage relationships with City & Guilds, ASDAN, and other awarding bodies
- Maintain centre approvals and ensure compliance with awarding body standards
- Coordinate external quality assurance visits and action planning
- Submit registrations, claims, and certification requests on time
- Lead annual centre reviews and continuous improvement processes

### **3. Quality Assurance & Compliance**

#### **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA):**

- Lead internal quality assurance processes across all programmes (*IQA qualification highly desirable*)
- Conduct sampling of assessor work, observations, and standardisation activities
- Maintain IQA records, action plans, and evidence trails
- Support assessors to maintain consistent, fair assessment practices
- Prepare for and manage external quality assurer (EQA) visits

#### **Regulatory Compliance:**

- Ensure compliance with Ofsted requirements and prepare for inspections
- Maintain compliance with ESFA funding rules, audit requirements, and data returns
- Oversee safeguarding, health & safety, and equality & diversity compliance

- Lead self-assessment reviews (SAR) and quality improvement planning (QIP)
- Implement actions from external inspections, audits, and reviews

#### **Data & Reporting:**

- Oversee learner data management, ILR submissions, and funding claims
- Generate performance reports on achievement rates, retention, and progression
- Monitor and analyse learner outcomes and satisfaction data
- Produce management reports for CEO and Board of Directors
- Coordinate annual reporting and impact measurement

#### **4. Team Management & Development**

##### **Line Management:**

- Line manage **1 Administrator** and **3 Teaching/Assessment Team** members
- Conduct regular supervision, appraisals, and performance management
- Set clear objectives, monitor progress, and provide constructive feedback
- Manage staff workload, capacity planning, and holiday coordination
- Lead recruitment and selection of new team members as needed

##### **Staff Development:**

- Identify training needs and coordinate CPD for all team members
- Ensure staff maintain appropriate qualifications (teaching, assessing, IQA)
- Support staff to achieve required awarding body standards and competencies
- Foster a collaborative, professional team culture focused on continuous improvement
- Coordinate staff induction and onboarding processes

### **Team Coordination:**

- Lead regular team meetings, planning sessions, and standardisation activities
- Coordinate communication and workflow between educators, administrators, and support staff
- Ensure effective handovers and information sharing across the team
- Build positive team morale and address any performance or conduct issues promptly

## **5. Learner Journey & Experience**

### **Learner Management:**

- Oversee the end-to-end learner journey from enquiry to progression
- Ensure robust enrolment, induction, and initial assessment processes
- Monitor learner progress, attendance, and engagement
- Coordinate EHCP reviews, annual reviews, and multi-agency meetings
- Lead interventions for learners at risk of withdrawal or underperformance

### **Safeguarding & Support:**

- Ensure safeguarding procedures are robust and consistently applied
- Coordinate with welfare and therapy teams to support holistic learner needs
- Manage learner behaviour, discipline, and exclusion processes where necessary
- Ensure effective pastoral support and learner voice mechanisms
- Oversee destination tracking and progression planning for all learners

### **Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Build and maintain relationships with parents, carers, and families
- Liaise with local authorities, social workers, and commissioning bodies

- Coordinate with referring agencies (schools, alternative provision, social care)
- Represent Different Steps professionally in multi-agency forums

## **6. Business Development & Growth**

### **Employer Engagement:**

- Develop employer partnerships for apprenticeships, supported internships, and work experience
- Coordinate employer briefings, training, and ongoing support
- Manage job coaching, placement monitoring, and employer feedback
- Build sustainable relationships with local businesses and industry sectors

### **Marketing & Recruitment:**

- Work with marketing team to promote Different Steps programmes
- Coordinate open days, taster sessions, and prospective learner visits
- Support learner recruitment processes and conversion of enquiries
- Develop promotional materials and case studies showcasing learner success

### **Income Generation:**

- Identify new income streams and funding opportunities
- Support bid writing and tender responses for contracts
- Monitor and forecast income against targets
- Explore opportunities for expansion (new programmes, sites, or partnerships)

## **Person Specification**

### **Essential Requirements**

#### **Education and Qualifications:**

- **Training/education sector qualification** (degree level or equivalent professional experience)

- Evidence of continuing professional development in training/education sector
- Enhanced DBS check (required before commencement)

### **Experience:**

- **Minimum 3 years' experience working in a training or education environment** (training provider, FE college, apprenticeship delivery)
- **Proven experience with operational/business management** and process improvement
- Experience working with **learning management systems** (One File experience highly desirable)
- Experience with awarding body requirements and quality assurance processes
- Experience managing teams and coordinating multiple stakeholders
- Understanding of working with SEND learners and EHCP processes

### **Skills and Knowledge:**

- **Strong process and systems management skills** – you excel at creating efficient workflows
- **Excellent organisational abilities** and attention to detail
- Understanding of post-16 training landscape, funding mechanisms, and compliance
- Knowledge of awarding body standards (City & Guilds, ASDAN, or equivalent)
- Strong analytical skills with ability to interpret data and produce reports
- Proficient in Microsoft Office, databases, and digital systems
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Financial awareness and budget management capability

### **Personal Attributes:**

- **Business-minded with a problem-solving approach**

- Strong leadership abilities with capacity to motivate and manage teams
- Resilient and adaptable in a dynamic environment
- High levels of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to inclusive education and supporting vulnerable young people
- Proactive, self-motivated, and able to work autonomously

## **Desirable Requirements**

### **Highly Desirable:**

- **Level 4 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) qualification** or commitment to achieve within 12 months
- **Direct experience creating and managing apprenticeships**
- Advanced One File user or administrator experience

### **Additional Desirable:**

- Assessor qualification (TAQA, AI/CAVA)
- Teaching qualification (PGCE, Cert Ed, PTLLS, or equivalent)
- Experience working in alternative or specialist educational settings
- Knowledge of therapeutic or outdoor education approaches
- Understanding of farm-based or land-based learning environments
- Experience with Ofsted inspections and ESFA funding audits
- Experience developing supported internship or employment programmes

## **Working Conditions**

### **Location and Environment:**

- Based at Manor Farm, North Marston, Buckinghamshire
- Working farm environment requiring appropriate dress and safety awareness

- Mix of office-based work and interaction with farm-based learning activities
- Travel occasionally required for meetings, training, and professional development

### **Working Hours:**

- Full-time position (40 hours per week)
- Core hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday to Friday
- Flexibility required for evening events, family meetings, employer meetings, and occasional emergencies
- Some weekend working may be required for events and activities (TOIL provided)

### **Additional Requirements:**

- 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
- Driving licence desirable for occasional travel

### **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 (including IQA if needed)
- Beautiful rural working environment
- Opportunity to shape and grow a successful training provider
- Genuine impact on young people's lives
- Career progression opportunities within the growing Animal Antiks Group

- Supportive, values-driven leadership team

## Application Process

### How to Apply

Please submit the following documents:

1. **Covering letter** (maximum 1 page) addressing:
  - Your experience in training/education operations and business management
  - Your approach to process improvement and systems management
  - Why you're interested in leading Different Steps CIC
  - How you meet the person specification
  - Your salary expectations
2. **CV** including full employment history and qualifications
3. **Contact details** for two professional referees (including current or most recent employer)

### Selection Process

1. **Shortlisting:** Based on application against person specification
2. **Assessment Day:** Including:
  - Systems/process scenario task
  - Presentation on operational improvement
  - Interview with Company Secretary and CEO
3. **References and Checks:** Before final offer confirmation

### Key Dates

- **Application deadline:** March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026
- **Interviews:** rolling interviews up to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- **Start date:** ASAP

## **Contact Information**

**For informal discussions about this role, please contact:**

**Amanda Foister, Company Secretary**

Email: [amanda@animalantiks.co.uk](mailto:amanda@animalantiks.co.uk)

**Completed applications should be sent to:**

Email: [hello@six-hr.com](mailto:hello@six-hr.com)

*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**