

# Working for Us

As a Careers Consultant

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Our 'briefing' evenings for prospective careers consultants and opportunities to carry out work shadowing help you find out what it's really like to work for us.

# Working for Us

As a Careers Consultant

## What we do

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*The working life of our Careers Consultants is varied and includes a range of activities such as delivering 1:1 careers support, creating and facilitating workshops and events, working with academic departments or getting involved in a whole range of collaborative project work within your allocated Careers Service(s) or across The Careers Group.*

### Innovative careers education

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You could be facilitating a workshop on 'What to do with your degree in History' at Royal Holloway, designing an employability summer school programme at UCL or running a webinar for University of London students interested in careers in the creative industries.

With constant advancements in technology, changes in the higher education landscape and increasing globalisation, the work of careers consultants is continuously evolving. Careers consultants need to ensure that the advice and guidance they are giving is up to date, relevant and delivered in innovative ways. This might be through delivering guidance to international students via Skype, running social media workshops in a computer lab, running webinars on careers-related topics, or participating in the development of e-learning resources to reach a larger audience.

### Relationship management

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An important part of our work is building effective, strategic relationships with key institutional stakeholders, often working with academic departments as well as other key university teams and other stakeholders such as employers and student groups. Our practice is increasingly evidence-based, so careers consultants are expected to draw on data from a variety of sources (e.g. graduate employment destination data) and keep abreast of labour market intelligence and research within the field of career management to inform and evaluate their work.

### Working collaboratively on projects

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There are lots of exciting activities and challenges in the work of careers consultants and what you work on at any given time will depend on the strategic priorities of the member institution you are allocated to and the needs of the client groups you are working with. This could involve developing a new online learning programme for students about to embark on a taught postgraduate degree course, or working with employer engagement colleagues to prepare a group of students effectively for work placements or internships.

Before making an application to be a Careers Consultant at The Careers Group, it's important to research the role and ensure that it is suitable for you. There is information about The Careers Group as an organisation on our website including some staff profiles as well as further details about the role and our requirements in the recruitment pack (including the full job description/ person specification).

#### Our mission

The Careers Group exists to make each of our member's services the best that it can be strategically and operationally in the context of its institution and to ensure that each service is demonstrably better as a member of the group than it would be if it were not.

As a collective, our group will be highly visible as thought and practice leaders in higher education careers and employability nationally and globally. In turn, the leading edge thinking and practice will enhance delivery in member services and bring reputational benefits to UoL centrally and to member institutions.

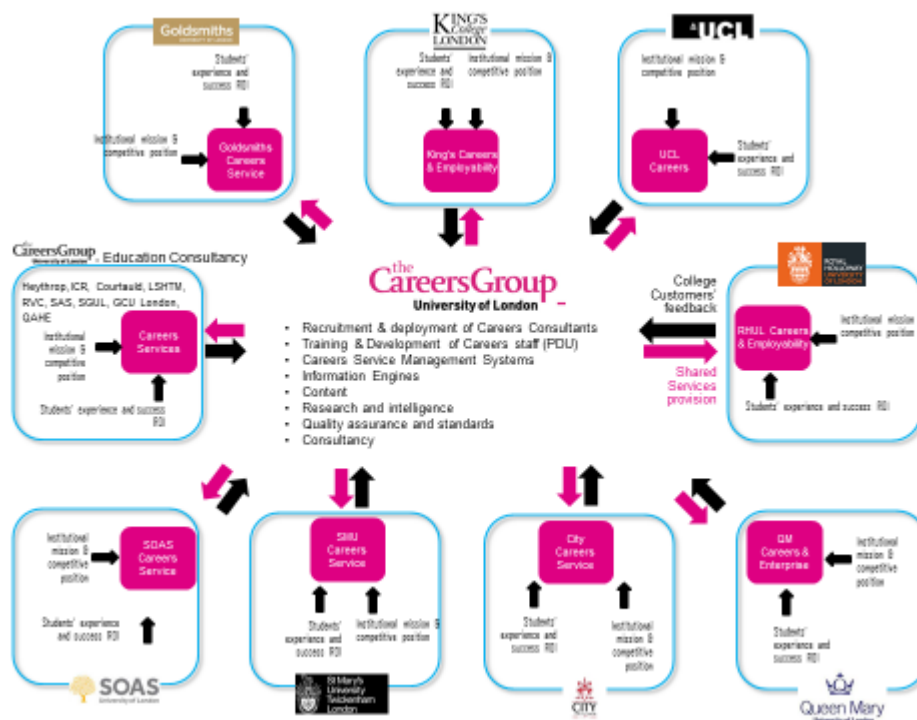
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## An overview of The Careers Group

The Careers Group is a membership organisation consisting of a range of higher education Careers Services supported by a small central team within the University of London. The Careers Group provides expertise, experience and high quality staff to work within member services supporting undergraduate and postgraduate students, recent graduates and research staff as well as liaising with graduate recruiters from all sectors.

As a membership organisation, The Careers Group exists to ensure that each member Careers Service is the best that it can be within the context of its institutional strategic priorities. To achieve this mission The Careers Group seeks to maximise the cost benefits and added value available to member Services through collaborative working or centrally organised activity. As a collective, The Careers Group is the largest higher education careers and employability Service in the world, and is committed to being a thought and practice leader in the field of graduate employability.



The Careers Group operates on a not-for-profit basis, covering essential costs and seeking to achieve maximum value for money for member Services. Strategic decisions around investments, innovations and organisational development are taken by the Senior Management Team which comprises the Head of Careers Service from each member institution.

The Careers Group includes over 200 careers and employability professionals in different roles working across its member services. Our in-house Professional Development and Research Units ensure that staff are supported to be practice leaders in their field, working with students and graduates from all disciplines and employers from across all sectors.

# Working for Us

## As a Careers Consultant

### Our member Services

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The following university Careers Services are full members of The Careers Group:

- City, University of London
- Goldsmiths Careers Service
- King's College London Careers & Employability Service
- Queen Mary Careers & Enterprise Service
- Royal Holloway Careers & Employability Service
- SOAS Careers
- St Mary's University Careers Service
- University College London
- The Courtauld Institute of Art
- Heythrop College
- The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- The Royal Veterinary College
- St George's University of London
- School of Advanced Study

The Careers Group also provides on-site careers services to some other higher education institutions, including the London campuses of various UK universities.

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## Remuneration and benefits

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### Salary and benefits

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#### What is the salary and benefits package?

Careers Consultants are appointed to the University of London's **Grade 7**. Experienced and qualified careers professionals may be appointed directly as Senior Careers Consultants at Grade 8 depending on their prior experience. The current salary scales for these two grades can be found on the University of London website.

Please note that starting salaries will be determined by the specific relevance of any professional qualifications you hold to careers work in higher education alongside your general career experience. The University of London has fixed salary bands that are non-negotiable and the package also includes an incremental rise in salary on an annual basis. **It is expected that a candidate with no prior careers experience within higher education would be appointed towards the lower end of the grade 7 scale.**

The University operates occupation pension schemes; the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), applicable to staff in academic and related grades, and the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) for other staff.

Annual leave is generous. In addition to the basic leave entitlement of 30 days plus public and bank holidays, there are several University closure days around Easter and Christmas (when the central University of closed) on which staff do not work. This always includes the time between Christmas and New Year.

In addition, permanent staff can apply for childcare vouchers, interest-free season ticket loans, a tax-free cycle scheme, salary-sacrifice computer and mobile phones and online retail voucher codes.

#### What are the working hours?

The hours for careers consultants are usually a standard eight hour day with an hour break for lunch. Occasionally you will be required to work in the evenings or at weekends to attend careers events which will generally be paid back to you in toil.

#### Are there opportunities for flexible working?

We are committed to preserving and promoting opportunities to individuals with personal or domestic circumstances, or physical or mental disabilities which require a degree of flexibility. Reasonable consideration is given to requests for adapting working patterns and regimes to the above along with requests made to vary normal working hours to meet an employee's religious or cultural needs.

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### Induction and workplace allocations

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#### Where would I actually be working?

After an initial induction and training programme, all of our Careers Consultants are allocated to one or more of our member institution's on-site Careers Services for a period of time. In practice this means that you might be working for two days per week in one Service and three days per week in another Service, for example. Careers Consultants must be willing to work in any of our member institutions.

You can find out the locations of all of our member Services on our website, and there is a list of all our member institutions at the end of this document.

#### How does the allocation process work?

As an organisation we look to allocate our careers consultants to different locations based on the needs of our member institutions along with the professional development requirements and previous experiences of our consultants. This flexibility is part of the foundation of the running of The Careers Group as a collective organization and delivering a responsive service to our members. It is also core part of our approach to staff development, so our Careers Consultants are moved periodically for their own professional development.

#### How much say will I have in to which institution I am allocated?

Careers Consultants are asked to fill in an allocation preferences form annually. This information is taken into consideration when allocations are made, in conjunction with our member institutions' requirements for Career Consultant staff.

#### How often would I move my allocation?

The allocations process usually takes place once a year, but this does not necessarily mean that everyone is moved. Occasionally Careers Consultants are reallocated if a need arises in a particular institution during other times of the year. There is no fixed term for a posting, which varies according to business requirements primarily along with an individual's professional development goals.

#### Are there any exceptions to this?

The only exception to this is if you are recruited in to a specialist role which is attached to a specific academic department or funded project within an institution.

#### What does the induction comprise of?

The induction includes a range of activities that will help you in your role as a Careers Consultant. You will have the opportunity to:

- shadow other Careers Consultants conducting 1:1 appointments and workshops
- meet with staff from different areas of the business
- attend training on core work functions
- visit The Careers Group colleges and meet with Heads of Service and other staff
- research labour market information and attend employer visits

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### How quickly will I be doing the 1:1s/ groupwork on my own?

You will not be expected to go 'live' until you feel confident, usually this will be after you have done the guidance and group work training towards the end of your induction. You will be observed carrying out initial interactions by a more experienced colleague who can give you feedback and support.

### Opportunities for experienced careers consultants

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We welcome applications from experienced Careers Consultant professionals who have worked in different careers environments. In addition to sufficient relevant experience (see job specification), candidates must have one of the qualifications below to be considered for direct entry to a Senior Careers Consultant position. Please note that if we consider that you have insufficient experience within the higher education context then we may offer you a position on the Grade 7 scale and then support you through the internal promotion process.

The following careers related qualifications are currently recognised by The Careers Group:

- PGDipCEIGHE (Post-Graduate Diploma in Careers Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education) - not following TCG pathway
- Postgraduate Diploma in Careers Coaching by University of East London – not following TCG pathway
- QCG (Qualification in Careers Guidance)
- DipCG (Diploma in Careers Guidance)
- Cert CEIG HE (Certificate in Careers Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education)
- Dip CEIG HE (Diploma in Careers Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education)
- MA in Careers Guidance in Higher Education
- S/NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance
- MSc Career Management and Counselling

**Note:** Consultants who hold one of our recognised qualifications and join The Careers Group, may still be asked to complete some elements of our supported professional qualifications to cover particular topics that are considered core to our work. For example, some of our Careers Consultants who have a recognised careers qualification but no experience in higher education may complete the module on 'careers work in higher education' which forms part of the PG Diploma in Career Coaching at the University of East London.

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## Qualifications and professional development

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### Professional careers qualifications

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#### Do I need a professional careers qualification?

You do not need a professional careers qualification in order to apply to become one of our careers consultants, but newly appointed Careers Consultants without a relevant professional training qualification will be required to undertake one at a point in time after passing their probationary period.

Once you have finished your probation period, the Professional Development Unit will contact you to apply for your qualification. Careers Consultants will be invited as a group with colleagues who joined The Careers Group in the same academic term.

#### What qualifications can I do?

The qualifications that are currently supported by the Careers Group areas follows:

- The Diploma in Careers Education, Information and Guidance in Higher Education (Dip CEIG HE) run by our professional body (AGCAS<sup>1</sup>) in conjunction with the University of Warwick
- The Postgraduate Diploma in Careers Coaching offered by University of East London

The AGCAS/Warwick Dip CEIG HE is the preferred qualification offered to our careers consultants. This qualification is deemed the most relevant for the work you will be doing within The Careers Group. It is run jointly through AGCAS, our professional body and Warwick University and consists of modules that are a mixture of short residential courses and distance learning.

Within both of these qualifications, The Careers Group has preferred 'pathways' to ensure that you cover the elements of the programme that are considered most relevant to our work, and depending on any previous relevant experience and/or qualifications you may have. You will plan your route through one of these qualifications in conjunction with your line manager and the Professional Development Unit Coordinator.

#### Do I have to pay for the qualification?

The Careers Group will fund your professional qualification both in terms of course fees and time spent away from your allocation to attend classes. Due to the significant investment we make in profession qualifications, you'll be expected to remain at TCG for 2 years after completing your course. If you were to leave within this timeframe, there will be a repayment of fees requirement in line with TCG policy on this issue.

### Continous professional development and progression

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#### What general training will I receive?

All our Careers Consultants can access a range of internal training opportunities through the Professional Development Unit (PDU). This includes training on guidance skills, facilitating workshops, building strategic relationships, giving feedback on CV & Applications and more. The initial induction training programme covers all core aspects of the work that Careers

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<sup>1</sup> [www.agcas.org.uk](http://www.agcas.org.uk)



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Consultants do, and then Careers Consultants can select from a range of professional development activities to continue to enhance their practice.

### **How will my performance be appraised?**

You will have a twice yearly appraisal with your line manager to set and review your objectives for the year. You will also have regular non-appraisal meetings with your line manager to discuss progress. Peer review is also an important aspect of our practice so you will be expected to undertake at least two peer review sessions per year where a colleague will give you feedback on your 1:1 or group work sessions, and you will have the opportunity to observe and learn from colleagues.

### **What are the career progression opportunities for Careers Consultants?**

Individuals who join The Careers Group as Careers Consultants will have the opportunity to apply for promotion to become Senior Careers Consultants once they have built up the relevant experience and professional qualifications. There are opportunities to apply for a managerial position within our member Services, such as team/project leader roles.

### **How does the promotion process work?**

Careers Consultants who feel they fulfil the criteria required for promotion to Senior Careers Consultant can submit an application for promotion at any point during the year. Consultants are encouraged to work with their line manager to set professional development objectives to help them to progress towards promotion, and receive feedback on their progress and potential 'readiness' to apply.

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## The selection process

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### What are the stages of the selection process?

The selection process includes the following stages:

1. Application form
2. Telephone interview – this will be a competency-based interview lasting for around 15-20 minutes
3. A panel interview and selection exercises – the selection exercises will include short one:one and groupwork role-play exercises
4. Final round panel interview and selection exercises – activities on this day will include a written exercise and the verbal presentation of a proposal for a new careers related service of relevance to our clients or stakeholders

### How long does the process usually take?

Shortlisted candidates will be notified of their telephone interview by email with no less than three days' notice. The full selection process will normally take around one month from closing date of application to notifications of job offers.

## Recruitment briefing evenings and work shadowing

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We encourage all potential applicants to find out as much as they can about the role of the Careers Consultant within The Careers Group before making an application.

### Briefing evenings

We run briefing evenings periodically for people interested in joining The Careers Group as a consultant. At these events you will have the opportunity to learn more about The Careers Group and working in a college setting and meet some of our current staff.

### Work experience/ placements

To be considered for an opportunity to carry out some work shadowing/ experience as a careers consultant, please send a cover letter and CV directly to one of our member Services with your request:

- Goldsmiths - [careers@gold.ac.uk](mailto:careers@gold.ac.uk)
- King's College Careers Service - [careers@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:careers@kcl.ac.uk)
- Queen Mary, University of London - [careers@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:careers@qmul.ac.uk)
- Royal Holloway, University of London - [careers@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:careers@rhul.ac.uk)
- St Mary's University College - [careers@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@smuc.ac.uk)
- SOAS, University of London - [careers@soas.ac.uk](mailto:careers@soas.ac.uk)
- University College London - [careers@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:careers@ucl.ac.uk)

Please note that larger colleges tend to receive a higher volume of requests so please consider requesting opportunities at smaller colleges. We may not always be able to accommodate your request because of peak service times and demands on teams at different times of the year.