

Counsellor

OPPORTUNITY

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gets real.



Reference: 0471-25

Grade: 08

Salary: £38,784 to £46,049 per annum, depending on experience

Contract Type: Permanent

Basis: Part-time (0.8 FTE)

Job description

Job Purpose:

Aston University's 2030 strategy is *Inclusive, Entrepreneurial and Transformational*. We are building a new model of university for a changing world. Our vision is to be a leading university of science, technology and enterprise, measured by the positive transformational impact we achieve for our people, students, businesses and the communities we serve.

The Student Life team at Aston University provides a wide range of services to support the academic, emotional, and personal wellbeing of our students. The Counselling team, part of the Student Wellbeing Services alongside Chaplaincy and Wellbeing, offers an inclusive, supportive environment that helps students navigate challenges impacting their ability to study and thrive at university.

Reporting to the Head of Student Wellbeing, the successful candidate will collaborate with colleagues across Student Life and the broader University community to provide high-quality support.

We are looking for a qualified (postgraduate level 7) and accredited therapist (BACP/ UKCP/BPS) with evidence of 3 years post-qualification supervised practice, to join our student-facing Counselling Service for 4 days per week. The Counselling Service offers short-term therapeutic support to students throughout the year, with services including:

- ▶ Time-limited counselling (up to 6 sessions)
- ▶ Wellbeing work – including covering drop-in desk, co-working/leading wellbeing activities.
- ▶ Reflective practice groups, and mental health events

The postholder will be part of a dynamic and experienced team, responsible for delivering culturally competent, brief individual interventions and risk assessments. You will support students facing emotional and psychological difficulties that affect their academic performance and overall university experience.

The Counselling Team at Aston University is composed of professionals from a variety of therapeutic backgrounds including the integration of, Person-Centred, Existential/Humanistic, CBT, Solution-Focused, and Emotion Freedom Technique approaches. We currently offer talking therapy, Emotional Freedom Technique and Walk and Talk therapy. The team is committed to proactively addressing cultural diversity, race, and equality issues in all aspects of its work.

Key responsibilities include:

- ▶ Providing brief therapy for students experiencing a range of emotional and psychological concerns.
- ▶ Conducting risk assessments and developing appropriate intervention strategies
- ▶ Collaborating with the wider wellbeing team and university staff to ensure holistic support for students.
- ▶ Contributing to the wellbeing service including covering drop-in desk, co-working/leading wellbeing activities.
- ▶ Actively participating in team meetings, reflective practice, and professional development.

The successful candidate will:

- ▶ Have extensive experience providing brief, evidence-based counselling, ideally within a higher education or similar setting.
- ▶ Demonstrate strong skills in supporting students with a range of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, trauma, cultural/faith sensitivities, relationship issues, and academic pressures.
- ▶ Be committed to working with diverse student populations and addressing issues of race, culture, and equality.
- ▶ Hold a relevant professional postgraduate qualification in counselling or psychotherapy, and be accredited by a recognised body (e.g., BACP, UKCP)
- ▶ At Aston University, we provide a supportive and flexible working environment where staff are encouraged to develop professionally while making a meaningful impact on the student experience.

Main Duties/Responsibilities

- ▶ Manage caseload of students experiencing ongoing emotional and mental health difficulties, providing appropriate support and guidance.
- ▶ Conduct initial assessments to evaluate students' needs in relation to their academic and work context, determining the most appropriate course of action.
- ▶ Assess and manage risk in cases involving suicidal ideation, self-harm, or other factors that could endanger student welfare, ensuring accurate documentation and reporting.
- ▶ Apply tailored counselling approaches based on the needs of individual students, referring to other professionals or counsellors as appropriate.
- ▶ Provide brief, solution-focused counselling in-person, online, or by telephone, based on service requirements and student needs.
- ▶ Collaborate with students on clinical decisions and recommend appropriate next steps, including referrals to internal teams or external agencies (statutory or voluntary).
- ▶ Effectively communicate with a diverse student body, including staff and students from various cultural, social, and academic backgrounds.
- ▶ Contribute to the wellbeing service including covering drop-in desk, co-working/leading wellbeing activities.
- ▶ Work closely with chaplaincy and student welfare teams.
- ▶ Serve as a Duty Counsellor, managing enquiries, referrals, and urgent concerns as they arise.
- ▶ Support the wellbeing service in promotion, design and the implementation of wellbeing activities and initiatives.
- ▶ Offer guidance and consultation to staff on matters relating to students in crisis or with urgent mental health needs.
- ▶ Lead and contribute to training initiatives for academic departments and professional services to enhance their capacity to support student wellbeing.

- ▶ Maintain accurate electronic and written records of student sessions, contact, and any relevant interventions or referrals.
- ▶ Produce written reports as needed and liaise with academic mentors, professional services staff, and external parties (e.g., GP, NHS mental health services), while maintaining student confidentiality.
- ▶ Participate in service quality audits and evaluations, ensuring that the Counselling Service meets high standards of accountability and effectiveness.
- ▶ Collaborate as part of a team in the ongoing development and delivery of the counselling and broader Student Wellbeing services.
- ▶ Participate in clinical and case-based meetings, adhering to core service standards and providing insights into student cases.
- ▶ Engage in broader student and staff wellbeing initiatives, contributing to a holistic approach to wellbeing across the university.
- ▶ Follow University policies related to student and staff wellbeing, including disability, fitness to study, harassment, grievance, and equality, diversity, and inclusion matters. Comply with GDPR, FOI, Health & Safety regulations, and other relevant legislation.
- ▶ Work in line with professional ethical standards, including the BACP Ethical Framework, UKCP, and AUCC/BACPUC guidelines for good practice.
- ▶ Respond to high-risk situations (e.g., suicidality, self-harm) in collaboration with the Head of Student Wellbeing and other Student Life staff, ensuring appropriate action is taken for the safety and wellbeing of all involved.
- ▶ Address safeguarding concerns raised during student disclosures, in consultation with the Welfare and Safeguarding team, ensuring that confidentiality agreements are adjusted when necessary to manage risk.
- ▶ Perform other relevant duties as directed by the Head of Student Wellbeing, or Director of Student Life.
- ▶ Participate in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and attend individual supervision sessions, maintaining professional membership requirements.

Additional Responsibilities:

- ▶ Engage in ongoing personal and professional development, participating in relevant training and development activities to enhance personal expertise and contribute to the development of the team.
- ▶ Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of both staff and students, ensuring a safe working environment.
- ▶ Act with fairness and integrity, fostering trust and promoting equality in all aspects of the role.
- ▶ Support diversity and inclusion, working to create an inclusive environment for all students and staff while contributing to the University's sustainability initiatives.
- ▶ Demonstrate flexibility in your role, adapting to changing needs and priorities to ensure the effective delivery of services.

Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Postgraduate/MSc in Counselling or Psychotherapy ▶ 1st Class or 2.1 undergraduate degree in Psychology/Counselling or related Mental Health subject ▶ Accreditation with BACP/ UKCP/ HPC/ BABCP/ BPS/ as a Counsellor/ Psychotherapist/ Counselling Psychologist or equivalent 	Application form
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Significant experience of providing counselling in a university or comparable institutional setting. ▶ Expertise in counselling/ psychotherapy and familiarity with the application of theory to both clinical and team/institutional processes. ▶ Experience of working effectively in a short term/ brief therapy model. ▶ Substantial experience of delivering counselling for a wide range of presentations within public sector institutional settings ▶ Significant experience of working with young adults from diverse backgrounds with complex and varied mental health needs Understanding of the issues facing students and staff within HE ▶ Awareness of the requirements of the Equality Act as it applies to students 	Application form and interview

	Essential	Method of assessment
Aptitude and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ability to manage and prioritise a busy workload, keeping good quality records. ▶ Ability to work independently as well as part of a team, including managing own clinical caseload. ▶ Evidence of being a productive and engaged team member by contributing to good working relationships, valuing the contribution of others, and being willing to adapt own practice in the light of feedback from colleagues. ▶ Experience of working with a varied ▶ caseload and presentations, working collaboratively across a diverse group ▶ of staff from different professional ▶ disciplines. ▶ Experience of team supervision/clinical ▶ meetings ▶ Evidence of ability to bring own ▶ specialist skills and expertise to ▶ contribute to team development and ▶ service delivery across the institution. ▶ Ability to promote equality and diversity in working practices and to maintain positive working relationships with volunteers, staff and students. ▶ Ability to take an active part in the 	Application form and interview

	Essential	Method of assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ developmental role of the service, ▶ including contributing to workshops and training events for students and staff. ▶ Ability to plan and deliver approaches to respond to a wide range of needs across a complex diverse institution. ▶ Evidence of appropriate decision making in the case of clients facing serious mental health problems and those at risk. ▶ Ability to take responsibility and make key decisions independently in responding to significant areas of risk. ▶ Excellent verbal and written communication skills when dealing with a range of people. ▶ Ability to deal with challenging situations of a sensitive nature. ▶ Working knowledge of local mental health service provision. ▶ Ability to deal appropriately with confidential information and adhere to GDPR requirements. ▶ IT skills, particularly in the use of Microsoft Office packages, Case Management systems, Microsoft Teams and email. 	

	Essential	Method of assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ability to work as part of a team and contribute to outstanding team performance. Accurate and timely record keeping. 	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Distinct qualifications/training in Emotional Freedom Technique, Walk and Talk, Systemic Therapy, EMDR, or Somatic Therapy. 	Application form and interview
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Experience of working in a UK Higher Education Institution. ▶ Experience of providing on-line or telephone support 	Application form and interview

University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University. In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them.

Values + Behaviours

				
Innovation	Collaboration	Ambition	Inclusion	Integrity
We strive for excellence within ourselves and others, providing solutions to new and existing challenges.	We work best when we are collaborative, working together to contribute to the Aston community.	We strive together for improvement and innovation looking ahead to see the bigger picture.	We treat everyone in our community equally and how they would like to be treated.	We are open, honest and fair. We take ownership of the way we work and how we treat each other.

How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs>.

Applications should be submitted by 23.59pm on the advertised closing date.
All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted.

If you require a manual application form, then please contact the Recruitment Team via recruitment@aston.ac.uk.

Contact information

Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Ummayah Sidhu
Job Title: Head of Student Wellbeing
Email: u.sidhu1@aston.ac.uk

Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via recruitment@aston.ac.uk or 0121 204 4500.

Additional information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits Aston University staff enjoy.

Salary scales: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

Benefits: [Benefits and Rewards | Aston University](#)

Working in Birmingham: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

Employment of Ex-Offenders: Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they applying for is listed an exception under the act.

Eligibility to work in the UK: You should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements, including meeting the [English language standards](#). If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful. Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

With the end of free movement for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals from 1 January 2021, the UK's new immigration system applies to all non-UK/Irish nationals who require a visa.

Where an individual is subject to UK immigration control, they will require a visa to work in the UK.

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

The main routes available for those who need a visa to work in the UK are **Skilled Worker**, **Global Talent** and the **Graduate Route**.

You can find further information about each of these visa routes on our candidate immigration page.

If you will conduct research in your role, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application. Please see below for further details.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):

If you will conduct research in your role and you apply for a Skilled Worker or Temporary

Worker GAE visa, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application.

This process can take at least 6 weeks to process, and Aston will consider this when confirming your expected start date. Processing times will increase between April and September and can longer to complete.

There is no fast-track option available. ATAS certificates will be processed in order of receipt.

You can find more information about ATAS on our candidate immigration page.

Before you start and Right to Work

90-day entry vignette

If you have applied for your visa outside of the UK, you will receive a vignette in your passport which is usually valid for 90 days. Please make sure to travel to the UK within the 'valid from' and 'valid to' dates on this visa. If you entered the UK before or after these dates, you would not 'activate' the visa and you would need to leave and re-enter the country.

You will also receive a decision letter confirming details about your immigration permission and where to collect your Biometric Residence Permit.

Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents in and around Birmingham that can help you find suitable accommodation. The Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme provides a list of professional agencies and landlords who have applied with them for accreditation. Whilst accreditation is not a guarantee of quality, it provides some reassurance about the standard of the service they provide.

You can also use property search websites such as Rightmove or Zoopla.

Equal Opportunities

Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level.

The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form. Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its

Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment.
Individuals will not be identified by name.

Data Protection

Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (“GDPR”). The University’s Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies>

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