

# Candidate brief: Evaluation Manager

## About TASO

The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes (TASO) is an affiliate What Works Centre, and part of the UK Government's What Works Movement. Our vision is to eliminate equality gaps in higher education (HE). Our mission is to improve lives through evidence-informed practice.

TASO was set up in 2019 and became an independent charity in April 2021. Our work focuses on the generation, synthesis and dissemination of high-quality evidence about effective practice in widening participation and student outcomes. We primarily focus on developing and disseminating causal evidence and encourage the sector to do the same by providing HE professionals access to research, toolkits, evaluation guidance, evaluation training and more to help improve equality within the sector.

## The Role

The Evaluation Manager will work on TASO's Research and Evaluation (R&E) programme to develop a better understanding of what works to support widening participation and student success. With the support and guidance of the Head of Evaluation, the Evaluation Manager will lead the development and delivery of practical evaluation training courses, of a suite of high-quality resources and step-by-step guidance to support universities and colleges to better evaluate the activities and programmes they deliver. This will include developing [evaluation guidance](#) documents, pages for our website, webinars and training materials. The Evaluation Manager will design and deliver training based on these materials to a wide range of external stakeholders - e.g., widening participation and student support practitioners at higher education institutions.

The Evaluation Manager may also commission new projects to external partner organisations that are designed to develop evaluation guidance for practitioners, evaluators and researchers from multiple higher education institutions. They will work across these projects to manage and monitor progress, collate findings, analyse data and help steer the overall programme of work. They may also undertake internal research projects themselves - including synthesis of secondary research, conducting primary qualitative and quantitative research - working closely with the Chief Research Officer and other Research Managers in the team. Typically, the Evaluation Manager would be supported by a junior Evaluation Officer and/or a Research Officer.

The role will involve substantial stakeholder management, liaison with various interested parties outside TASO, convening of stakeholder groups and supporting training sessions. The Evaluation Manager will have strong communication skills and be able to effectively deliver their evaluation training content, clearly convey complex research findings, articulate and promote

complex quantitative information and advanced evaluation methods (particularly causal impact evaluation methods), and support TASO to influence broader policy discussions.

While TASO directly engages with the higher education sector, this role does not involve conducting academic research or delivering academic lectures. Instead, the focus is on supporting practitioners in the sector to improve their applied research and evaluation skills.

Reporting directly to the Head of Evaluation, the main responsibilities will include:

- Developing a suite of high-quality, practical evaluation guidance to support practitioners within universities and colleges to better evaluate the activities and programmes they deliver.
- Using these resources and materials to lead the design and delivery of training - in-person and online - to a wide range of external stakeholders.
- Delivering external training courses, workshops, and events to disseminate the work of TASO's wider research programme, which will include a range of evaluation methodologies.
- Developing theory of change models and evaluation plans for individual interventions and multi-intervention programmes that higher education institutions are delivering, for example pre-entry outreach initiatives or student mental health interventions.
- Conducting desk-based research, reviewing existing literature to synthesise the quality of evidence on a given topic, and collating examples of sector good practice.
- Commissioning of external research and evaluation projects and collaborating with external partners e.g. research agencies, evaluation consultancies, or specialist academic advisors.
- Overseeing funded projects, ensuring delivery to timelines, value for money for TASO, and timely and proactive risk assessment and mitigation.
- Designing, running and analysing the results of research projects in collaboration with multiple external organisations. This may include qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Developing TASO's relationships with key stakeholders in the higher education sector and contributing to the administration and secretariat for a number of advisory panels formed of external stakeholders.
- Developing/maintaining knowledge of cutting-edge research and evaluation which is relevant to TASO's work. Using this knowledge to contribute to the delivery of blog posts, literature reviews and research briefings.
- Line managing an Evaluation Officer and/or a Research Officer.

Once appointed, the Evaluation Manager will be supported to grow into their new role through an intensive programme of on-boarding, induction, and on-going support - e.g. by coming along

to co-deliver some existing training sessions together with an experienced team member, before delivering training on their own. There are also plenty of existing training and guidance materials that the new EM can use to build on while developing new content.

### The attributes we are looking for in an Evaluation Manager

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate their skills and experience against the following criteria in their written application and at interview. That said, we welcome applications from candidates with a range of skills and experience and encourage you to apply even if you do not meet each and every criteria specified below.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<b>Education / qualification and training</b>		
Undergraduate degree in relevant discipline	X	
A minimum of 3 years experience working in a research and evaluation role	X	
Postgraduate level qualification in relevant discipline (e.g. applied research, public policy)		X
<b>Knowledge / skills</b>		
Ability to design and deliver evaluation training courses to a range of stakeholders on a variety of topics e.g. theory of change and impact evaluation approaches. Related experience - e.g. teaching quantitative or qualitative research methods - will also be considered .	X	
Ability to collate and analyse complex information for reporting purposes.		X
Ability to critically appraise the strength of causal research/evaluation, particularly the quality and reliability of the research/evaluation.	X	
Ability to develop theories of change, and design evaluation plans and research protocols.	X	
Ability to conduct quantitative research and evaluation studies including experimental and/or quasi-experimental methods.		X
Ability to analyse quantitative data.		X

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Confident using software (such as Microsoft Office suite and R/Stata/SPSS) to analyse and present research findings in a variety of formats.		X
Confident and clear written and verbal communication, including report-writing and presentation skills.	X	
Understanding of widening participation and student success policy agendas.		X
Experience of research and evaluation relating to widening participation and student success.		X
<b>Experience</b>		
Line management experience		X
Developing and delivering presentations and training courses for professional audiences.	X	
Collaboration and coordination of project stakeholders, communicating persuasively to ensure smooth implementation of research projects.	X	
Working on multiple projects and managing competing demands and timescales.	X	
Managing data protection and ethical processes for research/evaluation studies	X	
<b>Personal characteristics/other requirements</b>		
Ability to both use your own initiative and follow instructions and recognise when a problem should be referred to others.	X	
Ability to work collaboratively in small teams.	X	
<b>Values</b>		
Commitment to eliminating equality gaps in higher education; a passion for the mission of What Works Centres and the broader agenda around evidence-based policy and practice in public services.	X	

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Driven, with a personal style that supports the achievement of team goals – a natural collaborator, networker and convener who makes connections and brings others together.	X	

## Why work for TASO

- **Annual Holiday** - 27 days per year, plus public/bank holidays and a day off for your birthday.
- **Pension Scheme** - TASO will contribute 8% to your pension.
- **Flexible working** - We are committed to flexible working where possible, with core hours of 10am - 4pm.
- **Hybrid working** - Currently, a two-day requirement to work from our London office.
- **Team days** - Regular team days in the office and team building days.
- **Training and Development** - Systematic performance reviews, personalised learning and development objectives and access to a training and development fund plus team training days.
- **Volunteering** - Two days a year off to volunteer for an organisation of your choice.
- **Wellbeing** - Free Employee assistance programme which offers webinars, courses and counselling sessions. A yearly personal wellbeing budget.
- **Sick Pay Scheme** - 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay after probation has been passed.
- **Staff Discounts** - Discounts available via Perks At Work from wide range of retailers for shopping, dining, experiences, car maintenance, study, etc.

## Initial Terms and Conditions of Appointment

- Remuneration: £43,000 per annum
- Location: Central London. This post will be hybrid with the expectation that the post holder will be in the office two days a week in addition to attending office-based project meetings. Candidates must have the right to work in the UK.
- Term: Permanent. Full-time, 35 hours per week.

## How to apply

To apply, please send a CV (no longer than 2 pages) and your response to the four questions in the application form attached to [info@taso.org.uk](mailto:info@taso.org.uk), citing "Evaluation Manager" in the subject of the email. We also ask that you fill out our online [EDI monitoring form](#) when you submit your application. The form is anonymous.

We encourage interested candidates to inquire if you have questions or want to discuss your suitability for this role. We will facilitate brief online conversations with the TASO team, please email [info@taso.org.uk](mailto:info@taso.org.uk) to request a call.

**Applications will be reviewed regularly on a rolling basis and the final deadline for applications is 10:00 on Monday 20 May.** Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview, and complete a short pre-task, on a rolling basis between 13 May - 6 June 2024.