SOLAS
learning works

Role Specification

Title: Strategic Engagement and Performance Manager,

Grade: Grade 6

Unit: Research, Data and Strategic Engagement

Ref: 397

The Role:

SOLAS is seeking to recruit a permanent Strategic Engagement and Performance Manager. Reporting to the Director of Research, Data and Strategic Engagement, she/he will have relevant work experience at a senior level, with significant expertise in the development and implementation of national strategy, as well as outstanding engagement skills and abilities to successfully deliver for the organisation at the most senior level. The successful person will be a highly skilled communicator, with well-developed skills in both leading, formulating and monitoring national performance at a strategic level. Key to the role will be successful and effective strategic engagement and oversight across a range of national policies and initiatives, namely the SOLAS and the ETB Strategic Performance Agreements 2022-2024 as a key underpinning implementation component of the national FET Strategy. The successful candidate must be flexible, positive, and enthusiastic and able to demonstrate an outstanding record of achievement in their career to date. They will support the effective oversight and delivery of the National Transforming Learning FET Strategy 2020-2024, the SOLAS and ETB Strategic Performance Agreements and the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2021-2023 and Business Plan. The role will form a key part of the Research, Data and Strategic Engagement team and the overall Transformation Division.

Key Responsibilities:

- Senior level effective and influential strategic engagement with a wide range of key stakeholders critical to the success of the SOLAS Corporate Plan, the SOLAS Business Plan, the National Transforming Learning FET Strategy and the SOLAS and ETB Strategic Performance Agreements 2022-2024.
- Ensuring effective stakeholder engagement with key organisations and agencies, including the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Education and Training Boards, Department for Social Protection, Qualification and Quality Ireland, and other agencies and departments as required.
- Management and critical oversight and reporting of performance of overall strategic outcomes and system targets as set out in the SOLAS and ETB Strategic Performance Agreements, in collaboration with other teams in SOLAS as required.

- Supporting implementation of the FET Strategy, alongside the Director of Research, Data and Strategic Engagement, in close collaboration with the SOLAS Transformation Project Management Office and internal teams to ensure effective advancement of strategic further education and training system outcomes.
- Working with SOLAS colleagues lead strategic engagement projects and initiatives including drafting of SOLAS responses to related National Policy and Public Consultations, Memorandums of Understanding, Oireachtas Committee Submissions as well as PQ and Government requests for information. Support high level strategic projects as required.
- Support completion as well as steer relevant system evaluations, underpinned by research and evidence-based data, in collaboration with SOLAS colleagues to drive strategic performance. Ensure critical system performance mechanisms underpin strategic direction, including in areas such as the future funding model and learner voice.
- Act as secretariat to the SOLAS Board Strategic Planning Committee.
- Support a strategic and innovative approach to engagement to deliver successful outcomes for SOLAS.
- Manage the budget for Strategic Engagement and Performance.
- Ensure compliance with public procurement policy, data protection and governance practices.
- Implement the performance management system for all direct reports and ensure onward cascading, contributing strongly to an overall SOLAS high performance culture.
- Contribute to the successful achievement of SOLAS' strategic goals and objectives in collaboration with other teams in Research, Data and Strategic Engagement and across the organisation as required.
- Provide leadership and management to colleagues who directly report to you, working effectively to the Director and with peers, external colleagues, departments, and other relevant funded bodies.
- Perform such other duties as may be assigned from time to time including deputising for the Director and representing SOLAS nationally where necessary.

Essential Skills, Qualifications and Experience:

- 3 years management experience in senior level strategic engagement as well as effective implementation of national policy and strategy
- Ability to relate effectively with a diverse range of people internally and externally to the organisation, including education and training boards, government departments, Board members and agencies and organisations at all levels
- Knowledge and experience of national system evaluation and performance
- Excellent leadership, negotiation and influencing skills with the ability to motivate, challenge and engage individuals as well as own teams
- Proven track record of developing, driving, and delivering against implementation plans
- Outstanding written and spoken communications skills, as well as an excellent grasp of information technology
- Highly developed abilities in reporting, analysis and interpretation of national system outcomes and overall performance
- Higher or further education and training qualification in a relevant discipline

Competencies

Leadership	*Articulates and gives a sense of purpose and direction to the unit; delegates appropriately* ✓ gives the unit a sense of purpose by linking their efforts and contributions to the SOLAS overall vision, strategy and goals ✓ demonstrates a passion, high energy and accountability for achieving the desired future state ✓ listens without prescribing answers to ensure people feel comfortable voicing their opinions ✓ asks questions (rather than providing solutions) to help others make informed decisions ✓ delegates full authority and gives latitude to the individuals/team to do the job in their own way ✓ takes leadership responsibility for issues, inside and outside of his/her portfolio ✓ uses realistic but positive language to inspire others and make them feel part of a highly successful team.
Developing Self and Others	*Takes an active role in guiding others in their developmental activities* ✓ makes time to discuss career aspirations with team members ✓ identifies developmental opportunities for team members (e.g. cross-functional projects) ✓ acts as champion and sponsor for high performing team members ✓ volunteers individuals for organisational projects even where the team is disadvantaged in the short-term ✓ acts as a mentor to individuals at various levels within SOLAS.
Thinking Big	*Scans the environment for potential opportunities, engaging individuals in the development of innovative yet achievable goals and work plans* ✓ scans the economic, academic, business and/or technical environment to spot opportunities and plan for future needs ✓ analyses emerging trends and threats over the longer term and effectively interprets this information to demonstrate the potential for SOLAS ✓ focuses the team's attention on the importance of the bigger, longer term picture rather than the immediate ✓ challenges fundamental and traditional assumptions and encourages others to do the same.
Learner and Stakeholder Focus	*Juggles multiple resources to best meet the needs of students or clients* ✓ continuously updates the team with learner/stakeholder information enabling them to provide the most effective service ✓ reallocates resources as appropriate to best meet learner/stakeholder needs ✓ persuasively lobbies for additional resources where necessary to meet learner/stakeholder needs ✓ challenges individuals to look at issues through the eyes of the learner/stakeholder ✓ considers the needs of both the learner/stakeholder and the overall organisation and finds mutually acceptable solutions.
Results Focused and Business Aware	*Keeps current, builds effective business cases and seeks opportunities to raise SOLAS performance to meet organisational goals* ✓ keeps abreast of SOLAS's overall business and shares the information with his/her unit ✓ considers decisions from a business perspective to ensure economic viability ✓ uses financial information to evaluate options and opportunities ✓ builds effective business cases, separating the main issues, highlighting benefits, providing realistic cost and time estimations etc. ✓ pushes self and others for high value results, not just activity ✓ checks-in with individuals and asks them to do the same, holding people accountable for milestones and achieving results
Communication	*Proactively and consistently communicates within the unit, across SOLAS and with other stakeholders* ✓ takes the initiative and makes consistent and regular two-way communication a priority in the unit ✓ finds reasons to walk around to talk to people, being visible and available ✓ prepares and delivers engaging and motivating presentations ✓ considers other peoples' opinions, adapting the message to demonstrate respect for the audience ✓ Considers internal and external stakeholders to ensure effective communication with all