

TASO

Transforming Access
and Student Outcomes
in Higher Education

Candidate information pack

Head of Evaluation

Follow us



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**Until we get equality in
education, we won't have an
equal society.**

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Sonia Sotomayor

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.



Our Values

Continue to challenge

We are honest and transparent in every element of our work.

Integrity is everything

We challenge the status quo, push boundaries and strive for better.
from ourselves, from the team and from our stakeholders.

Always learning

We remain open-minded and curious, ever-ready to learn, develop or find out something new.

Stronger together

We support each other and believe in the strength of teamwork, partnership and collaboration.

Committed to equity

We strive to achieve fairness in everything we do.

Act with empathy

Our approach is driven by kindness, understanding and respect.



The Role

As the Head of Evaluation at TASO, you will play a pivotal role in guiding and supporting a small group of managers within the Research & Evaluation team to ensure the successful delivery of TASO's research and evaluation initiatives. As a member of TASO's senior management team, you will be responsible for commissioning and developing advanced evaluation guidance and tools tailored for the higher education sector, with a specific emphasis on impact evaluation and causal inference. Your expertise will significantly contribute to projects aimed at promoting evidence-informed practices in widening participation and student success. The Head of Evaluation role reports directly to the Chief Research Officer (CRO).

In this role, you will coordinate and monitor research and evaluation projects to ensure they are designed and conducted to a high standard. These projects include a range of methods, including large-scale quantitative methods (such as RCTs and quasi-experimental designs) but also qualitative components (e.g. as part of implementation and process evaluation or theory based evaluations). Monitoring will include acting as a first line of oversight and providing guidance to the research project managers (while consulting with the CRO in exceptional cases) to ensure projects are adhering to relevant procurement, legal and ethical requirements, delivery of commissioning rounds, supporting effective management of subcontractors and preliminary quality assurance of project deliverables. You will also design and implement – under the guidance of the CRO and with input from across the TASO team of research/evaluation managers – a comprehensive programme of evaluation support for the HE sector, including tailored training plans and guidance materials to help develop evaluation skills of both seasoned evaluators and non-specialist practitioners. Your responsibilities will also include line management for at least one Evaluation Manager, supporting the broader research and evaluation activities.



Main responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Head of Evaluation are outlined below. We will consider applications from candidates who are able to demonstrate their skills and experience in most of these areas, so please don't rule yourself out in case you don't have experience in all of the stated areas.

- Develop and deliver a programme of high-quality evaluation training and guidance to support universities and colleges to better evaluate the activities and programmes they deliver. Using these resources and materials to deliver training – in-person and online – to a wide range of external stakeholders.
- Offer guidance, expertise and support to managers in the Research & Evaluation team to support the delivery of TASO's research projects where appropriate.
- Contribute to projects focused on knowledge mobilisation and understanding how best to promote evidence-informed practice in widening participation and student success.
- Lead on some in-house research and analysis, including randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs.
- Manage the running of any evaluation-focused external advisory groups, for example the Research and Evaluation Subcommittee, and Evaluation Advisory Group.
- Develop and maintain an online evidence toolkit and evaluation guidance.
- Develop and maintain a system for monitoring the generation of new research so that TASO stays up to date with the latest developments.
- Provide verbal and written reports into TASO's governance and advisory groups.
- Be a respected and credible voice for robust research and evaluation within the sector.
- Undertake projects and duties as required or requested by the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive.

The HoE role requires some adaptability and openness to engage with other initiatives and projects that may arise throughout the year, as directed by senior staff.



About you

First and foremost, you will be a credible advocate for rigorous research and evaluation within the higher education sector, providing regular verbal and written reports to TASO's governance and advisory groups. Your responsibilities will also include line management for at least one Evaluation Manager, supporting the broader research and evaluation activities.

You're confident in having complex and challenging conversations with external partners and stakeholders. You can handle these conversations well, you can communicate TASO's position clearly – particularly on technical matters.

Driven with a personal style that supports the achievement of team goals, you're collaborative and a team player and are able to build strong relationships across the whole organisation. A natural convener who brings others together you're happy to help out when and where it's needed.



The attributes we are looking for in a Head of Evaluation

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.

Education / qualification and training

Essential

- Undergraduate degree
- A minimum of 5 years experience working in a research and evaluation role

Desirable

- Postgraduate level qualification in relevant discipline (e.g. applied research, public policy)

Knowledge and skills

Essential

- 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 .
- Ability to design and draft high-quality research protocols and evaluation plans, including the sample, measurement and analysis plans.
- Ability to conduct and to critically appraise the strength of causal research/evaluation, particularly the quality and reliability of the research/evaluation.
- Ability to analyse quantitative data, from secondary and primary sources.
- Confident using software (such as Microsoft Office suite and R/Stata/SPSS) to analyse and present research findings in a variety of formats.
- Confident producing technical documents that accurately report methodological and statistical information. You combine this with experience of communicating complex evidence and analysis in a simple and accessible format to non-experts.

Desirable

- Understanding of widening participation and student success policy agendas.
- Experience of research and evaluation relating to widening participation and student success.



Experience

Essential

- Leading teams and managing others to achieve outstanding results.
- Leading projects
- Working in a fast-paced and rapidly evolving environment.
- Taking personal responsibility for critical decisions.
- Collaboration and coordination of external project stakeholders, communicating persuasively to ensure smooth implementation of research projects.
- Managing data protection and ethical processes for research/evaluation studies.

Values

Essential

- A passion for the mission of What Works Centres and the broader agenda around evidence-based policy and practice in public services.



Why work for TASO

The Head of Evaluation role is an exceptional opportunity for the right candidate to achieve real impact through their work and leadership of an exciting portfolio of research and evaluation activities at TASO. Besides coordinating projects and programmes, you will have a chance to work in a small and friendly team of people who are genuinely committed to evidence-informed practice. And beyond this team, you will benefit from having access to a very wide network of expert researchers and policy makers with whom we interact on a regular basis. Other benefits include:

- **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 10:00–16:00.
- **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** - One 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 a wide range of retailers for shopping, dining, experiences, car maintenance, study, etc.



Position Summary

Remuneration: £54,100 to £56,000 per annum - depending on experience

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: 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, citing “Head of Evaluation” 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.

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to complete a task before or during the interview stage.

Deadline for applications: Monday 26th of August 2024 at 9:00 BTS.

Interviews are expected to be held on w/c 16 September and candidates will be issued the task to complete in advance.



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Equality! Where is it, if not in education? Equal rights! They cannot exist without equality of instruction.

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Frances Wright

