

Senior communications officer

About the role:

University Alliance are looking for an experienced and enthusiastic communications professional to join our core team.

Working closely with the Head of Communications and Public Affairs, this role will support in the day-to-day delivery of the comms and influencing strategy, working on a variety of proactive and reactive workstreams to maximise awareness and reach of University Alliance and our members' profile, reputation, campaigns, programmes and policy work.

This is an exciting chance to work in a fast-paced environment as part of a small but ambitious team, interacting with colleagues at all levels, working across varied briefs and contributing to the wider work of an effective influencing organisation. This role would suit someone looking to advance their career, having worked previously in a press / media handling / PR or communications/public affairs role.

About University Alliance

University Alliance is a mission group within the higher education sector, representing and supporting large to mid-sized, world-leading civic universities with a professional, technical and vocational focus with strong links to business and the public sector services. We are respected as a thoughtful and constructive force in the higher education sector, with excellent links with decision-makers in government at all levels we are committed to being an effective and powerful voice of professional and technical universities.

- We are a forward thinking and socially aware organisation
- We offer great work/life balance with flexi-time and working from home options
- Generous holiday allowance and pension scheme
- Fantastic location – Liverpool Street / Spitalfields

Our values

We are passionate about what we do and ambitious to achieve excellence across our mission.

We are collaborative, open minded and entrepreneurial – willing to consider new ideas, work with partners and to innovate.

We provide opportunity for all, embrace diversity, and work openly, honestly and constructively for the good of UK higher education.

Our areas of work

We advocate for our members as world-leaders in providing technical, professional and vocational higher education in the UK.

We work with our members on collective policy development and campaign formation, championing the many benefits of Alliance universities across key audiences and influencers.

We search for innovative solutions to the issues facing professional and technical universities, working to influence decision-makers and shape the policy landscape to create the best conditions for our members.

We facilitate networks for professional and academic staff to collaborate and share expertise.

Through our Doctoral Training Alliance programme, we unlock funding and partnership opportunities for universities and students in applied-research and teaching excellence

To find out more about University Alliance, our work and our members, visit www.unialliance.ac.uk

About the role

This role sits within the core University Alliance team and will primarily work with the Head of Communications and Public Affairs but will work closely with all members of the organisation including the CEO and Chair.

The post-holder will support all proactive and reactive communications and campaigns of the organisation; oversee the planning grid, develop and deliver content for a range of channels and audiences, prepare media / PR handling plans and support a varied events programme.

You will be self-starter, a highly motivated individual with experience in a press /media handling/ PR or related communications/public affairs role. You will be creative and proactive. You will work with energy, confidence and be buzzing with ideas. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills, be highly organised and like to work as part of a team.

You must be able to work at pace and be able to spot opportunities to communicate compellingly about our work, are confident dealing with the media and are able to get our messages out to key influencers including journalists, politicians and stakeholders in clear and effective way.

Main responsibilities:

- **Produce compelling content** that communicates our mission and helps to engage and influence key decision-makers; assisting in the delivery of communications plans and contributing to a range of outputs including drafting articles, blogs, web copy, newsletters, briefings, case studies and producing or sourcing accompanying multimedia content.
- **Maintain a planning grid** of upcoming communications events, opportunities and press interventions. In conjunction with the Head of Communications & Public Affairs, undertake regular, effective and accurate monitoring and evaluation of UA's social, digital and media activity.
- **Media relations:** Support the delivery of reactive and proactive media plans, identify potential news stories, craft press releases, draft responsive media comments, build own network of journalists and assist with media monitoring.

- **Digital/social:** Strengthen our on-line presence, overseeing UA's social media channels and website – supporting a new digital strategy and producing or commissioning and delivering new digital and social media content, as needed.
- **Campaigns:** Contribute to the development and delivery of campaign activity, working with member universities and other stakeholders to coordinate involvement, including sourcing and crafting case studies and developing messaging and content.
- **Events:** Provide content and logistical support for a varied events programme, including the annual summit, ad hoc parliamentary events and quarterly communications and policy network meetings.
- **Public affairs:** Support a programme of Parliamentary and stakeholder engagement and monitoring as well as the delivery of UA's influencing strategy.

Undertake a wider range of tasks, as required within a small team, to deliver UA's communications strategy, and contribute to the broader objectives and influencing and advocacy work of the organisation.

Terms and Conditions:

University Alliance staff benefit from generous terms and conditions including 25 days' leave plus concessionary days (supplementary to bank holidays), flexible working practices, pension scheme and a commitment to investing in and developing staff.

We welcome applications from people whatever their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, or age

Principal location of work: Middlesex Street, London, E1 7JF.

Line manager: Head of Communications and Public Affairs, Beth Button

Probation period: 6 months.

Starting salary: c. £28,000-£31,000 depending on experience

Conditions: Permanent

Full-time but would consider job shares and part-time

Application process:

Please submit the following with the subject line Senior communications officer to info@unialliance.ac.uk by the deadline:

- 1) An up-to-date curriculum vitae including two references: your current or most recent employer; and a former line manager who could be contacted during the process

- 2) A cover letter of no more than two sides of A4 addressing why you are interested in working for University Alliance and how your knowledge, skills and experience meets the requirements of the role.

The selection process will include a panel interview, and a task to be confirmed on invitation to interview

We would be happy to arrange for an informal chat about the role, please contact beth@unialliance.ac.uk

Person specification

Specification	Essential	Desirable
1. Education/Training		Degree-level qualification and / or equivalent qualifications or experience
2. Relevant Experience	Minimum 1-2 years experience in a press / media handling / PR or communications/public affairs role.	
3. Relevant Skills	<p>Excellent written and verbal communication skills - able to tailor writing to different audiences and media and communicate complex ideas in easily understandable, punchy language.</p> <p>Experience of developing communications materials and plans - able to identify clear hooks, messages, channels, activity and evaluation. - able to create high quality, creative content for social and digital media</p> <p>Experience of media relations, including handling requests and pitching stories</p> <p>Ability to work quickly and accurately to tight deadlines, able to prioritise tasks and handle multiple projects, issues and stakeholders simultaneously</p>	<p>Experience of using design software such as inDesign</p> <p>Knowledge and interest in the higher education sector</p>

	Proficient use of Microsoft office including word, powerpoint, excel	
4. Personal qualities	<p>Enthusiasm, a driven self-starter, proactive with initiative and drive</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal skills – confident dealing with colleagues of all levels, internally and externally</p> <p>Strong team player – quick to support colleagues across different teams where needed to deliver joint-results</p> <p>Professional approach and sensitivity to the political context</p>	
5. Other	A willingness to undertake further training and development	