

## **Head of Communications and External Affairs**

### **About the role**

University Alliance (UA) is looking for an experienced Head of Communications and External Affairs to lead the communications and external affairs of the organisation, working closely with the Chief Executive, Policy and Programme Teams, as well as teams across our growing membership.

This is a senior leadership role working closely with the Chief Executive to develop and deliver a proactive communications and external affairs strategy to promote the UA mission, champion the strengths of UA members, secure positive media coverage and generate stakeholder and political influence for our policy messages. In doing this, you will engage Government, Parliament, Whitehall, Devolved Administrations, funding councils, sector agencies/bodies, national academies, industry representatives and the media.

You will also provide support to the Chief Executive as part of the Senior Management Team with line management responsibilities for 1 member of staff.

### **Main responsibilities**

- To develop and deliver an effective and impactful communications strategy that brings to life the UA vision, mission and strategies; strengthens the UA brand and voice; champions the expertise of UA institutions, and provides a collective voice for our members on key strategic issues.
- To develop and deliver effective external affairs, engagement and campaign strategies to influence Government, Parliament, Whitehall, Devolved Administrations, funding councils, sector agencies/bodies, national academies and industry representatives in support of our agenda.
- To work effectively with the UA Policy, Programme and Network Teams to ensure all communications and external affairs activities and engagement are accurate, relevant and impactful.
- To build close and trusted relationships with national, specialist and sector media, securing consistent and positive media coverage for our policy messages, effectively managing, and rebutting negative stories.
- To oversee all UA's owned channels to ensure content is relevant, engaging and impactful for current and prospective audiences.
- To build an effective and trusted network of communication and external affairs colleagues across our membership and in the Higher Education sector more widely.
- To effectively represent the organisation at key meetings with key partners and stakeholders.

- To effectively line manage and develop member(s) of staff.
- To play a key role as a member of the Senior Management Team in leading and shaping the longer-term strategic direction of the University Alliance.
- To present at Subscriber Member Board meetings on the work of the Communication and External Affairs Team.
- Undertake a range of other appropriate tasks as directed by the Chief Executive.

**About University Alliance**

University Alliance is a mission group within the higher education sector representing large to mid-sized universities working at the heart of their communities. Alliance universities partner with industry and the professions to deliver the workforce of today and tomorrow through practical, professional, skills-based learning and applied research. UA has excellent links with decision-makers in government at all levels and we are committed to being an effective and powerful voice of professional and technical universities.

- We are a forward thinking and values-driven organisation
- We operate a generous holiday allowance plus concessionary days
- We offer a work-based pension scheme
- We are based in UA's Central London touchdown\* space (*subject to change depending on government's latest guidelines related to the pandemic*), but there is flexibility to work remotely for part of the working week and we provide all relevant equipment to accommodate this.

**Our principles/values as mission group**

We are open and honest

We are professional and positive

We are collaborative

We are impactful

We have fun and are enjoyable to work with

**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 expertise 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 excellence.

To find out more about University Alliance, our work and our members, visit [www.unialliance.ac.uk](http://www.unialliance.ac.uk)

**Terms and Conditions:**

University Alliance staff benefit from generous terms and conditions including 25 days annual leave (or pro rata for a part time appointment), standard public holidays plus additional concessionary days, flexible working practices, pension scheme and life cover.

University Alliance values diversity and is an equal opportunities employer. We actively encourage applications from people from diverse background.

**Principal location of work:**

University Alliance operates an agile working model where staff have the option to work the majority of the week remotely with access to a 'touchdown' space on one of the campuses of our member universities (Coventry University's London campus) for times when physical presence is required or preferred for performing job roles. This is subject to change depending on government guidelines relating to the pandemic.

The \*touchdown space is a modern, secure, bright, roomy shared spaced predominantly for the use of Coventry University's student alumni and enterprise students. The space is not a traditional office space, it operates a clear desk space with Wi-Fi and access to printing facilities and its primary use is for collaborative working with colleagues across the organisation. We also have access to a room booking system for meetings and tea and coffee making facilities.

<b>Line manager:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Probation period:</b>	6 months
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£48,000 to £53,000 per annum dependent on skills and experience
<b>Hours:</b>	Full-time (37.5 hrs per week)
<b>Contract type:</b>	Permanent

**Application process:**

To apply, please review the job description and apply via an email with the subject line: **Head of Communications and External Affairs** to [info@unialliance.ac.uk](mailto:info@unialliance.ac.uk)

- 1) An up-to-date CV of no more than two sides of A4.
- 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.

Please also mention where you saw the job advertised.

**Closing date:** 11.59pm Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**Interview date:** Interviews via MS Teams  
 First interview W/c 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021  
 Second interview W/c 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**Person specification**

Specification	Essential	Desirable
1. Education/ Training	Degree-level qualification and / or equivalent qualifications or experience	Postgraduate qualification
2. Relevant Experience and knowledge	Substantial experience in a senior PR / external affairs /communications, media and public affairs role  Media and social media management  Digital communication  Deploying various communication channels, techniques and content to target and engage specific audiences  Managing and developing effective teams/ individuals  Experience of working at senior / national level and with Government and / or politicians and senior stakeholders  Proven capability to develop and deliver effective communication and public strategies to deliver strategic organisational priorities	Experience of national Higher Educations communications issues          Marketing communications

Specification	Essential	Desirable
	Advising and supporting organisational spokespeople Proven networking ability at a senior level Interest in higher education policy and the sector Understanding of Government and Whitehall	
3. Relevant Skills/aptitude	Proactive self-starter Results and outcomes driven Creativity and innovation in deploying communicationsto deliver strategic priorities Attention to detail Ability to work in agile way and respond positively to a fast moving environment Excellent written skills Confident communication skills Ability to work effectively with and through others	
4. Personal qualities	Work quickly and accurately to tight deadlines A self-starter who is able to work independently as well as collaboratively as part of team/project Ability to work under pressure Self-motivated and able to use initiative Ability to work as part of a small team Professional approach Resilience to cope with uncertainty and changing deadlines and priorities	
5. Other	Confident, open approach to dealing with colleagues of all levels, internally and externally	Willingness to travel to attend meetings and events as required (when COVID restrictions allow)