

Communications and Press Officer Job Description

Post title: Communications and Press Officer
Responsible to: Head of Communications and Public Affairs
Responsible for: N/A

University Alliance (UA) is looking for an ambitious and independent communications professional to cover a fixed-term vacancy in our Senior Communications Officer role. This would make a good opportunity for an early-career communications professional. The ideal candidate will have a good knowledge and experience of communications tactics and have an interest in higher education, politics, social media and press engagement.

This is a particularly exciting and challenging time in the university sector, with a fast-paced political environment, big policy changes on the horizon and a great deal of political and media scrutiny. This is an opportunity to work as part of a small and agile team at the heart of the action as we advocate on behalf of our member universities within this context. You will interact with colleagues and stakeholders at all levels, and contribute to the wider work of an effective influencing organisation.

Main purpose of the job

Working closely with the Head of Communications and External Affairs, you will support in the day-to-day delivery of the communications strategy, helping to maximise awareness and reach of University Alliance and our member's profile and reputation, and communicate our campaigns, programmes and policy work via the media and UA's communications channels.

Working with the whole UA team to identify communications opportunities and appropriate audiences, you will be responsible for developing and delivering informative, creative content, using the full range of communications tools and channels available.

Responsibilities and duties:

- **Media relations:** Play a key role in the planning and delivery of reactive and proactive media plans; identify potential news stories, craft press releases, draft responsive media comments, build own network of journalists, deliver successful media interventions and undertake media monitoring.
- **Produce compelling content** for a range of channels that communicates our mission and helps to engage and influence key decision-makers including drafting articles, blogs, newsletters, briefings, case studies and producing or sourcing accompanying multimedia content.
- **Planning:** Maintain a planning grid and work across the team to identify upcoming communications events, opportunities and press interventions to ensure UA's communications are timely and relevant.

- **Digital/social:** Maintain social media accounts and grow our digital presence by developing interesting and engaging content and creating multi-media communications materials for social and our website. Undertake monitoring and evaluation of UA's social and digital activity.
- **Campaigns:** Support the planning and delivery of impactful campaign activity; including working with member universities and other stakeholders to coordinate involvement.
- **Events:** Provide content and logistical support for a varied events programme, including the annual summit and regular communications network meetings.
- **Public affairs:** Support a programme of Parliamentary and stakeholder engagement and monitoring as well as the delivery of UA's wider 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.

Responsibility for budgets: None

Relationships/contacts

Internal: Staff across the organisation all levels.

External: Staff at all levels within our member universities, professional, governmental and educational institutions. Individuals and businesses where appropriate.

This document outlines the main duties required, for the time being, of the post-entitled Communications and Press Officer to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive list and we may vary duties, from time to time, which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed.

Terms and Conditions:

Starting salary: £35,000 per annum

FTE: Full-time (working 37.5 hours per week)

Duration of Contract: Fixed term contract, 12 September -21 December 2022

Annual leave: 25 days per annum (pro rata for fixed-term/ part-time) plus standard public holidays and additional concessionary days including the closure of our office between Christmas and New Year (pro rata for part-time).

Other benefits include flexible working practices, pension scheme and life cover.

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.

Application process:

To apply, please review the job description and apply via an email with the subject line: **Communications and Press Officer** to info@unialliance.ac.uk

- 1) An up-to-date CV of no more than two sides of A4.
- 2) A covering 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 Sunday 31st July 2022

Interview date: Interviews via MS Teams
Thursday 4 and Friday 5th August 2022

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

We reserve the right to close the vacancy prior to the closing date. If you have not heard from us within 28 days of the closing date, please consider that you have not been successful at shortlisting stage.

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

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

Person Specification

Specification	Essential	Desirable
Education/ Training		
Experience	Minimum 1 year experience in a press / media handling, communications or equivalent role	Experience servicing committees and/or boards
Skills/aptitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent written and verbal communication skills, able to communicate complex policy issues to a range of audiences • Proven experience of producing high quality, engaging written work, with the ability to turn this into clear and concise messaging • Experience of media relations, including handling requests, selling-in stories, working with journalists and being part of a wider effort to raise an organisation’s profile • Experience of planning and developing communications activities across a range of channels, able to identify audiences, appropriate messages, channels, and undertake evaluation. • Able to create high quality, creative content for social media and our website • Excellent time management skills, able to work quickly and accurately to tight deadlines, able to prioritise multiple tasks, projects and stakeholders simultaneously • Proficient use of Microsoft office programmes e.g. word 	Experience of using design software such as InDesign
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm, a driven self-starter, proactive with initiative and drive • Excellent interpersonal skills – confident dealing with colleagues of all levels, internally and externally 	Knowledge and interest in the higher education sector

Specification	Essential	Desirable
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong team player – able to work both independently and effectively with others, and quick to support colleagues across different teams where needed to deliver joint-results • Professional approach and sensitivity to the political context 	
Other	Willingness to travel to attend meetings and events as required	A willingness to undertake further training and development