

Job Description

Job title	Communications Officer
School / department	Marketing, Recruitment and Communications
Grade	5
Line manager	Head of Communications and Events
Responsible for	UWL External Communications, Media Relations

Main purpose of the job

The Communications Officer will play a key role in promoting a positive image of the University through a range of communications channels and supporting in the delivery of the University business objectives. The Communications Officer will primarily:

- Create media campaigns, securing coverage across print, broadcast and digital media.
- Draft copy for press releases, website news stories, social media posts, blogs, opinion pieces, corporate collateral etc.
- Update social media channels - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn using social media management tools
- Proactively sell in stories and successfully engage with the media and deliver increased exposure and profile for the University
- Engage confidently with multiple stakeholders and influence, advise and persuade as required
- Work collaboratively in the team, sharing ideas with the wider marketing team, integrating communications across off-line and on-line platforms.
- Manage crisis communications and deal effectively with media queries.

Key areas of responsibility

- Supporting the Head of Communications to develop and deliver a strategic media relations plan to support the overall University brand communications strategy and deliver against the University business objectives.
- Plan, manage and update School specific Communications plans ensuring they are on message and encompass all School USPs.
- Identifying and developing a comprehensive forward plan of news stories to secure positive national and international media coverage, ensuring news stories are prioritised in accordance with the University's strategic plan wherever possible.
- Act as the first point of contact for incoming media enquiries and handle routine press enquiries in a professional, timely and efficient manner, liaising with the line manager and various relevant stakeholders as required. Ability to handle and escalate issues, and manage the press office.

- Proactively develop and maintain excellent relationships with local, national and international media ensuring UWL's achievements receive optimal exposure and coverage; ensure all contact databases are up to date and relevant.
- Ensure that key messages are delivered in a consistent, professional tone of voice and will raise UWL's reputation among current and potential stakeholders.
- Be fluent in and familiar with all social media channels and platforms, working closely with other university social media professionals and bringing best practice to bear on all activities.
- Proactively seek out news stories from across the University which will raise the profile of School activities among their key target audiences. Work closely with academics to follow up and obtain information and collateral to support communications outreach e.g. blogs posts, case studies, social media messaging etc.
- Research, write and distribute press releases to local, regional and national media to secure media coverage; in addition to generating website news stories, social media posts, blogs, opinion pieces etc.
- Organise media interviews as required with approved spokespeople, providing them with full pre-interview briefings. Oversee press events and liaise with outside suppliers and agencies.
- Contribute to the production of factually accurate, engaging written copy for communications and marketing materials (including key corporate pieces such as Annual Reports, reviews etc.), media materials, events, stakeholder relations, internal and external online communications, briefings and other written materials
- Brief and work with creatives (e.g. graphic designers, photographers, editors) to produce high quality materials for online and off line publications.
- Provide media administration support i.e. monitoring news and social media coverage, compiling evaluations, budget administration, ensuring spend provides good value for money
- Monitor and evaluate all communications and media activity, including rigorous analysis of market and competitor trends, and provide feedback and analysis as to effectiveness. Use analysis results to inform and develop future communications activities.
- Keep up to date with professional best practice and promote best practice throughout the team and the University
- Work closely with the Internal Communications Manager and cover for the position as required

In addition to the above areas of responsibility the position maybe required to undertake any other reasonable duties relating to the broad scope of the position. The post holder will be required to work outside of normal office hours and some weekend work as required.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and/or membership of professional bodies	Degree or equivalent qualification	Postgraduate qualification
Knowledge and experience	<p>Experience of working in a press team either in-house or agency.</p> <p>Experience of working and negotiating with internal senior managers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Proven hands-on experience in the UK media relations space and strong existing relationships with journalists.</p> <p>Understanding of the higher education sector.</p>	Experience of working in a university press office.
Specific skills to the job	<p>Effective communication skills, both written and verbal, with evidence of being able to work under pressure and meeting tight deadlines.</p> <p>Able to develop and deliver proactive media campaigns</p> <p>Ability and awareness to work to online brand guidelines.</p> <p>Excellent and high level working knowledge of Microsoft Office.</p> <p>The ability and willingness to maintain focus, take difficult decisions and to deliver.</p>	
General skills	Excellent organisational and time management skills.	

	<p>Excellent interpersonal skills and a positive approach to promoting the work of the university.</p> <p>Excellent customer service skills.</p> <p>Ability to work on own initiative and also lead more junior members of the team.</p>	
Other	<p>Ability to act as a spokesperson for the university and have a proven track record of working with the national media.</p> <p>Ability to liaise confidently with colleagues at all levels both inside and outside of the university.</p>	
Disclosure and Barring Scheme	This post does not require a DBS check	
<p>Essential Criteria are those, without which, a candidate would not be able to do the job. Applicants who have not clearly demonstrated in their application that they possess the essential requirements will normally be rejected at the shortlisting stage.</p> <p>Desirable Criteria are those that would be useful for the post holder to possess and will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.</p>		