

Head of Media and Corporate Communications

Basic information

Band: B

Job family: Marketing Communications

Terms: Permanent

Location: Cheltenham

Reports to: Director of External Relations

Team: Media and Corporate Communications

Business unit: External Relations

Additional

conditions: On call seven days a week, once a fortnight



Role purpose:

The role holder is responsible for securing UCAS' public reputation, by defining UCAS' public relations strategy and leading the delivery of this. They also ensure corporate communications are consistent with business strategy, and are communicated accurately and effectively internally and externally, to stakeholders and the media.

Key duties and responsibilities:

- Lead the development of UCAS' public relations strategy, setting out the high-level outcomes, delivery plan, and monitoring and evaluating delivery.
- Proactive delivery of the PR strategy to achieve positive media coverage of UCAS and UCAS Media Ltd, in line with corporate priorities, helping to position UCAS as an advocate for students, and UCAS Media Ltd as a specialist agency working with verified students. This will include delivery of a 24/7 press office function as required.
- Brief and support the CEO and/or Chair and Executive on significant public relations issues, offering handling strategies, and implementing these.
- Deliver a highly professional service to internal customers through the effective leadership, management and continuous improvement of the Media and Corporate Communications Team.
- Develop and nurture positive relationships with relevant journalists, news organisations, bloggers and heads of PR/communications in stakeholder organisations, particularly in government and education, and higher education sector organisations.
- Work with internal and external stakeholders to undertake horizon scanning to identify PR opportunities and risks, and to ensure management plans are in place.

- Lead on the PR aspects of crisis communications management, ensuring that plans are regularly reviewed and tested.
- Equip and support UCAS staff with the skills, infrastructure and tools to be effective communicators, ensuring that anyone who engages with the press is well prepared to do so.
- Deploy professional knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to the external relations leadership team and UCAS senior management team activities.

Accountabilities:

Financial authorities:

- Delegated authority for expenditure.

Non-financial authorities:

- Leadership of the Media and Corporate Communications Team, encompassing press, PR and internal communications functions.
- Authority to brief the media about developments and activities at UCAS.
- Member of the UCAS senior management team.

Person specification:

- An experienced communications professional, with a proven track record of developing, delivering, and evaluating media relations strategies across traditional and digital channels.
- An excellent communicator, able to develop ideas to promote messages and stories to achieve strategic goals, write and edit content for a range of audiences, with the confidence to deal with a wide range of media organisations.
- Political awareness and a proven ability to identify and evaluate opportunities and risks, and provide proactive strategic advice on positioning and messaging to the CEO and Directors.
- Experience of developing or delivering crisis communications.
- An ability and confidence with statistics, to be able to communicate UCAS' analysis to a range of public audiences, in an appropriate and effective way.
- Substantial experience of leading and managing a communications team, including managing projects and budgets.
- A passion for communication and desire to help colleagues become more effective communicators.
- The tact and skill to build and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of internal customers, and with the media and other external communications professionals.
- Prior experience of working in a professional communications role in the secondary, further or higher education sector.

This role profile sets out the scope and main duties of the post at the date when it was drawn up. Such details may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the level of the post. All UCAS employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their role and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of their role and their level of responsibility.

Our values in action

Customer – We always look through the customer lens. The logic of the customer is the logic of UCAS.

Commitment – When we commit, we deliver on time, quality, and budget, or we negotiate changed commitments for good reason. We never leave commitments uncovered.

Team – We work collaboratively. When we commit, we commit as an individual and as a team. We strive for and support team success as well as individual success.

Outcomes – We plan and do things to achieve outcomes. We define them, aspire to them, and deliver them.

Agility – We know we need to be agile when we look through the customer lens, when we make commitments, when we work in teams, and strive for the right outcomes.

Extraordinary – We are ambitious for our customers, for UCAS, and for our teams. We want more than ordinary outcomes – we strive to achieve extraordinary outcomes, extraordinary customer focus, and an extraordinary culture of high performance and quality of focus.