

1 Advertisement

Post Title: Public Affairs Manager

School/department: Communications, Marketing and Advancement

Hours: full time or part time hours considered up to a maximum of 37.5 hours
Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).

Contract: Permanent

Reference: 6460

Salary: Starting at £34,304 to £40,927 per annum, pro rata if part time

Placed on: 07 September 2021

Closing date: 08 October 2021. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: TBC

Expected start date: As soon as possible.

The Public Affairs Manager will be influential in increasing the institution's influence on public policy and discourse, and work to deliver the University's strategic goals in the public and political arena. This appointment is within the Communications, Marketing and Advancement Division.

The University is seeking to appoint an experienced public affairs practitioner who can enhance Sussex's world-leading reputation through communicating effectively with key opinion formers. The role will involve promoting the institution through a managed programme of stakeholder engagement, site-based activities and input to the policy setting agenda at a senior level.

The post holder will contribute to the University's public affairs strategy and will provide advice to senior management on policy developments and political engagement. They will support the wider organisational strategy and co-ordinate responses to key policy developments as well as having the ability to make and implement critical decisions.

The ideal candidate will possess first class communication skills, the ability to think strategically and creatively and be a strong team player.

The post-holder will report to the Associate Director of Public Affairs

Please contact L.Rolles@sussex.ac.uk for informal enquiries.

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.

2. The School / Division

Please find further information regarding the Communication, Marketing and Advancement Division at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schoolsandservices/professionalservices/communications-marketing-advancement>

3. Job Description

Job Description for the post of: **Public Affairs Manager**

Department: Communications, Marketing and Advancement

Section/Unit/School: Public Affairs

Location: A hybrid role part home based with a minimum of 50% at the office

Grade: 7

Responsible to: Associate Director of Public Affairs

Responsible for: N/A

Purpose of the post:

The Public Affairs Manager role, appointed to assist the Director of Communications, Marketing and Advancement and Associate Director of Public Affairs, to deliver the University's strategic goals and will be influential in driving the agenda to increase the institution's influence on public policy, stakeholder engagement and discourse.

One of the key responsibilities is to enhance the University's world-leading reputation as well as proactively position the institution as a strong policy contributor in the medium to long term. The work includes promoting major achievements to appropriate politicians and key opinion formers, through a managed programme of stakeholder engagement, site-based activities and input to the policy setting agenda at a senior level.

Reporting to the Associate Director of Public Affairs, this post will support the University's externally focused public affairs activity with both local stakeholders and national politicians.

The Public Affairs Manager will support the Associate Director of Public Affairs with political inquiries, as well as the political monitoring strategy on behalf of the University. The post holder will be responsible for producing materials to support the University's community and civic outreach, policy positions and undertake analysis on key policy and political matters, providing timely updates in order to respond to political set piece announcements which will impact the University and have a proven track record of influencing the public policy agenda.

The post holder will assist in the delivery of integrated communications and public affairs strategies and support the Associate Director of Public Affairs to provide internal advice to the University's senior management on policy developments and political, civic and community engagement, support the wider organisation strategy.

We are looking to appoint an individual who can help to shape the University's vision in a forward-thinking and creative way.

The post-holder will be expected to work closely with members of the broader Communications, Marketing and Advancement division to ensure delivery of a seamlessly integrated and complementary approach with maximum benefit for the University.

The post holder will be an experienced public affairs professional with excellent oral and written communication skills, a good political nose and the ability to work as part of a team.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Planning

The post-holder will be a key contributor to the design and implementation of the University's public affairs strategy and community engagement plans, with the aim of increasing the University's influence on public policy, focusing on issues which have the potential to impact on the University in the short, medium and long term.

They will also be responsible for identifying new opportunities for influencing key political decision makers and to help increase the University's profile in commenting on both local and national issues.

The post holder will work with the Associate Director of Public Affairs to support public affairs campaigns as well as working in close liaison with the whole division on broader stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Public Affairs Manager will be responsible for implementing a top-level political and stakeholder engagement plan and maintaining a database to track activities and outcomes.

Contacts will include, MPs, members of the House of Lords, civil servants, local MPs and councillors and council officers as well as relevant Committee Chairs.

The University already has well established links with many politicians through senior management, individual academics.

Regular updates will be prepared for stakeholders, updating them on the University's activities, inviting them to events on campus and requesting meetings with senior management, where appropriate.

The post holder will be responsible for ensuring our audiences have a sound understanding of the University's issues through regular and appropriate briefing and have a proven ability to create and sustain strong networks at a senior level.

Political Monitoring and Advice

The post holder will liaise with the political monitoring agency and provide a weekly bulletin to the University Executive Group and other University leaders – highlighting key issues of importance to the University.

The Public Affairs Manager will work in conjunction with the Director of the division, Associate Director of Public Affairs and other senior staff to prioritise responses to relevant Select Committee inquiries and consultations and summarise key reports for internal

audiences. Strong horizon scanning skills will help to ensure that potential issues are flagged up in advance of political set piece announcements.

Local Government and campus development

The Public Affairs Manager will need a comprehensive understanding of the University's campus development plans and the implications it will have on relationships with local Councillors, Chairs of relevant Council Committees and the local community. Strategies will need to be developed to communicate effectively on potentially sensitive issues.

Championing our excellence

The post holder will develop close working relationships with senior members of academic staff and notable academics, and identify key figures and areas of strength across the University in order to map to the key public policy matters. In addition, the post-holder will need to work collaboratively with relevant Professional Services colleagues to deliver on the University's strategic priorities in areas such as widening participation and housing.

Working with other organisations

Develop mutually beneficial working relationships with organisations such as Universities UK, PA practitioners at other universities, the local LEPs, the Chamber of Commerce, and develop joint campaigning activity where appropriate.

Other duties:

Work with specific areas of the University, such as policy@Sussex to help develop their specific stakeholder engagement plans, linking to the institution's wider strategy. Work with members of the Communications Marketing and Advancement division and professional services colleagues to develop a public affairs and community presence for the University through the relevant media, campaigns and internal communications.

To deputise for the Associate Director of Public Affairs where appropriate.

4. Person Specification

SKILLS / ABILITIES

	Essential	Desirable
Outstanding written and verbal communications skills	x	
Ability to think strategically and to horizon scan for upcoming issues	x	
Highest levels of persuasion, diplomacy and stakeholder management – allied with experience of using advocacy and influencing skills to challenge perceived wisdom and put forward alternative solutions	x	
Ability to understand and convey complex conceptual ideas and information and develop relevant briefings	x	
Ability to work productively and effectively within a team setting	x	
Ability to prioritise and meet strict deadlines	x	
Ability to implement and drive organisationally-integrated strategies and plans	x	

Ability to advise senior individuals and teams on political strategy and to contribute to speech writing/other collateral for a political audience	x	
Ability to adapt to new and innovative ways of working		x

KNOWLEDGE

	Essential	Desirable
Extensive knowledge of current affairs, the key players and the UK's political system	x	
Knowledge and experience of using social media to gather political information and comment on relevant issues		x
Knowledge and experience of the higher education and/or research sectors in the UK		x

EXPERIENCE

	Essential	Desirable
Experience in a public affairs role	x	
Extensive experience of stakeholder engagement	x	
Experience in adapting writing skills to different audiences	x	
Experience of delivering successful public affairs campaigns	x	
Experience of working with local government on potentially controversial issues		x
Experience of producing briefings for internal and external stakeholders	x	
Experience of measuring and evaluating the success of public affairs campaigns	x	
Experience of presenting difficult decisions in a balanced way	x	
Experience of delivering a community or civic engagement programme		x

QUALIFICATIONS

	Essential	Desirable
Educated to degree level or equivalent		x

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND CIRCUMSTANCES

	Essential	Desirable
Intellectual rigour with ability to think strategically	x	
Ability to network well, speak up on behalf of the university and present a professional approach to public affairs in the HE sector	x	