

Post Details		Last Updated: 10/11/2017	
Faculty/Administrative/Service Department	Communications and Public Affairs		
Job Title	Communications Officer		
Job Family	Professional Services	Job Level	4
Responsible to	Internal Communications Manager		
Responsible for (Staff)	Two Communications Co-ordinators (Level 3) (job share)		
<u>Job Purpose Statement</u>			
<p>The purpose of this role is to plan and deliver engaging, best-practice communications for our University community of staff and students, as well as providing communications support to the Vice Chancellor's Office and the Executive Board.</p> <p>Supporting the Vice Chancellor, involves being a point of contact for his office and drafting speaking notes, providing communications briefing and producing communication products including forewords, blogs, power-point presentations and managing the VC's social media presence. An external speechwriter will be used for keynote speeches.</p> <p>Reporting to the Internal Communications Manager, and working as part of a team, a large part of this role involves drafting communications for our University community of staff and students. This will include community-oriented news stories, information bulletins, website copy and video scripts. Some of the work will involve communicating complex and/or sensitive subjects as well as communication campaigns.</p> <p>You will be responsible for line managing two Communications Co-ordinators.</p>			
<u>Key Responsibilities</u> This document is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but an outline record of the main responsibilities (5 to 8 maximum)			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be an effective team member producing high quality communications content for a variety of purposes in a timely fashion in support of a programme of communications to support the Surrey Community. 2. Be a point of contact for the Vice Chancellor's office for his communications needs and working with colleagues in the Comms team, ensure he is briefed and prepared ahead of any communication activity. This will include drafting short speeches, talking points, presentations, and written messages, carrying out research of the subject matter where appropriate through liaison with other University staff. 3. Occasionally draft speeches and presentations for specific Executive Board members. 4. Review the VC's blog presence and formulate a plan and be responsible for maintaining an appropriate and engaging profile for the VC on Twitter, working with the Social Media Manager. 5. Rapidly build an understanding of the University and a network of effective relationships, including colleagues in Comms, Events and Marketing, as well as senior colleagues and the Students' Union. 6. Provide professional communications advice to colleagues on issues requiring communication within our community. 7. Line manage two members of staff who are in a job-share, providing clear guidance, support and the opportunity to grow their skills and experience. 			
N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.			

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.
- Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.
- Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.
- Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.

Help maintain a safe working environment by:

- Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand.
- Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy.

Elements of the Role

This section outlines some of the key elements of the role, which allow this role to be evaluated within the University's structure. It provides an overview of what is expected from the post holder in the day-to-day operation of the role.

Planning and Organising

The post holder will carry out tasks delegated by the Internal Communications Manager and the office of the Vice-Chancellor. General direction and guidance will be given by the Vice-Chancellor.

The post holder will be required to draft communication plans for significant projects, and to work closely with colleagues in Communications to plan activities within a wider programme of communications.

Where tasks involve the Vice-Chancellor, the post holder will liaise directly with the VC and his office, taking relevant advice and input from the Director of Communications.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

The post holder is required to bring professional communications expertise and judgement to provide solutions to communications problems.

The post holder will work closely with colleagues, senior leaders and executives to collect and understand information quickly and use their own initiative to turn this into news stories, information bulletins, speeches, presentations, written text or video/audio scripts. This will involve managing the perspectives of various individuals, departments and corporate guidelines, and a diplomatic and pragmatic approach will be required.

Continuous Improvement

The post holder is expected to:

- demonstrate best practice communications in this role and to continue to build their expertise and share knowledge; and
- identify and make recommendations for improvements (e.g. in policies and procedures) and contribute to the continuous operational improvement of the comms team.

Accountability

The post holder will be responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of the content produced but is expected to seek support from colleagues and subject matter experts to 'sign-off' finalised communication materials.

An advantage of the post is to work in collaboration and consultation with relevant colleagues within the University to undertake research and produce presentations and speeches for the Vice-Chancellor and selected communications at strategic levels. In liaison with the VC's Executive Assistant, the post holder will ensure that the Vice-Chancellor is fully briefed and prepared for the events at which these speeches and presentations are taking place, and for any other major event in which he is involved.

The ability to carry out detailed research for key speeches and advise on thought leadership will be necessary, as well as quick familiarisation with the VC's style, interests and perspectives. The role holder will need to adopt the VC's style and anticipate his voice for all communications from the VC's office, to ensure a consistency of tone across all corporate documents.

Supplementary Information

The post holder is privy to sensitive, confidential information at department and University level and as such is expected to maintain high levels of confidentiality.

Collaborating with colleagues in the communications team on planning and messaging is necessary.

The post holder might be expected occasionally to be a member of the on call duty rota for the wider communications team, whilst the tasks delegated by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor always take higher priority.

Person Specification This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships

Degree, HND, NVQ 4 qualified or equivalent qualification, plus at least three years' relevant experience
Or
Significant vocational experience demonstrating the acquisition of appropriate professional knowledge

E

Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge) This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role (please refer to the Competency Framework for clarification where needed and the Job Matching Guidance).

**Essential/
Desirable**

**Level
1-3**

Experience of planning and delivering engaging, best-practice communications, as well as providing communications support to senior executives, including drafting speeches and talking points and presentations

E

3

Skilled at producing a wide range of communications from newsletters to blogs, news stories to forewords and social media posts.

E

3

Experience of working effectively as part of a team, as well as working on one's own initiative

E

3

Experience of developing good working relationships with senior colleagues

E

3

Line management experience

D

n/a

Experience of managing social media channels for senior leaders

D

n/a

Experience of the Higher Education Sector

D

n/a

High level of practical knowledge of Microsoft Office applications, especially PowerPoint.

D

n/a

Special Requirements:

**Essential/
Desirable**

Flexibility on occasion to work outside of normal office hours.

D

Core Competencies This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade.

**Level
1-3**

Communication

3

Adaptability / Flexibility

3

Customer/Client service and support

3

Planning and Organising

2

Continuous Improvement

2

Problem Solving and Decision-making Skills

3

Managing and Developing Performance

2

Creative and Analytical Thinking	3
Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills	3
Strategic Thinking & Leadership	2

This Job Purpose reflects the core activities of the post. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder develop, there will inevitably be some changes to the duties for which the post is responsible, and possibly to the emphasis of the post itself. The University expects that the post holder will recognise this and will adopt a flexible approach to work. This could include undertaking relevant training where necessary.

Should significant changes to the Job Purpose become necessary, the post holder will be consulted and the changes reflected in a revised Job Purpose.

Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

Background Information

This role is part of the newly formed Communications and Public Affairs Team that works centrally across the University to promote our research, innovation and critical thinking, to build and nurture a recognisable Surrey Community, and to lead on best practice communications.

The team incorporates the University level functions for staff and student communications, social media, media relations, public affairs, public engagement, and events management.

This post will be part of the internal communications team but will work closely with other members of the wider team.

They will be encouraged to provide support as required by their line manager for University initiatives or events, some of which may fall outside of core working hours (e.g. speaking engagements, University Open Days, which normally take place on a Friday and Saturday twice a year, and Graduation).

There may be a requirement to be part of an on-call rota as part of our contingency arrangements, for which an allowance would be paid.

We are operating a blended working approach, meaning that we expect staff to work two days per week in the office, and the rest of the week where they feel they are most productive. We are committed to the University values of inclusion, inspiring our staff and delivering inspiring communications, we are open to innovation and testing ideas, and we work with integrity.

We are open to flexible hours within the contracted minimum.

Relationships

This role has a special responsibility to build relations with the Vice Chancellor's office and be their point of contact for communications support. And the post holder will also have frequent contact with the offices of senior staff within the University, especially Executive Board members.

The post holder will work closely with other team members and will need to build and maintain close working relationships across the Institution. This is underpinned by the need to exercise judgement and discretion at all levels.

There will also be contact with other members of staff within the University and external contacts.