



## Senior Policy Officer

<b>Location:</b>	Edinburgh
<b>Post Type:</b>	Full Time, permanent
<b>Grade:</b>	Technical
<b>Salary</b>	33,916 to 38,815
<b>Hours:</b>	Monday to Friday, 09:00-17:00, flexible working arrangements will be considered
<b>Application Closing Date:</b>	11pm, 21 November 2019
<b>Assessment:</b>	All applicants: application Shortlisted candidates: assessment exercise and interview
<b>Interview Date:</b>	9 December 2019

Universities Scotland is the representative organisation for Scotland's 19 higher education institutions (HEIs). We are highly influential in ensuring that politicians, government and its agencies make decisions that promote higher education and its contribution to our economy, culture and society.

Working with the leaders of Scotland's HEIs, we are a team of 15 staff. We aim to be a confident, creative organisation, with an emphasis on learning and integrity. In developing evidence-based policy proposals and the promotion of our messages, we aim to achieve a positive and significant impact for our members.

We have a vacancy in our team for a Senior Policy Officer. As the successful applicant, you will work in an exciting role at the heart of higher education policy and across multiple areas of expertise. With a particular initial focus in the role on the sector's resourcing and governance, you will work with colleagues across our team of 15 on a range of policy issues. You will also have the adaptability to support other areas of Universities Scotland's policy portfolio as required. The successful applicant will have the flexibility to understand

diverse issues quickly; build connections between diverse policies; and work with our specialist public affairs team to turn evidence into persuasive stories.

The role is a rare opportunity to work at the heart of Scottish higher education, working closely with Principals and senior colleagues in universities, government, other representative bodies and in industry. You will have a gift for assimilating and summarising large amounts of evidence, understanding members' and stakeholders' priorities, and developing policy proposals that can influence our key audiences. You will have the capacity to be authoritative and persuasive in your presentation to senior audiences within and outside Universities Scotland.

## **Job Description**

Post: Senior Policy Officer

Responsible to: Deputy Director (Policy)

Management responsibility: No formal line management, however the postholder will:

- guide the work of a Committee & Policy Assistant when they are working on resources and governance issues; and
- lead cross-team programmes of work as required.

## **Main responsibilities and deliverables**

The creative development and advocacy of evidence-based policy:

- to address resource and governance issues facing the sector; and
- to deliver work programmes that have relevance to more than one of our teams and committees.

To conduct research and analysis to support policy development.

To gather and interpret intelligence and manage relationships, including:

- building an effective network of contacts;
- anticipating and interpreting the actions of other stakeholders; and
- anticipating and interpreting members' priorities.

Negotiation and influencing, including key organisations such as government and agencies; and to do so in a way which promotes US's objectives.

Ensure that lead members, committees and senior US officers are provided with analysis and advice which enables them to make decisions about how best to promote the sector's interests.

## **Detailed responsibilities**

The issues the post-holder is expected to deal with will vary over time, and may include any part of US's policy portfolio. US is about to undertake a governance effectiveness review, which may lead to changes in priorities. The principal initial focus of the role will be on:

Resources & Governance (approx. 80% of the role, including the secretariat role listed below)

- exploring and developing future funding options for universities, including contributing to the development of cases for Scottish Government Spending Reviews;
- advocating for the Scottish Funding Council to allocate funding in ways that support sectoral success;
- securing a coherent sectoral response to the challenges of any proposed changes in the level and / or method of allocation of funding;
- supporting the sector in developing and highlighting initiatives for attaining efficiencies and improved value for money;
- aiding the development of proportionate frameworks for institutional and sectoral accountability;
- working with the sector to shape proposed policy and legislation which might affect the sector's governance, regulation and accountability.
- Across the above responsibilities, to work with the sector, others and with Universities Scotland colleagues to set out persuasive evidence and narratives of how key policy issues are being addressed.

Secretariat to US Committees and relationship with sector groups

Delivering, in consultation with the relevant Conveners and working with the Committee & Policy Assistant, the business and agendas of the Secretaries Group, Funding Policy Group, and Efficiency and Effectiveness Committee.

Working with the Committee & Policy Assistant, provide a limited secretariat service to the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) Scottish Committee.

Maintaining a strong working relationship with the Responsible Universities Group Scotland, recently established to support sector work on sustainability and social responsibility.

Maintaining a strong working relationship with key sector professional groups including the Finance Directors (SUFDG), Estates Directors (SAUDE), HR Directors (UHRS), IT Directors (HEIDS) and the Scottish Planners Forum.

Maintaining a strong working relationship with the Scottish Council of Deans of Education, facilitating liaison with the US Lead Member for Education as the need arises.

Liaising with the secretariat to the Committee of Scottish Chairs of Governing Bodies, providing information and papers as required.

### Other policy issues (approx. 20% of the role)

To lead or participate in the delivery of programmes of policy work that require a cross-organisational response, working constructively with colleagues and across US governance structures.

### Management

Guide the work of the Committee & Policy Assistant on resources and governance issues and support the formal line management of that post by the Senior Policy Officer (Research, Innovation & Health).

To participate in, and as required lead, programmes of policy work that draw on a contribution from colleagues across the organisation.

### General

To assist in the arrangement of Universities Scotland events and externally focused activities as appropriate.

To help to respond promptly to enquiries from universities or other stakeholders.

To represent Universities Scotland at external events, meetings and conferences where appropriate.

To deputise for the Deputy Director (Policy) in their absence.

To undertake any other such duties or general tasks and hours of work as may reasonably be required.

This job description will be reviewed and amended in the light of changing professional demands.

A job description is not a rigid or inflexible document but acts to provide guidelines to the duties expected while in post.

## Person Specification

Essential / Desirable	QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING	ASSESSED
<i>Essential</i>	An honours degree or equivalent (SCQF level 10 or above)	Application form
<b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b>		
<i>Desirable</i>	Sensitivity to the political and policy context and working in a membership organisation	Application Form / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Demonstrable experience in a policy environment, preferably within higher education	Application form
<b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b>		
<i>Essential</i>	Demonstrable strength in the sourcing and use of data in constructing persuasive evidence-based policy and advocacy and in the deployment of such data across teams.	Application Form / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Numerate with excellent written and oral communications skills with the ability to interpret and explain policies and provide advice and assistance	Application form / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Good interpersonal skills, including the ability to develop and maintain productive working relationships with a wide range of people and organisations within HE and beyond, including senior staff in universities and government	Application form / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Ability to work cooperatively in teams, and with different kinds of people, contributing to team decisions and maintaining team relationships by supporting others	Application form / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Ability to develop an understanding of new policy areas and to add value to the organisation's work in these areas	Application form / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Computer literacy - Universities Scotland currently uses Microsoft Windows and Office	Application form / Assessment

<i>Essential</i>	Ability to plan and manage one's own time and several projects at once, and to deliver these on schedule	Application form / Interview
<b>C. SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED</b>		
<i>Desirable</i>	Good knowledge of the UK higher education and, in particular, HE policy in Scotland	Application form / Interview
<b>D. PERSONAL QUALITIES</b>		
<i>Essential</i>	Willing to be flexible and positive about change	Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Committed to high standards	Application form / Interview
<b>E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS</b>		
<i>Essential</i>	Willingness to travel within Scotland and occasionally to other parts of the UK	Interview

Universities Scotland work in an open plan office which we share with other HE organisations, so the successful candidate would be someone who has a professional approach, is competent, easy to work with, adaptable and comfortable working in a small team. They will have a variety of tasks to deal with so they will need to be excellent time managers and have a calm, professional communication style to deal pleasantly and confidently with stakeholders at different professional levels. The successful candidate will be highly competent in managing competing priorities and comfortable distinguishing 'important from urgent' tasks and responding pro-actively. The ability to create or identify persuasive evidence and its use to influence universities' funding and operational environment are key elements of the role.

#### **Reporting Line**

The postholder will report to the Deputy Director (Policy)

#### **Point of contact for recruitment**

For any questions about the recruitment process or to arrange an informal discussion / ask about the role please contact HR, Universities UK: [HR@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:HR@universitiesuk.ac.uk)