



## Senior Policy Officer

<b>Location:</b>	Edinburgh
<b>Post Type:</b>	Full Time, 1 year Maternity Leave Cover, commencing mid-June 2020
<b>Grade:</b>	Technical
<b>Salary</b>	£33,916 to £38,815
<b>Hours:</b>	Monday to Friday, 09:00-17:00
<b>Application Closing Date:</b>	Applicants are asked to submit a CV and covering letter by noon on 5 May
<b>Assessment:</b>	All applicants: CV and covering letter Shortlisted candidates: assessment exercise and interview
<b>Interview Date:</b>	21 May to be held at our offices in Edinburgh or virtually depending on public health guidance
<b>Reference:</b>	US01020

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 maternity leave cover vacancy in our team for a Senior Policy Officer, leading on Research, Innovation and Health. 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 strong focus on universities' research, innovation and knowledge exchange and health policy issues.

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 strong ability 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.

The successful applicant will have the flexibility to understand diverse issues quickly; build connections between diverse policies; and work with our specialist public affairs and communications team to turn evidence into persuasive stories. You will also work more broadly across our team to deliver on key policy and advocacy issues across our responsibilities.

This role is based at our office in Edinburgh however our team is currently working at home, working closely with our members, government and others to support the sector through the covid19 pandemic.

## **Job Description**

Post: Senior Policy Officer

Responsible to: Deputy Director (Policy)

Management responsibility:

- Line management of the work of a Committee & Policy Assistant who also works with other colleagues in the organisation on resources and governance issues; and
- leading cross-team programmes of work as required.

### **Main responsibilities and deliverables**

The creative development and advocacy of evidence-based policy:

- addressing the sector's interests in research, innovation and health; and
- delivering work programmes with relevance to more than one of our teams and committees.

To gather and interpret intelligence and manage relationships to support the success of the sector, including:

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

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

Ensure that lead members and 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.

Liaising closely with colleagues at Universities UK, in particular on reserved policy and funding issues affecting research and innovation.

### **Skills and experience**

#### Essential:

- An honours degree or equivalent (SCQF level 10 or above).
- Experience in a policy or related environment, preferably within higher education
- Excellent analytical and research skills with the ability to analyse and assess data and construct and convey persuasive evidence-based arguments.
- Numerate with excellent written and oral communications skills with the ability to interpret and explain policies and provide advice and assistance to our membership.
- 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.
- Ability to work proactively with US members and stakeholders to deliver our operational priorities, including the work programmes of Universities Scotland committees, ensuring that follow-up actions are delivered.
- Ability to work cooperatively in teams, and with different kinds of people, contributing to team decisions and maintaining team relationships by supporting others.
- Computer literacy - Universities Scotland currently uses Microsoft Windows and Office.
- A commitment to continuing professional development.
- Willing to be flexible and positive about change.
- Committed to high standards.
- Willingness to travel within Scotland and occasionally to other parts of the UK.

#### Desirable:

- Sensitivity to the political and policy context and working in a membership organisation.
- Substantial experience in a relevant environment, preferably including policy analysis and development
- Good knowledge of the UK higher education sector and, in particular, HE policy in Scotland and research and innovation policy at the UK and EU levels.

## Person specification

Universities Scotland works in an open plan office which it shares with another two 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 in order to deal professionally 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 candidate 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 queries about the role please email [HR@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:HR@universitiesuk.ac.uk) / 0207 419 5488

### Detailed responsibilities

The postholder will be expected to be flexible, working within US's portfolio of responsibilities. The principal focus will be on:

#### Research and Innovation (approx. 85% of the role, including the secretariat role listed below)

- Influencing development of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) strategies and funding streams , including the continuation of policy for a dual support system that works for Scotland;
- Influencing the development and operation of performance frameworks such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF);
- Supporting the sector to shape and navigate issues connected to the environment and culture of university research and innovation (e.g. wellbeing, integrity, metrics);
- Working with US members and Scottish and UK agencies to support an awareness and understanding of the opportunities of the UK Industrial Strategy;
- Explaining and promoting the role of HEIs in the Scottish innovation system, including influencing the work of the Strategic Board for Enterprise and Skills;
- Supporting members to advocate for the value and impact of the Scottish Funding Council's Research Excellence Grant (REG), University Innovation Fund (UIF) and strategic investments in research and innovation; and
- Working with members, guiding the development of the sector's responses to reviews and evaluations of Scottish Funding Council investment in research and innovation.

### Health policy (approx. 15% of the role, including the secretariat role noted below)

Working with our Principal 'lead member' for Health, liaise with colleagues in the sector and in Scottish Government and its agencies to ensure that US members are sighted on and able to shape key policy developments, with particular focus on the health-related controlled subjects.

### Secretariat to US Committees and relationship with sector groups

Delivering, in consultation with the Convener and working with the Committee & Policy Assistant, the work programme of the Universities Scotland Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC).

Working with the Committee & Policy Assistant, and with colleagues at the Scottish Funding Council, deliver an annual joint meeting of the US and SFC Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees.

Maintaining a strong working relationship with the Sub Committees of RKEC, including attending meetings and providing analysis and input as required. Specifically, the Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group (RCDG), the Research Excellence Framework Managers' Group and the Research Training Sub Committee (RTSC).

Organising ad hoc meetings and events to support members' engagement with key policy makers from organisations such as UKRI.

Operating under a formal contract and working with the Committee & Policy Assistant, provide a secretariat service to the Board for Academic Medicine and associated sub groups.

Note that under current public health guidance we are hosting all of our meetings on line.

### Management

Line managing the Committee & Policy Assistant.

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

### General

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

Helping to respond promptly to enquiries from universities or other stakeholders.

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

Deputising for the Deputy Director (Policy) in their absence.

Carrying out 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.

### Selection criteria

Essential / Desirable	QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING	ASSESSED
<i>Essential</i>	An honours degree or equivalent (SCQF level 10 or above)	CV
<b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b>		
<i>Desirable</i>	Sensitivity to the political and policy context and working in a membership organisation	CV & covering letter / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Demonstrable experience in a policy environment, preferably within higher education	CV & covering letter
<b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b>		
<i>Essential</i>	Demonstrable strength in constructing persuasive evidence-based policy and advocacy.	CV & letter / 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	CV & letter / 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	CV & letter / 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	CV & letter / 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	CV & letter / Interview
<i>Essential</i>	Computer literacy - Universities Scotland currently uses Microsoft Windows and Office	CV & letter / Assessment
<i>Essential</i>	Ability to plan and manage one's own time and several projects at once, and to deliver these on schedule	CV & letter / Interview
<b>C. SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED</b>		
<i>Desirable</i>	Good knowledge of UK higher education and, in particular, HE policy in Scotland	CV & letter / 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	CV & letter / Interview
<b>E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS</b>		
<i>Essential</i>	Willingness to travel within Scotland and occasionally to other parts of the UK	Interview