

# Media Relations Manager

Recruitment pack

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## A message from our CEO, Vivienne Stern

Universities UK (UUK) is the collective voice of universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We bring them together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

My journey at UUK started as a Parliamentary Officer and I have progressed through the organisation from there, with the opportunity to work across a range of different teams, up to becoming CEO. This is testament to the fact that at UUK we support our people to succeed, helping us achieve our ambitious goals as an organisation as a result.

At UUK we believe that supporting our people to succeed involves prioritising wellbeing at work and being an inclusive employer. We employ a total of just under 160 staff across the UUK Group. In our 2023 staff survey, I am proud that we scored higher than similar organisations for caring about our employees and treating them with fairness and respect, and that 86 per cent felt proud to work for UUK.

I am continually inspired by the passion and talent of the team at UUK. If you care about higher education, its ability to transform people's lives and its impact on wider society, then, in my opinion, there is no better place to do it than here.

# Who are we?

At Universities UK, we harness the power of the UK's universities and create the conditions for them to thrive. We are the collective voice of 142 universities, bringing them together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

This mission forms the core of our [strategic plan](#) which runs to 2030 and sets out our ambitions for the sector. Our influence, convening power, and insight will enable our universities to:

- transform the lives of more people from the UK and around the world through high-quality education.
- drive greater growth and prosperity through the knowledge and skills they generate, creating places that allow communities to flourish.
- be globally competitive centres of research, at the forefront of making ground-breaking discoveries with the power to change our world.

To help them achieve this we will:

- secure sustainable funding that enables our universities to serve society better.
- build trust and confidence that our universities are a national asset to be proud of and are acting in the best interests of society.



# Role description

<b>Post title:</b>	Media Relations Manager
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Head of External Communications
<b>Salary:</b>	£44,083 (C (Regional))
<b>Location:</b>	London
<b>The team:</b>	Media Team, Communications Group

**Job summary:** UUK is the collective voice for 142 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As world leaders in research, teaching and innovation, our universities have a fantastic story to tell and will continue to be vital in the government's growth and opportunity missions. Working with its members, Universities UK is undertaking a major programme of work to shift the dial on perceptions of higher education over the next four years. We're looking for a Media Relations Manager to help us in this work by ensuring we make a big impression across print, online and broadcast media.

The media relations manager is a senior role in the team, overseeing the day-to-day function of the press office and leading on story creation, media relationship building and managing emerging issues. In a fast-paced, busy role, the post-holder will manage the Press Officer, together dealing with national and sector media on a daily basis, meaning they will need to be a confident self-starter with a proven track record of managing news media and should be able to find creative, impactful ways to tell a story. The ability to remain calm under pressure, to prioritise effectively, and excellent news judgement will be important.

The post holder will be part of a busy and fast-paced team, which primarily works Monday – Friday office hours, but with a requirement to take part in an out-of-hours on-call rota, for which there is an additional payment.

## **Main responsibilities:**

### **Media relations**

- Shape our stories and activity for a media audience, with the ability to take complex information and translate it into engaging and media friendly content
- Lead our work responding to day-to-day reactive enquiries from print, online, broadcast, podcast, consumer and sector media.
- Drafting and placing proactive media statements, opinion pieces, open letters and articles to tell UUK's story, including in response to emerging reputational issues.
- Managing and facilitating broadcast bids and print interviews, writing high quality briefing materials and providing expert media handling advice in support of our spokespeople.
- Building strong relationships with national education editors/correspondents as well as relevant political, consumer and newdesk correspondents across print, broadcast, sector media and podcast producers
- Using these relationships for effective briefing, to secure positive coverage for UUK and our members, or to influence and mitigate potential negative stories
- Expand reach into regional media, liaising with member press offices and working with Universities Wales/Universities Scotland to take proactive stories across the UK.

### **Stakeholder communications work**

- Taking decisions and providing counsel to senior colleagues on the right course of action in relation to proactive and reactive press activity, with input and support from the Head of External Communications where required
- Provide proactive and high-quality support for members in managing reputational issues, providing lines, briefings and counsel to relevant press teams.

- Developing a strong relationship with UUKi comms to ensure right support is provided to colleagues when UUKi policy issues cross into UK media space and that international enquiries are appropriately dealt with when coming via the UUK team.
- Working closely with communications colleagues at Universities Scotland and Universities Wales, to ensure alignment in messaging and approach, and to disseminate key information and briefing materials on issues that are not devolved.
- Develop relationships with key stakeholders within and outside the sector, exploring ways to work together to further the strategic aims of Universities UK.

## **Wider**

- Manage the Press Officer, conducting regular one-to-ones and putting in place progression and development plans
- Lead the communications planning on one of UUK's programme areas and act as the media team representative on multiple other programmes..
- Ensuring the organisational planner is up to date with planned press activity and external activity
- Evaluate the impact of media team outputs by exploring the most effective way to collect and showcase work, and guide the Press Officer in keeping the records required to do this.

## **Compliance and governance**

- to take responsibility for own health and safety in line with UUK H&S policy and current legislation and undertake such responsibilities as they relate to any employees, volunteers or contractors for which the post is responsible.
- to ensure compliance with UUK's internal procedures and all external legal requirements.

## Personal effectiveness

- to take responsibility as far as is practical for own personal development to ensure that personal knowledge and skills are updated to ensure effectiveness in meeting work objectives.

## General

- to show respect to colleagues, external partners and stakeholders, and to understand and adhere to UUK's Equal Opportunity policy, UUK Staff Standards of Conduct, and UUK's organisational capabilities.
- to work collegially, and to support all the teams which the post has contact with, in achieving the organisation's objectives.
- any other duties commensurate with the grade and level of responsibility of this post, for which the post holder has the necessary experience and/or training.
- 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.

Last reviewed: *April 2026*

# Person specification

## Essential skills:

Essential skills	Assessment
<p><b>QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING</b></p> <p>Degree <b>and/or</b> professional journalism, PR or communications qualification <b>or</b> equivalent journalistic or communications experience.</p>	Application form
<p><b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><u>Specialist</u></p> <p>Excellent, established experience in media relations, journalism or another frontline news environment.</p>	Application Form/Interview
<p><b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><u>Specialist</u></p> <p>Hands-on experience and knowledge of UK news media, with excellent news judgement and wide-ranging contacts.</p>	Application Form/Interview
<p><b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><u>Specialist</u></p> <p>The ability to manage senior, often high-profile, journalists and the confidence to establish productive working relationships which mean you can pick up the phone to brief or challenge them.</p>	Interview
<p><b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><u>Specialist</u></p> <p>Ability to spot and shape a story which appeals to the media, maximising its potential</p>	Application Form/Interview

<p><b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><u>Specialist</u></p> <p>Experience of reputation management in a frontline environment.</p>	Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Oral and written communications</u></p> <p>Excellent oral and written communications skills, with experience of explaining complex ideas and technical information for different audiences in an engaging and accessible way.</p>	Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Oral and written communications</u></p> <p>The ability to create high-quality written content quickly and efficiently, particularly under pressure.</p>	Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Interpersonal and Team working Skills</u></p> <p>Effective interpersonal skills with the ability to develop good relationships with media and colleagues at all levels and the confidence to 'own' senior relationships.</p>	Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Interpersonal and Team working Skills</u></p> <p>As a senior member of the media team, demonstrate the ability to lead and support others, giving advice and using their knowledge and initiative to shape team decisions.</p>	Application Form/Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Interpersonal and Team working Skills</u></p> <p>The confidence and ability to manage; to include the Press Officer, but also projects and budgets.</p>	Interview

<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Planning and Organisation</u></p> <p>Ability to develop impactful communications plans and to act as an expert advisor to UUK colleagues to anticipate and mitigate risks within our policy work.</p>	Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Planning and Organisation</u></p> <p>Highly organised: experience of managing multiple short-term deadlines and the judgement to prioritise accordingly.</p>	Application Form/Interview
<p><b>B. SKILLS AND APTITUDES REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Planning and Organisation</u></p> <p>The ability to plan their own time effectively and deliver work on schedule while keeping the team and internal/external stakeholders appropriately updated.</p>	Interview
<p><b>C. SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Sector and Subject Awareness</u></p> <p>Proven interest in and experience of current affairs and UK news and social media.</p>	Interview
<p><b>D. PERSONAL QUALITIES</b></p> <p>Flexible to the needs of the organisation.</p>	Interview
<p><b>D. PERSONAL QUALITIES</b></p> <p>Driven; willing to tackle demanding tasks and work independently.</p>	Interview
<p><b>D. PERSONAL QUALITIES</b></p> <p>A proven record of remaining calm and delivering excellent results under pressure.</p>	Application Form/Interview
<p><b>E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS</b></p> <p>Available for occasional out-of-hours work as part of the press office rota.</p>	Interview

Demonstrable experience of embedding inclusivity into your work.

Application form

Interview

## Desirable skills:

Desirable skills	Assessed by
<p><b>A. WORK BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><u>Specialist</u></p> <p>Hands on knowledge of social media and its role in the news landscape.</p>	<p>Interview</p>
<p><b>C. SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Sector and Subject Awareness</u></p> <p>Knowledge of and interest in higher education issues.</p>	<p>Interview</p>
<p><b>C. SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED</b></p> <p><u>Sector and Subject Awareness</u></p> <p>Experience of using traditional and digital media to either campaign, or to influence stakeholders</p>	<p>Interview</p>

# Working at UUK: Benefits

If you care about higher education, its ability to transform people's lives and impact wider society, joining our team is a great opportunity.

Universities play a huge part in our everyday lives, and we want to help them make even more of a difference. We bring together leaders of UK universities to discuss higher education issues and represent and campaign on their behalf to the government, business, the media and beyond.

People drive our success, and we value everyone's work.

Universities UK operates a hybrid working framework involving the opportunity to work from home and in the office. There will be a small number of roles where employees will be required to work from an office, but typically the majority of employees will be able to work remotely on average 60% of their working week. All employees are welcome to use their contractual office for their whole working week if that is their preference.

*"I joined Universities UK three months after leaving university, and I immediately felt so welcomed and supported. I've been given opportunities to develop new skills, get involved in such a variety of interesting projects and work with colleagues across the organisation. It's a really friendly place to work and I feel trusted and valued to put my own views and ideas into practice."*

Sofia Henderson, Senior Content Producer

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STAFF BENEFITS AND WELLBEING, VISIT OUR [WORKING AT UUK PAGE](#)**

# Staff benefits

## Leave



- 27 days annual leave rising to 30 days after 3 years' service and 32 days after 5 years' service plus bank holidays.
- 4 closure days between Christmas and New year.
- 2 days paid leave each year for volunteering activities

## Well being



- Access to 24 hour 7 day a week Employee Assistant Programme which extends access to close family.
- Virtual Medical Care – 24 hour access to GP consultations.
- Mental Health First Aiders.
- Staff network groups.

## Financial wellbeing



- Interest free season ticket loans after 6 months.
- Staff benefit fund loan scheme
- 'learn for you' – claim **£100** each year tax free towards hobbies and activities outside of work.
- Funding support for continuing development, up to 2/3 of course costs paid with the remaining funded through an interest free loan recovered through monthly pay.
- Generous pension scheme (USS or SAUL depending on role).
- Salary sacrifice Cyclescheme.
- Salary progression plans.
- a £45 contribution every two years towards eye tests and the purchase of glasses where required.

## Home working



- Hybrid Working policy – 40% of time averaged over a month to be spent in the office or meeting face to face with stakeholders; allowing 60% of time to be worked from home.
- Support for homeworking set up.

## External schemes



- Charity worker discounts.
- Apple hardware discount scheme.
- Access to Able Futures for mental wellbeing support.

## Our office facilities



- Tea/coffee/milk provided for refreshments.
- Kitchens available in all offices with access to fridges and microwaves.
- Shower facilities available (London and Cardiff).
- Cycle storage facilities.



# Equality, diversity and inclusion

We want every member of staff to feel that they belong, can be themselves and that their opinion counts.

We can only reach our ambitious goals with multi-skilled, multi-experienced teams. Different perspectives make our work better.

What unites us is a passion for higher education and the enthusiasm to spread the message about the positive impacts UK universities have on our society.

We are committed to the equal treatment of all current and prospective employees and do not condone discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, or marriage and civil partnership. We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage suitably qualified applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply and join UUK.

## An equal, inclusive and diverse place to work

Equality, diversity and inclusion help create new ideas and approaches to teaching, learning and research. With that in mind, we're building a culture where difference is valued. We're constantly evolving the programmes and tools that help all employees grow and manage rewarding careers.

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT UNIVERSITIES UK, READ OUR [INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN](#)**

# Staff engagement and wellbeing at work

## Staff engagement

In our 2023 staff survey, we scored higher than similar organisations for caring about our employees and treating them with fairness and respect, and that 86 per cent felt proud to work for UUK.

## Wellbeing at work

We care about the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff. Having open and honest conversations about mental health is important to us. Our commitment to staff wellbeing includes:

- Training some members of staff to become mental health first aiders so they are there for colleagues who need support and advice.
- Raising awareness by recognising Mental Health Awareness Week with external speakers, opportunities to come together and talk and take part in activities
- Training for managers and all staff on mental health awareness
- Employee Assistance support helpline.



Universities UK is the collective voice of 142 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our mission is to create the conditions for

UK universities to be the best in the world; maximising their positive impact locally, nationally and globally.

Universities UK acts on behalf of universities, represented by their heads of institution



Woburn House  
20 Tavistock Square  
London, WC1H 9HQ

☎ +44 (0)20 7419 4111

✉ [info@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:info@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

🖱 [universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://universitiesuk.ac.uk)

🐦 📘 📷 @UniversitiesUK

