

UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER

This job description does not form part of the employee's contract of employment but is provided for guidance. The precise duties and responsibilities of any job may be expected to change over time.

JOB TITLE: Head of Corporate Communications & Public Affairs

GRADE: L1

REPORTS TO: Director of Marketing, Communications & Development
Secondary reporting line to the Vice-Chancellor and President

PURPOSE:

The Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs strategically leads the Corporate Communications agenda to create a competitive advantage for the University, in line with the University's 'Being Westminster's' strategic plan, building and supporting key external relationships that enable the University's success.

In addition to leading, managing and inspiring the Corporate Communications and PR Team, the role holder will help manage the Vice-Chancellor/University Executive Board relationships, working with external and internal University corporate governance frameworks and policies to deliver business transformation, acting as a Strategic Partner to the Vice-Chancellor in the management of programmes, resources, and embedding a culture of transformation and improvement with responsibility. There is specific focus on - internal and external communications, strategic operational support to delegated UEB approved projects and interacting with UEB and the University's Court of Governors on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. Corporate Communications:

- Responsibility for the leadership, development and management of the Corporate Communications Team encompassing public and media relations, internal communications, public affairs, crisis communications and film production.
- Lead integrated corporate communications campaigns for internal and external audiences and plan and deliver the annual work programme to ensure the delivery of business objectives. All communications to be underpinned by the story of the brand which brings the student, professional, academic and alumni communities to life - connecting the University as an integral part of London's creative industries.
- Providing strategic support and advice to the Vice-Chancellor, Executive Board and senior

leadership on major flagship corporate programmes and issues of reputational risk; political engagement and public affairs and reputation management - identifying and handling rising tide issues proactively to support and protect the University's brand and reputation.

- Manage the annual budget process and ensuring all functional budgets and forecasts are updated and managed on a monthly basis to deliver activities on budget.
- Set and monitor KPI's for the team's performance and activities and enable the function to deliver the best possible professional communications and marketing service to colleagues across the institution. Conduct the training needs analysis for the team and allocate resources to invest into staff CPD.
- Monitor, evaluate, and analyse corporate communications, media relations and policy engagement outputs and impacts, creating an adaptable culture of continuous improvement and proven impact.
- Lead a high-impact, digital-first, content-led function - ensuring corporate communications are coordinated across multiple channels to maximise profile and reach our key audiences.
- Manage the University's crisis communications process, ensuring it is robust, tested and resourced – to ensure staff, students and key stakeholders are properly informed to support and protect the University's brand and reputation. Includes membership of Major Incident Silver Command.
- Be an agent and champion for change, supporting the University's strategic goals. Where required, take responsibility for shaping, influencing and leading transformational change both within the team and function, and as a nominated member to other University-wide strategic groups.
- Work with the MCD function's SMT to deliver the overall strategy and delivery plan, driving high quality outputs and excellent service.
- Act as an ambassador for the University - representing the Vice-Chancellor and other senior leadership externally where appropriate and, as required, orchestrate and manage internal media spokespersons, particularly in relation to crisis communications.
- Be an ambassador for the MCD function, always working constructively, positively and collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders, and to undertake any other duties as appropriate and as required by the Director of Marketing, Communications & Development from time to time.

2. Direct Support to the Vice-Chancellor

- Helping the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive Board assess the areas where they must direct their focus and identifying metrics for success. Revisiting regularly and evaluating progress.
- Business transformation and improvement: On behalf of the VC in close collaboration with the other senior leads, including the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer,

develop and lead a clear strategic programme that will motivate and inspire others, delivered through detailed plans and activities that are integrated and interdisciplinary.

- Act as a key thought partner, brainstorming and identifying solutions to challenges.
- Reviewing Internal and External Communications: working with corporate communications in the drafting of University bulletins, blogs, colleague briefings, reports, social media posts, speeches and presentations.
- Monitoring information flow on key strategic projects: Sometimes acting as a gatekeeper, ensuring the VC's involvement in a project or decision-making process at the right time.
- Implementing the VC's decisions within formal decision-making processes, ensuring compliance with University governance processes.
- Leading the University's Public Affairs strategy, managing related partnerships and providing a stakeholder management role on behalf of the VC (including MPs, GLA, local authorities).
- Representing the VC at a senior level as a champion of the Westminster brand and seeking relevant opportunities for working on matters of mutual interest and influencing policy.

3. Meeting and Event Participation

- Participating as required at UEB, Court of Governors, Senior Management Team and College Executive meetings, and other internal and external meetings and events as required.

4. Project Management

- Overseeing and managing a variety of cross-organisational projects, often cross-functional University-wide projects or initiatives, as delegated and approved through UEB.
- Monitoring alignment, identifying gaps and proactively implementing cross-functional solutions of all University-wide strategies and plans with the strategic objectives of the University, on behalf of the VC.
- Support business transformation activities of others via horizon-scanning, and direct mentoring.
- Bring together multiple stakeholders and help drive decisions.

CONTEXT

The Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs is a member of the MCD Senior Management Team and is intrinsic in shaping and developing the strategic direction of the function with SMT colleagues. The role is responsible for leading and developing a team of up to seven communication professionals. This role holds budgetary responsibilities of up to £100k per annum and will deliver excellent value for money and return on investment. The role necessitates significant resilience, tact, diplomacy and the ability to keep the strategic intent of the institution always, whilst appropriately challenging and influencing. The role holder is responsible for managing external agencies and freelancers. The role holder will develop positive, forward-looking relationships with academic and professional services colleagues and foster a service ethos whereby efficient, effective and consistent support frameworks, policies and processes are developed in partnership with colleagues; innovation is supported and encouraged, and all activities support the achievement of University objectives by enhancing the quality of the student and staff experience. The Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs is ultimately responsible for managing the progression of the positive reputation of the University of Westminster and will modernise the Corporate Communications Team to deliver the relevant targets as set out in the 'Being Westminster' strategy.

The role holder will be required from time to time to attend University Executive Board and Court of Governors meetings.

Key Relationships

- Vice-Chancellor
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors
- University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer
- Heads of College
- Director, Marketing, Communications and Development
- Head of Functions, particularly Student Services, HR, Legal, Global Recruitment & Admissions
- University of Westminster Students' Union
- Internal staff networks
- Press, including Sector Experts
- External Stakeholders
- Government – International, UK and Local

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

- First Degree or equivalent practical experience that demonstrates appropriate levels of knowledge, skill and practical application.
- Postgraduate qualification e.g. Management qualification or equivalent practical experience that demonstrates relevant levels of knowledge and skill (NVQ level 5 or 7 or equivalent).
- Relevant professional qualification and membership of a relevant professional body.

You will have proven experience and evidence of achievement of:-

- Delivering high-impact corporate communications and engagement for high-profile, organisations – nationally and internationally.
- Extensive demonstrable success at building relationships and networks at all levels within a complex organisation.
- Extensive demonstrable success at influencing others to achieve outcomes.
- Proven track record in building organisations' profile, reputation and brand PR internationally and nationally
- Outstanding written and verbal communications skills – and experience of presentation.
- Experience of management and implementation of effective quality procedures, including active involvement in committees and working groups.
- Experience of initiating, managing and implementing organisation-wide projects delivering results to business performance objectives, deadlines and budget.
- Evidence of managing political agendas in a complex organisational environment at senior level to influence decision making and bring about cultural change.
- Applied knowledge and experience of business planning, resource management, and of the issues affecting Higher Education.
- Strong record of building contacts, networks and relationships – able to influence and shape business, policy and stakeholders internally and externally
- Proven record of winning trust and confidence at Board and CEO-level through demonstrating sound judgement.
- Knowledge of University structures, UK Government policies in education, external agency and legislative requirements, and the international operating environment.
- Experience of management of staff and staffing budgets, including the effective handling of appraisal/performance reviews and staff development activities.
- Experience of developing business plans, budgets and project plans and successfully managing resources within them.
- Experience of drafting high-impact quality communications for senior colleagues.

Attributes and Skills

- Thrives on helping others be their best selves and anticipating their needs before they are spoken.
- Experience in wide-ranging or cross-functional areas, and an eagerness to learn new skills.
- Planning, developing and delivering communication strategies and plans
- Strategic thinker
- Strong written and verbal communication; listens well and can easily learn to communicate in someone else's "written voice".
- A team-player who engenders an inclusive and enabling ethos.

- Ability to influence policy development and decision-making at senior levels.
- Excellent negotiation and influencing skills and highly developed team working skills.
- Ability to take ownership and control and exercise leadership; initiating action and taking responsibility.
- Ability to exercise judgement in line with organisational strategy and priorities.
- Aptitude for horizon-scanning to identify and evaluate new opportunities.
- Ability to work both strategically and operationally concurrently.
- Sound ambassadorial qualities for external representation of the University.