1. Job Details
Job title: Press and PR Manager
School/Support Department: Communications and Marketing
Line manager: Head of Media and Communications

2. Job Purpose
To manage the reputation of The University of Edinburgh by implementing a proactive and reactive, press and media service to contribute to meeting the University’s strategic objectives. This includes managing the corporate press office and its team of press officers to develop and maintain a motivated and proactive team ensuring the University receives an all round professional press and PR service.

3. Main Responsibilities
- The role requires the planning, implementation and management of press and pr strategic campaigns for major College and University developments, high profile events and partnership projects.
- Manage, plan and co-ordinate the corporate office and its team of press officers including development and training needs in order to ensure the provision of professional press and media services to the University.
- Manage and deliver the press relations strategy in line with the University’s business aims and objectives and ensure its integration into the wider communications strategy.
- Develop effective relationships with University staff and media to proactively build strong and positive media opportunities. The role involves developing good relationships with key media contacts and developing a plan for the team to do so.
- Implement new systems of working and new technology where appropriate. Develop and implement media awareness seminars and training for academic and support service staff.
- Assess and respond to media enquiries from regional, national and international print and broadcast media to ensure that the media and its audiences are presented with accurate information on the University, and the University’s position is presented positively and clearly. Act as a University spokesperson, and when appropriate identify and brief senior staff to do so.
- Write press releases to ensure accurate information is issued to the media and positive coverage is gained for University projects. Write or contribute feature articles for University publications and website. Write articles and collate information for articles for a range of external publications.
- Minimise potential negative coverage by advising senior staff and working with the media so that the University’s reputation is enhanced or maintained.
- Manage press and PR activity at high profile events, co ordinating the team to manage the media attendance and required photocalls, to ensure a positive image of the University is projected to external parties.
- Provide advice to University staff, at all levels on media issues to provide support and guidance, and to ensure the media is provided with a professional and accessible service.
- To manage the monitoring and analysis of media office activity to inform decision-making.

4. Planning and Organising
- To manage and plan for major campaigns, events and announcements up to two years in advance at college and institutional level.
- To work with colleagues in the department to provide an all round Public Relations service and orchestrate the timing of campaigns and events.
- Managing press conferences, launches and photocalls.
- Co-ordinate visits by journalists to the University. Responding to enquiries from journalists, many of these will be urgent with short deadlines.
To develop and implement an annual work plan to be agreed with Line Manager.

It may be necessary at times to step out of the normal remit and contribute to a departmental/ institutional imperative or to respond to a crisis situation.

The jobholder has to be able to respond at speed, often within a few hours, to media enquiries. This requires gathering information on a wide range of subjects, and exercising a sound level of judgement and discretion in responding.

5. Problem Solving

Problem:

- Under the pressure of a tight deadline the jobholder has to present complex information about University issues to the media, its audiences, partnership organisations and stakeholders.

How problem is solved:

- The jobholder has to assess each enquiry then work in partnership with senior colleagues to research and gather information. The jobholder then independently has to present this information in a ‘media friendly’ format.

Problem:

- Balancing long-term proactive media planning with day to day reactive requirements of the media. While proactive media work is a priority for the jobholder a substantial amount of time can be driven by the information requirements of the media. These reactive requirements need to be met while keeping proactive long-term projects on track.

How problem is solved:

- The jobholder independently has to prioritise tasks and manage their own time and the team’s time efficiently to meet the conflicting demands. Occasional work outside office hours is required to meet the requirements of the media.

Problem:

- Jobholder has to ensure that their information on current developments in the University is up to date and accurate and they need to maintain long-term working relationships with staff at all levels. This is challenging in such a large and diverse organisation.

How problem is solved:

- The jobholder has to keep abreast of all developments in the University through regular contact with the Principal’s office, Heads of Colleges and Schools and through attendance at strategic meetings within the Schools and with partnership organisations. To generate news stories the jobholder must work independently at making contact with staff at all levels to source stories and new ideas.

6. Decision Making

- The jobholder will advise on the best use of media to support the University’s strategic goals. This includes deciding on where stories should be placed/ the recipients of stories, how to ‘sell’ the story and when to promote particular issues to avoid clashes and maximize coverage. In conjunction with the Press and PR manager they decide which stories to pursue to support institutional/college aims and which should be set aside.

- Using professional judgement the jobholder independently puts together the media responses and delivers the response to journalists, either verbally or in writing. Some media responses will be compiled in conjunction with senior staff, the Principal’s office or Heads of colleges or schools. If the main contact for the issue is unavailable the jobholder has to put a holding statement together for the media.

- The jobholder is the main contact for press and PR issues on specified areas of the university. This requires advising and making recommendations to senior staff on media relations.

- The majority of University staff are asked to consult the press office before speaking to the media. When the job-holder puts staff forward for interview they are required to brief staff on the structure of media interviews, questions they may be asked, and provide advice on the correct way to respond.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
The development of positive relationships with the media are required for this post as well as good contacts with key members of staff within the institution. The jobholder will also be expected to establish and maintain relationships with appropriate people in other organisations eg. government departments, funding councils, partner institutions and charities etc. Relationships within the department are also essential for good team work.

**Internal**
- Contact with senior staff including Principal’s Office, Vice Principals and Head of Colleges to discuss media interview requests, the best approach to take and to agree press statements.
- To develop contacts with key Academic and Senior admin staff to create good relationships and identify potential news stories. Contact is also required for the jobholder to brief staff before subsequent print or broadcast interviews.

**External**
- Building contacts with broadcasters and print journalists, including news editors and photographers (international, national and regional press) to promote University news, manage media enquiries and organise photocalls. Jobholder works with the media to achieve positive coverage and limit negative coverage.
- Contact with press teams and senior staff members from partner organisations, funders and other universities for the media handling of joint press and PR opportunities.

**8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience**
The post requires five years experience in a press/public relations environment and a degree in journalism, public relations or equivalent, a sharp sense of how to make the most of a story, knowledge of how the media work and how to gain quality coverage. Good management and organisational skills as well as outstanding interpersonal skills are required. The jobholder will have excellent writing and proofing ability and be capable of working independently when required. Experience of organising events and photocalls and of general project and campaign planning is highly desirable as is experience of working with mediadisk.

**9. Dimensions**
The jobholder will line manage a team of press officers (currently three) within the corporate press office.

**External customers**
- The jobholder is responsible for managing information that is issued to the media and put in the public domain. This will have a direct influence on key stakeholders of the institution. The media is one of the crucial ways of engaging with key stakeholders world-wide, and promoting the excellence of the University to the wider public.

**Internal customers**
- All of the University’s staff, current, prospective and former students, are affected indirectly through the impact of media relations on the university’s reputation. This can have implications for funding, recruitment, fund raising and widening participation.

**10. Job Context and any other relevant information**
The jobholder is expected to respond to a constantly changing environment, be up to date with the Higher Education Sector in general and be administratively self sufficient.

The nature of the job requires a flexible attitude to some out of hours work. The jobholder will be expected to attend some evening events and at times to respond to out of office enquiries and emergencies.