University of Edinburgh
Job Description

1. Job Details
Job title: Head of Media and Communications
School/Support Department: Communications and Marketing (formerly CPA)
Unit (if applicable): Communications & Marketing
Line manager: Director of Communications and External Affairs

2. Job Purpose
To maintain and enhance the reputation and raise the profile of the University in the media and with stakeholders to enable it to achieve its objectives at local, national and international level. To ensure the effective provision of media and PR support services to the University, the academic units and the support services to achieve a positive working relationship with in-house clients. To ensure good communications with key internal and external audiences with the objective of building support for the University.

3. Main Responsibilities

1. To devise media, PR and communications strategies to support the University’s strategic aims.
2. To manage and motivate the Press & PR team consisting of a Press & PR Manager plus three other media officers to ensure a positive media profile.
3. Be part of a senior team in the Department available to advise the Principal and senior staff in the University on responses to high profile, sensitive press enquiries to protect and enhance the University’s reputation.
4. Monitor and ensure that effective working relationships are developed and maintained between the Press/PR team and their in-house customers to ensure a positive working relationship with staff in the Colleges and Support Services.
5. To develop the University’s community relations strategy in conjunction with the Vice-Principal responsible for community relations. To engage relevant stakeholders in the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Executive, City of Edinburgh Council and the local community to maintain and build support for the University.
6. In partnership with Human Resources, to respond to requests from the University for support on internal communications.
7. Work closely with the Head of Marketing and Head of Web Development to ensure that the department provides an integrated communications, marketing and web service to the University.
8. Contribute to the overall management of the Department including assisting with overseeing the budget to ensure the effective operation of CPA.

4. Planning and Organising
- Responding to the needs of the institution and deploying appropriate resources to provide the required service.
- Anticipating changes in institutional requirements in response to developments in HE up to five years ahead.
- Prepare forecasts of activity and budget for a year ahead in conjunction with the Director.
- Assist the Director in preparing documents associated with the general management of the Department such as the annual Planning Round publication as well as other documents required by the University such as the Risk Register.
- In conjunction with the Head of Marketing assist the Director in the management of the Department by arranging and preparing for Departmental meetings including preparing agendas, chairing in the absence of the Director, following up points raised.
- Planning a programme of communications to raise awareness and understanding amongst academic and administrative staff of the Press & PR teams role and output.

5. Problem Solving
Advising the Director and senior management on ways of handling sensitive media issues often in situations of uncertainty, incomplete information, often without precedent and a high risk to the University’s reputation.
Problem solving through the anticipation of potential issues and identifying timely responses.

Provide solutions when issues arise between academic staff and the Press & PR Team.

6. Decision Making
The post holder will make decisions on:
Most effective implementation of strategies and deployment of resources having agreed the strategies with the Director
Appropriate responses to sensitive media issues.

The post holder will refer to the Director on:
Determining long-term action plans and strategies for the University and for the Department.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
Excellent working relationships with the Director, the Principal and where relevant, senior managers within the University
Provide leadership to the Press & PR team
Effective relationships with key stakeholders such as main contacts in the media and relevant politicians and local councillors.
Close working relationships with Student Recruitment & Admissions (SRA), Heads of College, Heads of Schools and key academic staff.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
An honours degree and ten years of experience in Public Relations/Communications are required for this post.
A relevant postgraduate qualification is desirable.
A thorough understanding of the media and knowledge of key contacts within relevant media. Excellent judgement shown on handling sensitive media issues.
Good staff management skills.

9. Dimensions
• Line management of Press & PR Manager and indirect management of three media officers.
• Build positive working relationships Heads of College, Heads of Support Services, 21 Heads of School and high profile academic staff.
• The job impacts on consumers of media coverage in print, broadcast and on the web.
• Internal communications when required could impact on over 7,000 staff.
• Key stakeholders in Scotland and the UK, over 120 MSPs, relevant contacts within the Scottish Executive, key Councillors and senior managers at City of Edinburgh Council as well as a number of local community groups.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
The post holder 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 towards some out of hours work. The post holder will be expected to attend some evening events and at times to respond to out of hours enquiries and emergencies.