Head of Research Communications

Department: Communications, External Relations

Hours of work: Full time | 37 hours per week | Part time working of 0.8FTE will be considered

Contract type: Open

Salary: Grade 7 | £42,155 - £51,805 per year (reduced pro rata for part time working)
Introduction

Our research spans the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences, and we prize both the discovery of new knowledge and the impact it brings to our society. You will be responsible for leading our University research brand and communications in support of the University’s vision to be a true force for public good.

Main purpose of the role

We engage a wide range of UK and international audiences to foster a shared understanding of our University’s vision and strategy - research for public good.

Our communications help build a strong reputation for York’s research, by supporting academics to share their findings and insights to drive partnerships and collaborations, attract funding, and demonstrate the value of our research to society and the environment.

Our audiences include celebrating and inspiring our community of staff, students and alumni, as well as engaging academics, funders, government departments, policy-makers, industry and business, third-sector and the general public about the impact of York’s research.

Our reputation

The University’s uncompromising commitment to working with partners and communities across the world has most recently been evidenced in the latest research league table, which places York in the top 10 in the UK for the quality of its research (Times Higher Education (THE) ranking of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021).

Building on this reputation, you will help strengthen our research communications strategy by developing our research branding, designing a content strategy, and planning and delivering effective multi-channel campaigns aligned to University’s research strategic priorities. You will also lead best practice to provide timely and relevant advice for effective, consistent and compelling research communications and engagement.

Shared purpose

The role reports to the Director of Communications and is based within the University’s core Communications team, which also covers creative services, digital comms, media relations and events. The Communications team is in one of four teams within the External Relations Directorate.

You will be responsible for a small team of content producers, and you will also need to manage excellent relationships, including directing or line-managing research communicators in teams across the University who deliver policy- and industry-focused activities.

To do so effectively, you will need to work closely with other University teams to support strategic objectives and help develop our culture of shared purpose. This includes Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE), The York Policy Engine and our public affairs functions. Relationship building also includes developing shared communication objectives with our Faculties, Departments and varied research Institutes/Centres, which all provide unique insights into how our research can help tackle some of the most pressing environmental, social and economic challenges facing our rapidly changing world.
Key responsibilities

(Role holders will be required to undertake some or all of the duties below)

1. Role Specific Responsibilities

- Support the Director of Communications to further develop our overarching approach to research communications and the University’s public good mission, including developing our brand proposition and aligning resources and activity with strategic research priorities.
- Take responsibility for a content strategy for our research communication channels and platforms, to represent the University’s brand identity and embed best practice for high-quality, search-optimised, multimedia content.
- Plan and deliver effective multi-channel, audience-led campaigns, and measure their effectiveness to identify opportunities and improvements.
- Coordinate activity across your team, and work with other members of the Communications team, to deliver core activity including managing webpage updates/redesigns, supporting our public-facing research events, and working closely with media relations to promote research findings and insights.
- Attend key University committees, steering groups and working groups to influence and translate research strategy and impact into communications activity, and maintain a high level of knowledge and understanding of research priorities and our research entities (e.g. Institutes / Centres).
- Develop excellent working relationships with internal stakeholders (e.g. our academic community and the Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange team), and external stakeholders (e.g. counterparts in funding bodies and key partners), in order to build awareness of our research strengths and impact, build shared objectives and encourage advocacy.
- Lead and develop our University research communications network, as well as facilitate workshops with academics, to encourage best practice communications and stakeholder engagement.
- Keep abreast of new intelligence and the external context for our research environment (including national policy and political developments), to positively position our research communications, and horizon scan to anticipate sensitive issues to help manage our research reputation.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of the Communications strategy, to identify further opportunities to promote research and our expertise as we position York as a university for public good.
- Deputise for the Director of Communications and our Board member (Director of External Relations) when required, and play an active role in the Communications and External Relations Senior Leadership Teams

2. University of York Responsibilities for Grade 7

Service and Operational Delivery

- Contribute to operational leadership and decision making to shape the nature and level of professional and support services within own area of responsibility.
- Line manage and lead the work of a team or section; optimise use of resources and ensure team objectives are met; set the overall direction and goals of the team.
- Accountable for delivery of a service for a large or complex area or across multiple service areas.
- Make effective use of digital solutions to carry out operational activity and lead the development of efficiency improvements.
- Provide support and encouragement for members of the team through effective leadership; demonstrate compassion and give advice on commonly occurring wellbeing issues

Continuous Improvement
● Review service / operational delivery, identify additional service requirements or shortfalls and develop innovative solutions to progress.
● Promote the improvement and efficiency of services by implementing and managing the review and improvement of service procedures.
● Review internal and external practice to identify and deliver opportunities for future improvements or efficiencies.
● Apply expertise to identify, understand and propose resolutions for significant, long term or complex problems.
● Proactively identify opportunities for building new personal knowledge and skills for self and others. For roles at this level with line management responsibilities, ensure training and development needs of the team are met.
● Deliver knowledge sharing on specialist defined processes to the broader team and/or the University.

Specialist Contribution
● Act as a specialist point of contact for dealing with complex data and information sources, providing interpretation and analysis.
● Responsible for shaping the development and learning of others both within and outside of the team, through the design and delivery of training sessions.
● Provide expert professional subject expertise and problem-solving skills, sharing knowledge with the team as needed

Collaboration and Communication
● Produce communications for promotional and reporting purposes, designing and structuring information and facts, applying creative and innovative principles to influence and engage.
● Actively participate in internal and external communities of practice and knowledge sharing with a view to inform and improve future service or operational delivery plans and development.

Governance and Oversight
● Oversee activity to ensure all processes and transactions are delivered in line with regulatory and professional service and policy standards, ensuring appropriate controls and monitoring interventions are in place.
● Provide advice to stakeholders regarding compliance and regulations where there is a level of ambiguity or discretion to be applied.
● Horizon scan to understand emerging legislation and regulation and support consideration of the University’s response.
● Where applicable to the role, take responsibility for health and safety considerations of the work environment, through the completion and implementation of risk assessments.

Planning and Organisation
● Responsible for the planning and organisation of the workload of the team across a range of activities, on a regular basis.
● Contribute to longer term planning requirements at operational and occasionally strategic level; make recommendations about future resource requirements.
● Lead large scale projects to facilitate major service or operational change

As part of our University vision, you will help embed key institutional principles impacting our communications and engagement activities: embracing and supporting global awareness, collaboration, sustainability and the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion.
The above list of duties is not exhaustive and is subject to change. The post holder may be required to undertake others duties within the scope and grading of the post.
# Person specification

## Role specific

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<tr>
<th>Role-specific</th>
<th>Essential/Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to lead strategic communications and prioritise communications resources and activity that align with broader objectives of an organisation</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>A compelling and creative digital communicator, with proven experience of planning and delivering content strategies and evaluating multi-channel campaigns</td>
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<td>Ability to convey and present complex information in a responsible, accurate and accessible way, for a range of different audiences</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Strong management experience, able to inspire and motivate a team and drive high performance, and/or experience of directing the work of individuals without direct line-management, by providing leadership to support effective communications</td>
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<td>An understanding of the opportunities and challenges of working within a professional communications team in a large/complex organisation</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to develop strong communication networks, negotiate and influence others when managing competing communication priorities, and work with tact and a high degree of diplomacy</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Awareness and knowledge of brand development and implementation, and effective application of visual identity and voice across communication channels</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Understanding of the higher education sector and its role in society, including issues affecting academic and the research funding environment</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Experience of working in the policy or public affairs environment, and/or experience of B2B marketing</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>High level website planning and content implementation skills, able to coordinate development of new multi-page sections or redevelopment of legacy sections of websites</td>
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## Qualifications

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<td>Level 6 qualification (Qualifications at this level include a degree. Please view the full list). We also welcome applicants with equivalent non-uk qualifications or equivalent professional experience in Communications/Marketing/PR</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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## Skills - demonstrates the ability to:

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<td>Lead large-scale projects</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Gather, analyse, interpret and report complex data/information</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Use digital technologies including Google applications and/or Microsoft Office</td>
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<td>Communicate to engage and influence others</td>
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## Behaviours:

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<td>Works collaboratively with others</td>
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<td>Delivers a quality service</td>
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<td>Develops self and others</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Actively champions respect, inclusivity, equality and diversity</td>
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<td>Identifies and implements continuous improvement</td>
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