

Candidate Information

Position:	Public Affairs Officer, Public Engagement
School/Department:	Public Engagement
Reference:	22/110263
Closing Date:	Monday 28 November 2022
Salary:	£35,333 - £42,155 per annum.
Anticipated Interview Date:	Week commencing 12 December 2022

JOB PURPOSE:

The post-holder is responsible for supporting the continued development of Queen's University's political engagement and public affairs strategy and delivering it to political representatives, policy makers and other stakeholders at all levels of Government, including local councils, the Northern Ireland Assembly, Westminster, Dail Eireann and the EU. The role involves working closely with the Public Affairs Manager, Head of Public Engagement and Director of Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility, gathering information, contributing to providing advice, guidance and support to a range of internal stakeholders, in order to sustain and build Queen's University's reputation with political decision-makers and opinion-formers.

The post-holder is expected to work on their own initiative on a day-to-day basis, assisting the Public Affairs Team in delivering high-quality support to senior management and the wider university community.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Work closely with colleagues in the Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility Directorate and make a significant contribution to the development and delivery of a Public Affairs strategy that builds and maintains Queen's University's public affairs profile across local councils, Stormont, Westminster, and Dáil Éireann, with a particular focus on strengthening the University's reputation and influence with key policy and decision makers at all levels of government.
2. Design and maintain the University's Public Affairs stakeholder engagement matrix, ensuring appropriate engagement with a range of external stakeholders.
3. Assist in the identification, analysis, and engagement of new and existing key external stakeholders and to work with Queen's University's senior leadership team to develop and deliver a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy; identify opportunities for the Vice-Chancellor and his team to build and maintain relationships with key decision makers.
4. Co-ordinate responses to parliamentary questions and queries from political parties, politicians, and other decision makers.
5. Work closely with the university's communications team to proactively promote events, initiatives and public affairs objectives in mainstream media and social media and assist in developing pro-active campaigns in relation to the university's interests. Provide advice on responding to media enquiries on matters in relation to public affairs.
6. Provide professional, timely, high-quality updates and briefings on policy and political activity of relevance in support of Queen's University's internal decision-making, and in particular the external activities of senior teams with stakeholders, policy and decision-makers including ministers and civil servants.
7. Proactively follow developments in the external political sphere through formal and informal networks.
8. Support the Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility Directorate in the management, in significant volume, a series of engaging, high-quality visits and events including party conferences and engagement with Belfast City Council, the NI Assembly, Belfast City Council, Westminster and Dáil Éireann and undertake all follow up and evaluation as appropriate.
9. Contribute to the identification of opportunities for collaborative external working on key aspects of Queen's University's Public Affairs objectives.
10. Identify and deliver opportunities that support engagement between policymakers and Queen's University.
11. Ensure appropriate institutional responses to all relevant Public Consultations.
12. Ensure that an understanding of the importance of confidentiality is applied when undertaking all duties.
13. Abide by University policies on Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity.

14. Perform other duties as required which are not included above, but which will be consistent with the role.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. Degree or equivalent qualification or substantial relevant professional experience.
2. Minimum of 3 years' recent relevant professional experience (within last 6 years) in a Public Affairs role, including evidence of:
 - Liaison with the political and policy environment
 - Use of media relations
 - Producing publications, print and digital
 - Organisation of high profile events and visits
 - Proven experience of identifying and managing opportunities to enhance organisational profile and reputation and of building purposeful relationships locally and nationally.
3. Demonstrable evidence/ experience of successfully introducing and implementing new ideas and initiatives that drives a public affairs function forward to meet the needs of the organisation.
4. Excellent IT skills including advanced use of Outlook, Excel, WordPowerPoint and Microsoft Teams.
5. Demonstrable knowledge of workings of governments, assemblies and parliaments.
6. Excellent verbal and written communications skills, including ability to quickly draft briefing documents on complex subject matter, confidence in giving presentations and the ability to quickly and effectively engage a range of audiences and meet tight deadlines.
7. Evidence of well-developed networking skills, both internally and externally, and ability to give advice and guidance to internal and external stakeholders, build relationships and manage expectations.
8. Excellent interpersonal skills.
9. Exceptional organisational skills with an eye for detail and ability to manage volume and variety of demands simultaneously.
10. Self-motivated, responsive, creative, flexible, ability to handle sensitive political situations, manage complex work programmes.
11. Demonstrable capacity for long-term strategic thinking and perspective, negotiating, diplomacy, working collaboratively, building consensus and evidence of ability to solve problems using initiative and creativity; identify and propose practical solutions.
12. Evidence of ability to work unsupervised and proven ability to work under pressure on multiple priorities and to demanding timescales, planning and setting priorities for own work and monitoring progress against set objectives.
13. Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
14. Willingness to work flexibly as required in accordance with the needs of the post.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Relevant experience of Public Engagement work in a public sector/third sector environment.
2. Experience of database creation and management.
3. Demonstrable understanding of the role of universities and their contribution to society.