

Candidate Information

Position: Public Affairs Officer (Maternity Cover 12 months)
School/Department: Civic Engagement and Strategic Communications
Reference: 26/113457
Closing Date: Monday 6 July 2026
Salary: £41,519 - £49,536 per annum.
Anticipated Interview Date: Monday 20 & Tuesday 21 July 2026
Duration: 1 Year

JOB PURPOSE:

The post-holder plays a key role in delivering Queen's University Belfast's public affairs and political engagement strategy, maintaining and enhancing the University's reputation, profile, and influence with political representatives, policymakers, and stakeholders across Northern Ireland, the UK, Ireland, and, where relevant, the EU and internationally, with a specific focus on the Oireachtas in the Republic of Ireland and the Government's focus on Shared Island and other all-island initiatives.

Reporting to the Public Affairs Manager, this role involves direct working within the public affairs team as well as collaborative working with colleagues across the Governance, External Affairs and Registrar (GEAR) Section. The postholder is responsible for supporting informed decision-making at senior leadership level through collating information and providing advice, as well as managing internal and external stakeholders, and event management. The post-holder is expected to operate with a high degree of autonomy, managing relationships, and identifying opportunities to enhance Queen's profile with relevant stakeholders and opinion-formers.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Work closely with colleagues in the Civic Engagement and Strategic Communications Directorate and the Governance, External Affairs and Registrar (GEAR) Section in the delivery of the Public Affairs strategy that builds and maintains Queen's University's public affairs profile across government in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and in Westminster, with a particular focus on strengthening the University's reputation and influence with key policy and decision makers.
2. Maintain the Public Affairs stakeholder mapping 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; 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
6. Provide advice on responding to media enquiries on matters in relation to public affairs.
7. 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.
8. Proactively follow developments in the external political sphere through formal and informal networks.
9. Support or lead (when appropriate), 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.
10. Identify and deliver opportunities to connect policymakers with Queen's research and academic expertise.
11. Represent the Public Affairs function, and where appropriate the University, in external meetings and engagement with stakeholders.
12. Help coordinate and lead (where appropriate) institutional responses to all relevant public consultations.
13. Ensure that an understanding of the importance of confidentiality is applied when undertaking all duties.

14. Abide by University policies on Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity.
15. 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, Word, PowerPoint 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 external 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Informal Enquiries to James Dillon, email: j.dillon@qub.ac.uk