

Candidate Information

Position:	Assistant Director and Head of Strategic Communications
School/Department:	Strategic Communications
Reference:	26/113685
Closing Date:	Monday 26 October 2026
Salary:	Salary commensurate with experience.
Duration:	Permanent

JOB PURPOSE:

This senior role will lead all the communications (external and internal), media engagement, public relations, brand narrative, social media/web and make a significant contribution to reputational operations.

The postholder will be responsible for developing a new five-year strategic communications plan, leading and managing a support structure to deliver enhanced coordination and cohesion of the institutional communications. The post holder will be responsible for the management of the internal and external communications teams and will also oversee and drive the media engagement to ensure the local and national reputational targets are met.

The postholder will work with the Director to managing the University's reputation Grid and will attend meetings of the Registrar's Management Group.

MAJOR DUTIES:

External Communications and Media Engagement

1. Improving the overall reputation, relevance and public awareness of the University's positive impact on its environment, community, research, students and staff.
2. Ensure that Queen's University is effectively represented to relevant external audiences.
3. Developing and delivering an institutional communications plan and campaign calendar (Grid) to ensure a joined-up institutional approach to all communications.
4. Oversee the implementation of strategies and plans for Strategic Communications.
5. Leading the University's engagement with senior media leaders on critical issues (Editors, Senior Managers and other key personnel).
6. Increasing the University's capacity to manage strategic risks and identifying and maintaining relationships with key media stakeholders.
7. Responsible for developing and reviewing a 24-hour media operation that provides agile and swift responses that reflect institutional messaging on strategic issues.
8. Developing an institutional strategic narrative that ensures that messaging of Strategy 2030 is understood and supported by key stakeholders.
9. Liaising with the University Management Board to ensure that Queen's is appropriately positioned to inform and influence.
10. Provide advice to the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar on the media, communications and external engagement.

Internal Communications

11. Working with the Chief People Officer to develop an effective internal communications strategy for staff to ensure appropriate, accurate and fit-for-purpose messaging via various mediums.
12. Working with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students on internal student communications, ensuring close liaison with the Student's Union where appropriate.

Resourcing

13. Lead the Strategic Communications Team staff structure to support delivery of an effective Communications Strategy linked to the targets and outcomes of Strategy 2030. Engaging in continuous reviews the current communications approach with both Faculties and Directorates
14. Maintain a continuous review of quality and external benchmarks to promote the best possible service.

Digital Communications

15. Responsible for managing and overseeing all University social media channels and web-site content, ensuring an effective and coordinated approach in line with Strategy 2030 reputational goals and that brand messaging is effectively communicated.
16. Continually review the University social media constructs and develop supporting production capacity for enhanced content, this will involve completing the social media review and putting in place/reviewing an appropriate social media structure.
17. Any other duties that fall within the general ambit of the post.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. A degree (or equivalent qualification) in a relevant area OR extensive relevant experience in senior communications role(s) or in senior role(s) directly overseeing a significant institutional communications function.
2. Substantial experience/evidence of developing, implementing and assessing the impact of effective communications strategies, procedures and systems.
3. Substantial experience/evidence of effective team leadership, management and engagement of a high functioning, multi-disciplinary communications team to deliver successful outcomes.
4. Evidence of possessing strong analytical skills to support rapid decision making with the ability to clearly communicate complex information in written or oral briefings.
5. Demonstrable professional experience in providing communications and public relations advice to Senior Managers regarding complex and high organisational impact issues.
6. Evidence of collaborative working at a senior level, both within a large organisation and externally, on high-profile issues.
7. Evidence of designing, implementing and measuring impact of an effective external-facing web and social media strategy through the delivery of a successful campaign.
8. Evidence of effective internal communications (both channel management and message content) by outlining a successful intervention within a staff environment of a similar size and scale to QUB.
9. Excellent and effective interpersonal skills including motivating, negotiating, influencing and networking.
10. Computer literacy with appropriate relevant experience.
11. Demonstrable commitment to the University's core values.
12. Ability to adapt to shifting priorities in a fast-paced environment.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Postgraduate qualification in a relevant subject.
2. Previous experience leading crisis communications.
3. Demonstrable understanding of the higher education policy environment and/or experience of working with organisations in the sector.
4. Demonstrable deep understanding of strategic communications in higher education and globally.