

Head of Research Policy:

Recruitment pack

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A message from our CEO, Vivienne Stern

Universities UK (UUK) is the collective voice of universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We bring them together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

My journey at UUK started as a Parliamentary Officer and I have progressed through the organisation from there, with the opportunity to work across a range of different teams, up to becoming CEO. This is testament to the fact that at UUK we support our people to succeed, helping us achieve our ambitious goals as an organisation as a result.

At UUK we believe that supporting our people to succeed involves prioritising wellbeing at work and being an inclusive employer. We employ a total of just under 150 staff across the UUK Group. In our 2023 staff survey, I am proud that we scored higher than similar organisations for caring about our employees and treating them with fairness and respect, and that 86 per cent felt proud to work for UUK.

I am continually inspired by the passion and talent of the team at UUK. If you care about higher education, its ability to transform people's lives and its impact on wider society, then, in my opinion, there is no better place to do it than here.

Who are we?

At Universities UK, we harness the power of the UK's universities and create the conditions for them to thrive. We are the collective voice of 142 universities, bringing them together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

This mission forms the core of our [strategic plan](#) which runs to 2030 and sets out our ambitions for the sector. Our influence, convening power, and insight will enable our universities to:

- transform the lives of more people from the UK and around the world through high-quality education.
- drive greater growth and prosperity through the knowledge and skills they generate, creating places that allow communities to flourish.
- be globally competitive centres of research, at the forefront of making ground-breaking discoveries with the power to change our world.

To help them achieve this we will:

- secure sustainable funding that enables our universities to serve society better.
- build trust and confidence that our universities are a national asset to be proud of and are acting in the best interests of society.



Role description

Post title: Head of Research Policy

Responsible to: Deputy Director, Policy

Salary: £58,884 – £65,424 (dependant on experience)

Location: London and hybrid (occasional domestic travel)

The team: This role is based in the Policy Group team of 24 core staff. The Head of Research Policy sits within our 'Growth' division and will report to the Deputy Director of Policy.

Job summary: This is an exciting opportunity to join a successful team at Universities UK to shape the future of higher education and research policy.

We are seeking a Head of Research Policy who will play a key role in the UUK team to develop, lead and influence policy on research and development (R&D) on behalf of UUK's member universities across the country.

You will have the skills and capabilities to create and deliver projects and programmes of work across different high profile and complex areas within R&D policy. You will have a proactive approach and the ability to identify priority policy issues for UUK, developing new thinking that is credible and influential along the way. You will have the skills to lead and motivate a team to achieve your goals, and a strong understanding of the evidence and the political environment in which universities operate.

Main responsibilities:

- Creating and delivering projects and programmes of activity that will best- place UUK to lead and shape the university research and development (R&D) policy agenda.
- Developing credible policy positions on R&D on behalf of UUK's 141 members.
- Leading and developing a high performing team to deliver.
- Line management of two team members – a Policy Adviser and a Policy Analyst.
- Maximising policy impact and influence by working collaboratively with colleagues on advocacy, communications and media activity.
- Building strong and influential networks with senior level decision makers and influencers in the higher education sector, government and agencies, and with wider stakeholders.
- Representing UUK publicly where necessary and relevant.
- Contributing to the production of outputs across a range of media.
- Contributing to the leadership and effective management of the UUK Policy Group as a whole.

Compliance and governance

- to take responsibility for own health and safety in line with UUK H&S policy and current legislation and undertake such responsibilities as they relate to any employees, volunteers or contractors for which the post is responsible.
- to ensure compliance with UUK's internal procedures and all external legal requirements.

Personal effectiveness

- to take responsibility as far as is practical for own personal development to ensure that personal knowledge and skills are updated to ensure effectiveness in meeting work objectives.

General

- to show respect to colleagues, external partners and stakeholders, and to understand and adhere to UUK's Equal Opportunity policy, UUK Staff Standards of Conduct, and UUK's organisational capabilities.
- to work collegially, and to support all the teams which the post has contact with, in achieving the organisation's objectives.
- any other duties commensurate with the grade and level of responsibility of this post, for which the post holder has the necessary experience and/or training.
- This job description will be reviewed and amended in the light of changing professional demands. A job description is not a rigid or inflexible document but acts to provide guidelines to the duties expected while in post.

Last reviewed: *August 2024*

Person specification

Essential skills:

Essential skills	Assessment
Ability to identify priorities and develop policy positions in response to external policy or political changes.	Application form Interview
Ability to use, present, and strengthen the evidence base to inform policy outputs and new policy ideas using a range of methods.	Application form Interview
Ability to manage complex, policy focused programmes and projects through to successful delivery. This includes the ability to prioritise issues, coordinate and manage resources, keep to timelines, and promote maximum impact.	Application form Interview
Ability to work collaboratively with a communications function, and to reflect political and external communication considerations when setting priorities.	Application form Interview
Ability to build strong networks and develop effective partnerships with stakeholders, including senior leaders.	Application form Interview
Excellent oral communication skills – able to communicate effectively at the most senior levels. This includes having the confidence and authority to influence and win the trust of senior-level stakeholders, and to represent UUK effectively in the public sphere.	Application form Interview

Excellent written communication skills, with the ability to draft a range of outputs, including reports and concise briefings, and communicate complex issues accessibly to a range of audiences.	Application form Interview
Strong negotiating and influencing skills, including the ability to effect change.	Interview
Ability to exercise political judgement and awareness, and to make decisions accordingly.	Interview
Understanding of, and commitment to, equality, diversity and inclusion as set out in UUK's Equal Opportunity policy.	Application form Interview

Desirable skills:

Desirable skills	Assessed by
Knowledge of the UK research and development (R&D) and higher education landscape.	Application form Interview
Financial management and reporting skills e.g. ability to set and manage a budget.	Application form
Line management experience, or experience of monitoring staff workload, setting objectives and managing performance.	Application form Interview

Working at UUK: Benefits

If you care about higher education, its ability to transform people's lives and impact wider society, joining our team is a great opportunity.

Universities play a huge part in our everyday lives, and we want to help them make even more of a difference. We bring together leaders of UK universities to discuss higher education issues and represent and campaign on their behalf to the government, business, the media and beyond.

People drive our success, and we value everyone's work.

Universities UK operates a hybrid working framework involving the opportunity to work from home and in the office. There will be a small number of roles where employees will be required to work from an office, but typically the majority of employees will be able to work remotely on average 60% of their working week. All employees are welcome to use their contractual office for their whole working week if that is their preference.

"I joined Universities UK three months after leaving university, and I immediately felt so welcomed and supported. I've been given opportunities to develop new skills, get involved in such a variety of interesting projects and work with colleagues across the organisation. It's a really friendly place to work and I feel trusted and valued to put my own views and ideas into practice."

Sofia Henderson, Senior Content Producer

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT STAFF BENEFITS AND WELLBEING, VISIT OUR [WORKING AT UUK PAGE](#)

Staff benefits

Leave



- 27 days annual leave rising to 30 days after 3 years' service and 32 days after 5 years' service plus bank holidays.
- 4 closure days between Christmas and New year.
- 2 days paid leave each year for volunteering activities

Well being



- Access to 24 hour 7 day a week Employee Assistant Programme which extends access to close family.
- Virtual Medical Care – 24 hour access to GP consultations.
- Mental Health First Aiders.
- Staff network groups.

Financial wellbeing



- Interest free season ticket loans after 6 months.
- Staff benefit fund loan scheme
- 'learn for you' – claim £75 each year tax free towards hobbies and activities outside of work.
- Funding support for continuing development, up to 2/3 of course costs paid with the remaining funded through an interest free loan recovered through monthly pay.
- Generous pension scheme (USS or SAUL depending on role).
- Salary sacrifice Cyclescheme.
- Salary progression plans.
- a £45 contribution every two years towards eye tests and the purchase of glasses where required.

Home working



- Hybrid Working policy – 40% of time averaged over a month to be spent in the office or meeting face to face with stakeholders, allowing 60% of time to be worked from home.
- Support for homeworking set up.

External schemes



- Charity worker discounts.
- Apple hardware discount scheme.
- Access to Able Futures for mental wellbeing support.

Our office facilities



- Tea/coffee/milk provided for refreshments.
- Kitchens available in all offices with access to fridges and microwaves.
- Shower facilities available (London and Cardiff).
- Cycle storage facilities.



Equality, diversity and inclusion

We want every member of staff to feel that they belong, can be themselves and that their opinion counts.

We can only reach our ambitious goals with multi-skilled, multi-experienced teams. Different perspectives make our work better.

What unites us is a passion for higher education and the enthusiasm to spread the message about the positive impacts UK universities have on our society.

We are committed to the equal treatment of all current and prospective employees and do not condone discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, or marriage and civil partnership. We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage suitably qualified applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply and join UUK.

An equal, inclusive and diverse place to work

Equality, diversity and inclusion help create new ideas and approaches to teaching, learning and research. With that in mind, we're building a culture where difference is valued. We're constantly evolving the programmes and tools that help all employees grow and manage rewarding careers.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT UNIVERSITIES UK, READ OUR [INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN](#)

Staff engagement and wellbeing at work

Staff engagement

In our 2023 staff survey, we scored higher than similar organisations for caring about our employees and treating them with fairness and respect, and that 86 per cent felt proud to work for UUK.

Wellbeing at work

We care about the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff. Having open and honest conversations about mental health is important to us. Our commitment to staff wellbeing includes:

- Training some members of staff to become mental health first aiders so they are there for colleagues who need support and advice.
- Raising awareness by recognising Mental Health Awareness Week with external speakers, opportunities to come together and talk and take part in activities
- Training for managers and all staff on mental health awareness
- Employee Assistance support helpline.



Universities UK is the collective voice of 142 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our mission is to create the conditions for

UK universities to be the best in the world; maximising their positive impact locally, nationally and globally.

Universities UK acts on behalf of universities, represented by their heads of institution



Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
London, WC1H 9HQ

☎ +44 (0)20 7419 4111

✉ info@universitiesuk.ac.uk

🖱 universitiesuk.ac.uk

🐦 📘 📷 @UniversitiesUK

