

Interim Deputy Director, Partnerships & External Affairs (Fixed-term contract):

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 160 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 141 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: Interim Deputy Director, Partnerships & External Affairs
(Fixed-term contract 27 May 2025 – 07 November 2025)

Responsible to: Director, UUKi

Salary: £72,044 – £80,048 (dependant on experience)

Location: London

The team: Universities UK International

Job summary: UUKi represents the UK's higher education institutions and supports their global engagement and international ambitions. We support universities to develop and deliver their own unique international strategies and use our convening power to act in the collective interests of the sector.

The Partnerships and External Affairs team is critical to the delivery of UUKi's new strategic plan. It brings together the unit's communications and member support functions and core income generating activities. This fixed-term contract will ensure continuity of the team during a period of sabbatical. As Interim Deputy Director, you will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of UUKi's strategy for events, strategic partnerships, and external affairs.

Collectively, these functions contribute to the reputation, impact, and financial sustainability of UUKi, and help amplify the key messages and priorities of the organisation in line with positions agreed through close engagement with our policy team, and our members, funders, and other stakeholders. They also support our members to understand and respond to emerging and systemic challenges.

Main responsibilities:

Working with the Head of Events, Head of Strategic Partnerships, and Head of Communications and Campaigns, you will oversee delivery of:

- A high quality, high impact events programme in line with UUKi's strategic priorities, generating income in line with an agreed annual target.
- UUKi's portfolio of eternally funded strategic partnerships, which provide opportunities for funding, partnership and collaboration to members and a service offer to our stakeholders.
- An external affairs strategy which enhances UUKi's reputation and impact and fosters understanding of the positive contribution internalisation makes to the UK and our status as a global leader in international HE and research, including through campaigns, insights and strategic relationships.
- UUKi's annual publications, insights and capacity building activities that help members to respond to emerging and systematic challenges.

The postholder will:

- Lead and motivate the team to deliver their agreed annual plans, providing advice, leadership, and prioritising resources across the team as required to support delivery of agreed priorities.
- Be accountable for the delivery of the events, partnerships, and communications and campaigns strategies, including delivery of agreed income targets.
- Support diversification of UUKi's income through events, partnerships, and strategic relationships with key partners.
- Oversee the delivery of plans for events, partnerships, and external affairs in line with agreed priorities.
- Manage networks and relationships at a senior level with universities and sector stakeholders which support the delivery of UUKi's strategic objectives.

General responsibilities of the Interim Deputy Director, subject to agreement with the Director of UUKi, are to:

- Support the delivery of operational plans in line with the UUKi strategic priorities.
- Work closely with the UUKi PaGE team and partners across UUK (including External Affairs, Policy, and Operations) to coordinate activity.
- Represent UUKi to external stakeholders, including at conferences, working groups, receptions, and events.
- Manage budgets within the scope of the team's work.
- Be an active member of the UUKi management team, which may include taking ownership of specific issues.
- Co-lead the Responsible Global Engagement programme of work, supported by a delivery team.
- Take on other duties as required by the Director and to Deputise for the Director as appropriate.

A job description is not a rigid, inflexible document. It provides guidelines to the duties expected while in post. As such it may be amended in the light of changing professional demands.

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: *17 February 2025*

Person specification

Essential skills:

Essential skills	Assessment
<p>Qualifications</p> <p>A degree or equivalent level qualification</p>	CV & Cover letter
<p>Work experience</p> <p>Experience in at least one of programme and/or project management, business development and/or events and communications</p> <p>Experience of managing teams to deliver organisational objectives</p>	<p>CV, Cover letter & Interview</p> <p>CV, Cover letter & Interview</p>
<p>Knowledge</p> <p>Understanding of UK higher education and its international dimension</p>	CV, Cover letter & Interview
<p>Skills</p> <p>Excellent written and oral communication skills, including evidence of ability to adapt to a variety of cultural settings</p> <p>Ability to influence senior stakeholders, demonstrating tact, diplomacy and political sensitivity</p> <p>Ability to lead and work effectively as part of a team, including those involving multiple organisations</p>	<p>CV, Cover letter & Interview</p> <p>CV, Cover letter & Interview</p> <p>CV, Cover letter & Interview</p>

Ability to maintain networks with senior stakeholders	CV, Cover letter & Interview
Ability to deliver operational and project plans in line with organisational objectives and to manage own and team's time and other resources effectively	CV, Cover letter & Interview
Miscellaneous	
This post will require occasional overnight (and possibly) international travel. The post will require some flexibility in working hours to suit the needs of UUKi	Cover letter
Demonstratable experience of embedding inclusivity into your work.	CV, Cover letter & Interview

Desirable skills:

Desirable skills	Assessed by
Work experience	
Experience as a line manager	CV, Cover letter & Interview
Experience in an organisation related to international higher education and/or research	CV, Cover letter & Interview
Experience in managing budgets for external grant and/or contracts	CV, Cover letter & 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 141 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



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