Communications Officer

Job Description

1 x full time post or 2 x 0.5 fte posts

We are…

Professional HE Services (PHES) is an umbrella company for membership organisations in Higher Education. Currently PHES is the corporate “parent” of four Special Interest Organisations (SIOs); the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE), the British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG), the Higher Education Strategic Planners Association (HESPA) and Universities Human Resources (UHR).

We are looking for…

A **Communications Officer** to join our small team (approx. 13 staff) during this exciting period of expansion and perform this crucial communications role. This role will provide communications support to AUDE and UHR. We are looking for a candidate who can work full time or 2 candidates who can work 0.5 fte.

The successful candidates will proactively position the SIOs in the media looking for opportunities to showcase good news stories and celebrate sector success. You will act as public relations manager between the SIOs, their stakeholders, local and national press and trade publications.

You will write innovative and informative communications to members via our digital platforms and social media. You will also take the lead on public consultations collating members views and draft collective responses that speak on behalf of the association.

The post-holder reports to the AUDE Executive Director and the UHR Executive Director. This role has no line management responsibilities, will be based in Loughborough and include frequent UK travel and occasional overnight stays.

You need to be…

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| A **member-focussed**, well organised, **communications expert**. Someone who can produce **engaging online and written content**, targeting a variety of audiences.  |
|  | Because you will need to… |
|  | * Create online content in the form of news articles, blogs and resource pages
* Plan the social media activity, posting and responding where appropriate
* Collate and write content for electronic and print newsletters, reports and other communications
* Have strong marketing skills across all communication channels, so that you can increase member engagement
* Display excellent organisational skills, to lead on your projects and be a partner in others
* Manage several projects at the same time
* Work with the Operations Director to analyse usage data, engagement scores and other information
* Provide general communication support and work with any communications working groups
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| **Experienced at dealing with press**, briefing journalists and ensure the **correct messages** are communicated.  |
|  | Because in conjunction with colleagues you will need to… |
|  | * Deal with media enquiries, briefing journalists and creating narrative for release. You will liaise across the associations to ensure messages resonate with the audience and convey the correct messages.
* Be able to spot warning signs from challenging enquiries and be able to manage them effectively to protect and build the reputation of the associations.
* Demonstrable experience of building effective working relationships with journalists, colleagues and other stakeholders.
* Develop media handling plans
* Deal promptly with media enquiries, alerting colleagues and management where appropriate, formulating responses and logging them centrally
* Display exceptional interpersonal and relationship management skills
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| Someone who can **maximise the impact of our events** through targeted, time specific communications. |
|  | Because you will need to… |
|  | * Support training events and award ceremonies ensuring that the appropriate marketing and communications channels are used to maximise attendance
* Ensure every conference has a communications plan and a press/pr plan
* Deputise for the Executive Directors and other SIO staff during periods of annual leave or other absence
* Undertake any other duties as directed by the AUDE/UHR Executive Directors
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| A great **team player** who is happy working in a **small team** and willing to share ideas. But you will also need to be a **self-starter** to get the job done.  |
|  | Because you will need to… |
|  | * Be educated to degree level or equivalent
* Have a flexible approach to team working - on occasions, there will be a need to work outside normal office hours, for example when organising or attending conferences/events
* Have extensive working knowledge of standard office IT products
* Have a positive, persuasive and diplomatic manner. Although an inclusive and conciliatory manner is needed to work in a diverse membership organisation and a small team, the post-holder must have the strength of character and skill to confront under-performance of any project participant at an early stage and in a constructive manner
* Support colleagues in all PHES organisations as required
* Commit to observing the organisation’s Equal Opportunities Policy at all times
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Please note: while you will be working on projects for both AUDE and UHR, some of the above tasks may only be for one of the two associations.

You might also have…

* Experience of working in the higher educational sector
* Experience of working in a membership organisation
* Experience of stakeholder engagement with national press

We will offer…

* A full time, post based at our offices in Loughborough
* A competitive annual salary at **Grade 6 £25,023 - £31,656 pro rata** dependent on qualifications and experience.  We benchmark our salaries to the University of Sheffield grading structure.
* A defined contribution pension scheme with **7.5% employee and 16% employer** contribution rates, together with life insurance.
* **30 days’ holiday** plus bank holidays and discretionary days’ office closure.
* Support for **CPD** and appropriate training.
* This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed.