

DIRECTOR OF
EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION



The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities



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DIRECTOR OF
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DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT INTRODUCTION



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Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)

In the 107 years since our inception, the ACU has forged a unique position in international higher education. With over 500 member universities in more than 50 Commonwealth countries, we fully reflect the diversity of the current higher education landscape.

The ACU's mission is to build a better world through higher education, and we passionately believe that global challenges can only be solved through international collaboration.

We champion the power of higher education to improve lives – shaping policy and promoting, at the highest levels, the value of universities to society and their role in sustainable development. We support the long-term vitality of universities – strengthening capacity and improving equity, inclusion, and access. We engage and connect universities across borders – convening the sector and promoting collaboration. We deliver educational opportunities that make a positive and lasting difference – seeding change through life-changing scholarships, grants, and fellowships. And we are committed to upholding the ACU's reputation for excellence and demonstrating our impact – by being a world-class organisation, we deliver value to our members, clients, funders, and other partners.

I am proud of the work and impact of the ACU, and how we live our values of quality, collaboration, innovation, respect, and inclusion. It is now our responsibility to ensure that we can deliver the ambitions laid out in our strategy, 'The road to 2030', launched last year.

As Director of External Engagement, you will lead a newly-formed group, providing dynamic and inspirational strategic leadership to the Marketing and Communications, Public Affairs, Policy, Research and Insights and Fundraising functional teams.

You will play a vital role in enhancing the ACU's reputation, status and impact, ensuring the organisation has outstanding relations with a wide range of external stakeholders, including Commonwealth governments, international organisations, Buckingham Palace, and Whitehall. Alongside the other members of the Senior Executive Team, you will support me in setting the strategic direction of the ACU, driving and delivering the implementation of our new strategy and operational plan.

I look forward to receiving your application.

Dr Joanna Newman MBE, FRSA
Chief Executive and Secretary General

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT ABOUT THE ACU



The Association
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Our Mission

To build a better world
through higher education.

Our Vision

A world in which higher
education transcends
borders, strengthens
societies, fosters innovation,
and lifts the lives of people
throughout the
Commonwealth and beyond.



The ACU is an international organisation dedicated to building a better world through higher education.

International collaboration is central to this ambition: by bringing universities together from around the world – and crucially the people who study and work within them – the ACU helps to advance knowledge, promote understanding, broaden minds, and improve lives.

The ACU champions higher education as a cornerstone of stronger societies, supporting its members, partners, and stakeholders as they adapt to a changing world.

The Road to 2030

Universities make a critical contribution to sustainable development across the Commonwealth and beyond.

Our strategic plan - 'The road to 2030' - reinforces our fundamental belief that global challenges can only be solved through international collaboration, and our collective commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through higher education.

Our Strategic Priorities

- To champion the power of higher education to improve lives
- To support the long-term vitality of universities
- To engage and connect universities across borders, and promote collaboration among them
- To deliver educational opportunities that make a positive and lasting difference
- To uphold the ACU's reputation for excellence and demonstrate its impact

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT VALUES



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The ACU's set of values help guide the organisation in its mission.

Our values reflect our aspirations, who we are, and how we do things, and are brought alive in everything that we do.

Quality

We strive to excel in all we do, and continuously reflect on our work to find new ways forward.

Collaboration

We believe that cooperation and sharing ideas makes us stronger.

Innovation

We encourage people to think differently, be curious, and explore new ideas.

Respect

We treat others in the way we would like to be treated – with fairness, integrity, and generosity

Inclusion

We value difference, and encourage and celebrate the diverse voices of our colleagues and partners.

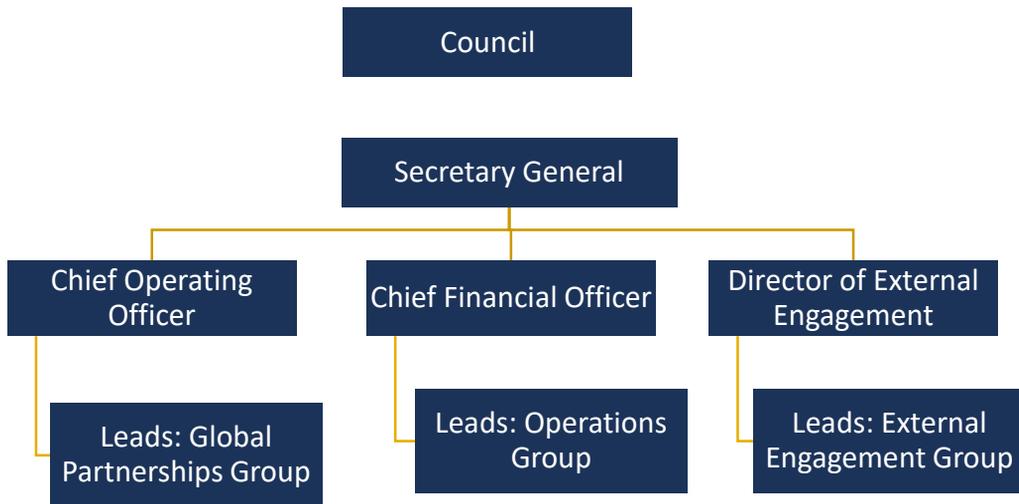


DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



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Leadership Structure



DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT ROLE PURPOSE



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Purpose

The Director of External Engagement will enhance the ACU's reputation, status and impact, ensuring the organisation has outstanding relations with Commonwealth governments, international organisations, Kensington Palace, Whitehall, relevant media and other stakeholders and partners by providing dynamic and inspirational strategic leadership for the External Engagement Group, which includes the Marketing and Communications, Public Affairs, Fundraising and Research and Insight functional teams, setting a strategic direction coherent with the overall ACU strategy.

The post-holder will drive high-performance by developing and mentoring team members whilst holding them accountable for the delivery of the operating plan's ambitious targets and encouraging cross-team working by driving the successful delivery of Strategic Priority 1 (Shaping Policy: To champion the power of higher education to improve lives).

As a member of the Senior Executive Team (SET), the Director of External Engagement supports the CEO/Secretary General in setting the strategic direction of the ACU and providing strategic leadership and management across the organisation, enabling the SET to drive and deliver the implementation of the ACU's ambitious strategic and operational plans.

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT ROLE PROFILE



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Key responsibilities and accountabilities

- To support the CEO to drive and deliver the ACU's vision, mission and The Road to 2030 strategy, with overall accountability for the achievement of assigned strategic priorities.
- To work with SET in shaping the ACU infrastructure, increasing effectiveness, innovation, building capacity and creating a high performance culture across the organisation.
- To champion cross-functional working and integration through matrix management, knowledge exchange, collaboration and inclusion.
- To coach and mentor functional leads, to continue to build strong, capable, confident and autonomous team leaders.
- Develop and implement an external engagement strategy that advances the purpose, strategy and priorities of the ACU by developing and nurturing relationships and partnerships of influence, enhancing the reputation of the ACU and its members, and communicating how our work in Higher Education is building a better world.
- Provide inspirational and strategic leadership to the Marketing and Communications, Public Affairs, Research and Insight, and Fundraising functions, ensuring the leads in these areas achieve their goals and deliver the operating plan objectives to support the ambitions of the organisation.
- Develop, implement and grow a new fundraising function to achieve our ambitious targets to increase the number of QECS scholarships - the next generation of Commonwealth leaders - and enable us to offer more grants and fellowships to our member universities.
- Establish and embed a monitoring and evaluation and market research and insight function to both demonstrate the impact of our work and inform strategic decision-making.
- Overall responsibility for the external engagement budget, assisting with the development and oversight of financial management for the ACU



Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- Proven experience of leading a highly effective and successful Marketing and Communications or External Affairs department, with responsibility for directing, marketing and communications and a number of other relevant functions, which could include policy, public affairs, and partnerships
- Advanced knowledge of marketing and communications principles
- Significant experience of developing senior-level external relationships and securing the highest-level advocacy, including developing and harnessing strong networks across multiple stakeholder groups
- Advance understanding of stakeholder engagement
- Extensive experience of leading, motivating and managing teams with the ability to promote a culture of high performance, continuous improvement and innovation
- Experience and successful track record working in complex fast paced environments and the ability to influence positive change
- Knowledge and passion for data and insights
- Senior level experience of project planning and management
- Knowledge of financial management
- Commercially astute
- Proven success of transformational change management and implementing process change through people and capacity building

Desirable

- Experience of working in higher education
- International experience in a professional, educational or voluntary capacity
- Experience of working in a not-for-profit or membership organization
- A well-developed understanding of the international Higher Education landscape
- An understanding of changing economic, political, and social environments affecting the ACU
- An understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and their relevance for Higher Education and the Commonwealth

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT ROLE PURPOSE



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Skills and Behaviours

Vision

- Strategic thinker, capable of working at a senior level and contributing at Board/Council level
- Entrepreneurial with the ability to input on strategic planning from a commercial standpoint
- Ability to anticipate future opportunities and problems, taking strategic and pre-emptive action
- Ability to set and achieve comprehensive goals for performance and growth
- Passion for working in the developing world and creating positive change

Leadership

- Inspire confidence and promote shared values that underpin the ethos of the ACU
- Inspires others, is visible, adaptive, authentic and engenders trust
- Visible leadership, promoting collective leadership for taking teams through significant programmes of change
- Passion and commitment for continuous improvement
- Ambitious individual who has personal drive to succeed and develop their own career, and support their teams to strive for excellence

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Skills and Behaviours

Building and Managing Teams

- Directs and coaches others throughout the organisation and enables people to perform at their best
- Ability to recognise and cultivate rising talent
- Creates a positive team environment
- Creates cohesion, developing synergies and achieves through common goals

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

- High emotional and social intelligence
- Collaborative, supportive, calm under pressure, solution focused and able to lead others effectively in such a way that encourages maximum performance and engagement
- Exceptional communicator both in writing and in person to a range of audiences.

Relationship Management

- Exceptional relationship-building and interpersonal skills with the ability to influence and negotiate with a wide range of stakeholders and partners
- The gravitas and credibility to influence both within and beyond the organisation

Analytical Skills

- Conceptual thinker, innovative and capable of complex problem solving
- The ability to work well under pressure and take a considered, measured position

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Skills and Behaviours

Results Orientated

- Desire for success and the motivation to constantly seek improvement
- Ability and drive to manage organisational complexity
- A high level of resilience with the ability to initiate and drive decisions
- Tenacious, adaptable and the ability to get things done
- The highest levels of self-awareness, commitment, and integrity
- A proven commitment to fairness, inclusion, equality, diversity, and transparency

Values

- A strong commitment to the Commonwealth Values

Special Conditions/Other Requirements

- Degree educated or equivalent



DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT TERMS & HOW TO APPLY



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Terms of Appointment

The position of Director of External Engagement is a full-time post, based in London. International travel will be required. The salary is competitive and commensurate with the seniority of the appointment.

At the ACU, we are committed to creating an inclusive working environment, where diversity is valued and there is equality of opportunity. We therefore welcome applications from all sections of the community and we offer a range of benefits to encourage a work-life balance.

How to Apply

Please contact Muksheeda Boodhoo for an initial discussion and apply for the role via the Ellwood Atfield website with a CV and a covering letter of no more than 1,000 words.



Muksheeda has headhunting experience spanning Corporate Communications and Investor Relations across listed companies, financial institutions including several other sectors and organisation types.

At Ellwood Atfield, she now recruits mid to senior external communications professionals into prestigious organisations across a range of sectors and specialisms.



Geraldine leads the Permanent Practice, recruiting Directors of Communications, Policy and Public Affairs for clients such as The King's Fund, the British Heart Foundation, The Francis Crick Institute, Bayer, Sanofi, Roche, and the Association of Medical Research Charities.



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