

private & confidential

Role Description



The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities

Public Affairs Manager
Strategic Communications

For further information please contact:

Naomi Sharma

T. +44 (0)20 3824 9861

M. +44 (0)7584757195

naomi@ellwoodatfield.com



Job title: Public Affairs Manager
Initial term: Full time, permanent
Reporting to: Head of Head of Policy and Strategic Partnerships
Location: London

Dear candidate,

The ACU is the world's first and oldest international university network, established in 1913 to provide a forum for universities to share information, knowledge, and ideas. Our mission is to build a better world through higher education, and we believe that international collaboration is the key to tackling the global challenges that we now face.

Universities transform lives. Over the past two years, as the world has battled the coronavirus pandemic, they have been at the forefront of the fight against the virus and its impact. They have proven their value to society as thought leaders and innovators, through ground-breaking medical research, informing public policy, and supporting their local communities.

And now, as we start to plan for a post-pandemic future, Higher Education must be supported and protected as an integral part of the education sector and crucial for global economic and social recovery.

Higher education is the key to realising the potential of individuals, communities, and nations. With more than two thirds of the Commonwealth under the age of 30, access to Higher Education is essential for a healthier, greener, and fairer future.

Through international collaboration, we can foster stronger, more vibrant higher education systems, and create opportunities for individuals and societies.

You will be joining us at an exciting time in our journey to help shape an ACU powered by ideas and innovation, with greater collaboration and more opportunities for us to grow our influence and impact across our network of over 500 universities in more than 50 countries.

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](#)'.

Thank you for your interest in the ACU. We look forward to receiving your application.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joanna Newman'.

Dr Joanna Newman MBE
FRSA Secretary General
The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)

Purpose of the job:

We have an exciting opportunity for a talented Public Affairs Manager to join a global organisation and contribute to an ambitious strategy to secure support for higher education with governments and stakeholders across the Commonwealth and on the global stage, working with a diverse international network of more than 500 member universities.

The postholder will work with colleagues across the organisation and with our external partners to deliver engaging and impactful policy and public affairs for major activities to strengthen the ACU's global influencing work and identify new opportunities for the ACU and our members.

Working as a key member of the Strategic Communications team, the postholder will deliver a public affairs strategy and manage stakeholder relationships to reach and influence key decision makers and other stakeholders with the work and impact of the ACU and our members.

The postholder will use insight and monitoring to inform and develop the ACU's policy priorities and strategic engagement, provide high quality and strategic advice, and produce impactful briefings and written content for senior team members to support the communication of the ACU's policy priorities both internally, and externally.

They will be expected to lead, develop and nurture effective and influential strategic relationships within Whitehall, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Governments, High Commissions and other stakeholders.

The post holder will bring a knowledge and understanding of the political landscape, policy making processes, how to influence decision makers at both an international and national level, and first-hand experience of securing support for organisational priorities in a strategic way.

They will demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills as well as strong writing and presenting skills, regularly representing the ACU externally.

The postholder will be highly motivated and able to work with a high degree of autonomy to produce high-quality work in a fast-paced environment.

Main Responsibilities:

As the Public Affairs Manager your responsibilities will include:

1. Contributing to the development and delivery of an ambitious public affairs strategy, with a particular focus on strengthening ACU's government relations activity.
2. Using monitoring, strategic relationships and engagement to provide insight and advice for senior colleagues, spotting opportunities to develop and strengthen the ACU's influence and profile amongst its members, and the international higher education, political and development communities.
3. Preparing high quality and strategic briefings for the Secretary General and other senior staff.
4. Producing policy papers, thought leadership, persuasive content for speeches, and other communication that will proactively inform and influence key stakeholders, shape thinking, strengthen ACU's positioning and profile, and influence policy objectives.
5. Demonstrating understanding and applied knowledge of the current thinking in international higher education, including the development and political context, proactively identifying themes, key issues, and opportunities for policy influencing
6. Identifying and managing strong working relationships with key stakeholders and influencers across the UK and Commonwealth, including senior government officials, and representatives within the higher education sector, to strategically influence policy, and deliver ACU's strategic priorities.
7. Representing the ACU at external events, meetings, and conferences where appropriate.
8. Working with colleagues across the organisation, engaging ACU's diverse network of
9. universities across the Commonwealth in our policy work and external affairs
10. Representing the Policy and Strategic Partnerships team as a business partner for other departments, building strong collaborative relationships with colleagues through regular meetings, co-design of policy, research, and public affairs activities, and providing advice and support to enhance the ACU's influencing and engagement activities.

Knowledge, skills and expertise required:

Some of the skills you need to be able to demonstrate include:

1. Educated to degree level, or equivalent experience
2. Knowledge and relevant experience of working in higher education and/or international
3. development, the SDG's, and the Commonwealth
4. Parliamentary experience or relevant experience working in the public affairs sector influencing with Governments.
5. Excellent understanding of the political landscape, processes and systems across the UK

and/or Commonwealth countries. Knowledge of international/multilateral bodies, including the UN is an advantage

6. Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to draft briefs, speeches, and present and communicate complex information in a clear, compelling, and concise manner, with an awareness for the audience and an ability to respond rapidly.
7. A strategic thinker, effective influencer, and networker, with a track record of effectively influencing change in a policy or public affairs capacity
8. Strong analytical skills, including an ability to gather, analyse, interpret, and present information and intelligence effectively and to apply it strategically to inform workplans
9. Strong interpersonal, communication, influencing and negotiating skills, including an ability to develop and manage strong and strategic relationships with a range of stakeholders
10. Excellent planning and organisational skills, time management and ability to be flexible to balance competing priorities
11. Experience of managing senior and complex stakeholder relationships.
12. Strong commitment to higher education and its influence throughout the Common wealth and beyond

Why work for us?

If you join us, you will benefit from the following:

- Working for an organisation with social impact, with the opportunity to make a difference.
- The opportunity to build your career with extensive training and development opportunities.
- Exposure to the international higher education and international development sectors.
- A positive, supportive, and flexible working culture.
- Working within an inclusive environment where health and wellbeing is a priority.

Our benefits

- 27 days annual leave, plus 8 bank holidays (pro rata for part time employees), plus 4 Christmas closure days
- Generous pension scheme – 5% employee contribution, 10% employer contribution
- Volunteering days
- Enhanced maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave
- Give As You Earn charitable donations scheme
- Cycle to work scheme
- Sabbatical leave
- Ability to request flexible working from day one

Work/life balance

- Hybrid flexible working, with 40% of your time per month being office based.
- Our offices are in central London, only ten minutes' walk from Euston and Kings Cross stations.
- We make every effort to support flexible working so that staff can have a healthy work/life balance (compressed hours, nine-day fortnights or part-time roles). We also have long- and short-term arrangements for staff with caring responsibilities, or other personal circumstances that need flexibility.

Health and wellbeing

- Staff Wellbeing Service for professional advice and assistance. This is a free, independent 24/7 service, offering help and advice for work-related issues, as well as problems affecting your home life.
- Annual flu jab vouchers for all staff and free vaccines for international travel.
- Reimbursement of up to £75 for sight tests and towards glasses or lenses.
- We have a network of mental health first aiders who are here for all our staff when needed.

Professional development

- We have an annual programme of training and development to support skills development and promote wellbeing.
- We have regular external speakers who speak about issues of diversity and equality, such as transgender training, gender, and race.
- We have additional opportunities to attend a range of internal and external events.
- We have an ACU Educational Fund for further study and professional development.

Additional information:

- Postholders must be committed to the ACU's mission, ethos and values and comply with policies and procedures, including our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policies.
- The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 requires the ACU to obtain evidence of immigration status and eligibility to work in the UK for new employees. If invited for an interview, you will be asked to show appropriate documentary evidence of your eligibility to work in the UK when you attend. The ACU cannot sponsor candidates for this role.

- Postholders must be willing to travel within the UK and overseas when this is possible.
- Postholders are expected to carry out other duties which are broadly consistent with those described in accordance with the changing needs of the department and the requirements of the job.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In recognition of its importance to the success of our organisation, inclusion is one of our [five core values](#).

The ACU aims to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (defined as Protected Characteristics in the UK Equality Act 2010).

It is important that the people in our organisation reflect the wider community. Bringing together a diverse range of people helps us perform to our best, whether bringing universities together from around the world, supporting international collaboration, providing great scholarship services or realising our ambitions to build a better world through higher education.

Our focus on Access and Inclusion through grants and initiatives that help to drive systemic change and by working with universities to widen access and reduce inequality helps to tackle socioeconomic disparities and level the playing field.

We're proud of our inclusive culture and want to be a place where everyone can be themselves at work.

Our people can be confident that difference is not only accepted but celebrated at the ACU.

All our people are recruited, trained and held to account on the basis that discrimination in any form is unacceptable.