



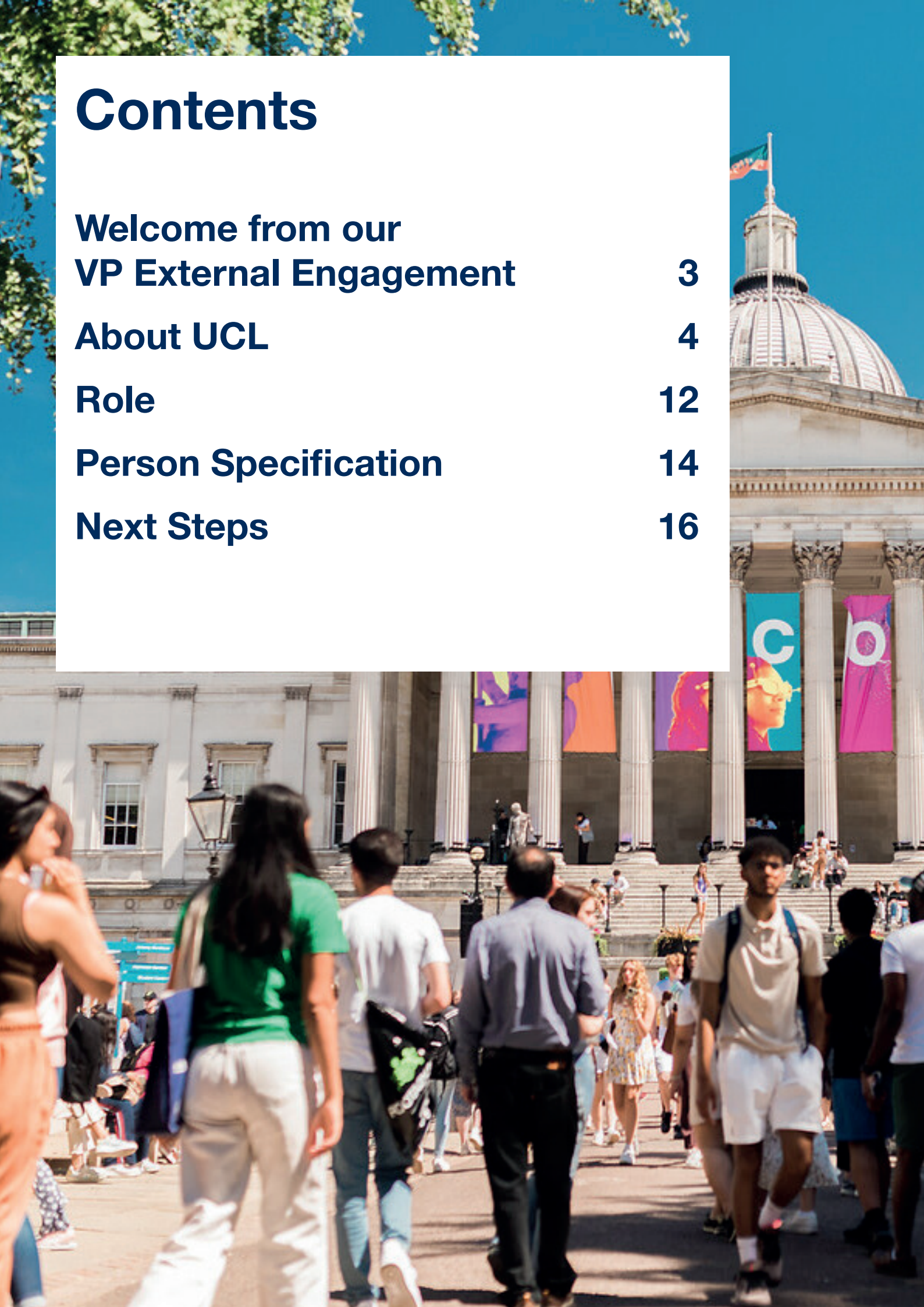
Candidate Pack

Role: Director of Strategic Communications
Department: VP External Engagement



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Welcome from our VP External Engagement

Dear Candidate,

Thank you very much for your interest in UCL and the role of Director of Strategic Communications.

At UCL we champion innovation, creativity and cross-disciplinary working in our teaching and research. It's what makes us a top 10 global university. We also take an innovative and creative approach to our communications and marketing activity. Our central External Engagement team is formed of 80 colleagues delivering sector-leading expertise in the fields of media relations, public affairs, institutional communications, brand and integrated marketing, student recruitment, and events.

Our President & Provost, Dr Michael Spence, has built a senior leadership team with external engagement at its heart.

Together, we are delivering a [strategic plan](#) lays out the university's priorities for the next four years, built on the foundations of trust, openness, collaboration, and commitment across our UCL community.

The Director of Strategic Communications role is a key leadership role within my team, and across UCL. It is responsible for crafting a suite of stories, content and messaging that promotes and protects UCL's brand. Your work will help to channel our exceptional breadth of academic and research expertise into engaging campaigns and storytelling created for our key audiences.

This is a great time to join UCL. We've started to plan how we celebrate our bicentenary in 2026, work has begun on a refreshed brand framework, and we're looking for the best way to tell the story of how UCL harnesses cross-disciplinary collaborations to find solutions to societal grand challenges.

I love working at UCL, we look at the world with inquisitive minds and find new ways of doing things, so we welcome applications from everyone – diversity, inclusion, and the feeling of belonging matter to us. We need someone committed to excellence, who will help develop, drive, and deliver a sector-leading strategic communications strategy.

If you choose to pursue this opportunity, you'll be joining a dynamic, creative, world-class communications team with a leader that is vested in your success.

I sincerely look forward to hearing from you and hope you consider joining UCL.

Kirsty Walker

Vice-President (External Engagement)



About UCL

UCL is a diverse global community of world-class academics, students, industry links, external partners, and alumni. Our powerful collective of individuals and institutions work together to explore new possibilities.

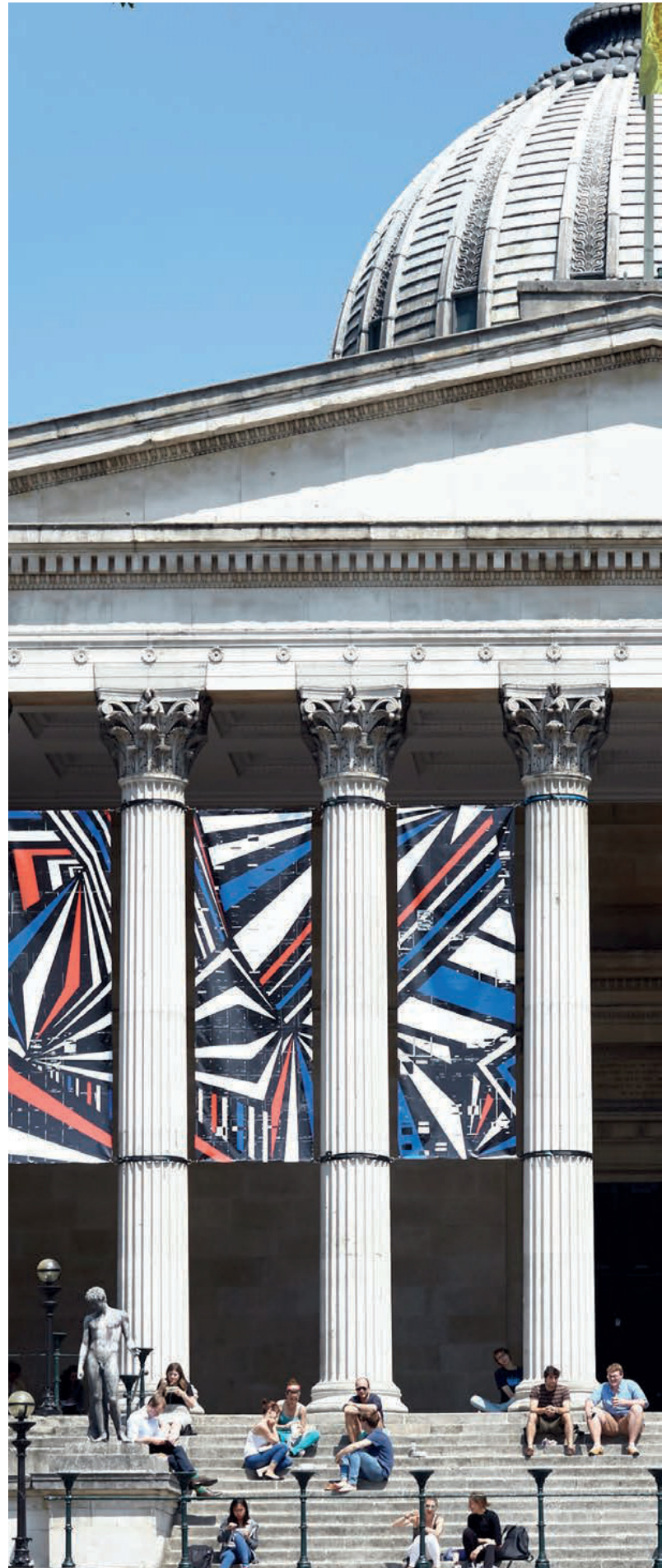
Since 1826, we have championed independent thought by attracting and nurturing the world's best minds. Our community of more than 51,000 students from 150 countries and over 16,000 staff pursue academic excellence, breaks boundaries and makes a positive impact on real world problems.

We are consistently ranked among the top 10 universities in the world (QS World University Rankings 2010 – 2023) and are one of only a handful of institutions rated as having the strongest academic reputation and the broadest research impact.

We have a progressive and integrated approach to our teaching and research – championing innovation, creativity and cross-disciplinary working. We teach our students how to think, not what to think, and see them as partners, collaborators and contributors.

For almost 200 years, we are proud to have opened higher education to students from a wide range of backgrounds and to change the way we create and share knowledge.

We were one of the first in England to welcome women to university education and that courageous attitude and disruptive spirit is still alive today. We are UCL.





UCL in numbers

A research powerhouse in the centre of London, UCL is consistently placed in the global top 10:

- Joint 8th in the QS World University Rankings 2023 – placing us joint 4th in Europe and 4th in the UK
- 1st for Education (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2014 - 2023)
- 2nd in the UK for Research Power (Research Excellence Framework 2021)
- 7th in The Times and Sunday Times University League Table (2023)
- 9th overall in the Complete University Guide (2023)
- 20th in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings (2022)
- 30 Nobel laureates
- 34 Athena SWAN awards
- 16,000 staff
- 51,000 students
- Over 350,000 alumni in over 190 countries
- c.£500 million total research income annually
- 'It's All Academic' Campaign raising £600m in philanthropic funding
- Transforming UCL, £1.25 billion investment in estate over 10 years
- Over £1.75 billion annual turnover

Portico artwork – Razzle Dazzle
by Emily Laserwitz, 2016

Our faculties

UCL has 11 faculties, each home to world-class research, teaching and learning in a wide range of academic disciplines across all study levels:

- Arts & Humanities
- Built Environment
- Brain Sciences
- Institute of Education
- Engineering Sciences
- Laws
- Life Sciences
- Mathematical & Physical Sciences
- Medical Sciences
- Population Health Sciences
- Social & Historical Sciences.



Delivering our Strategic Plan

The UCL [Strategic Plan 2022 -2027](#) was developed through a year long consultation with our community and stakeholders and sets out the university's priorities for the years ahead, focusing effort and investment on a small number of shared priorities agreed through consultation with our community and stakeholders. Joining UCL now, you will have an opportunity to take part in setting the direction and priorities for UCL for the run-up to our bicentenary in 2026, and the launch of our next philanthropic campaign.



Research

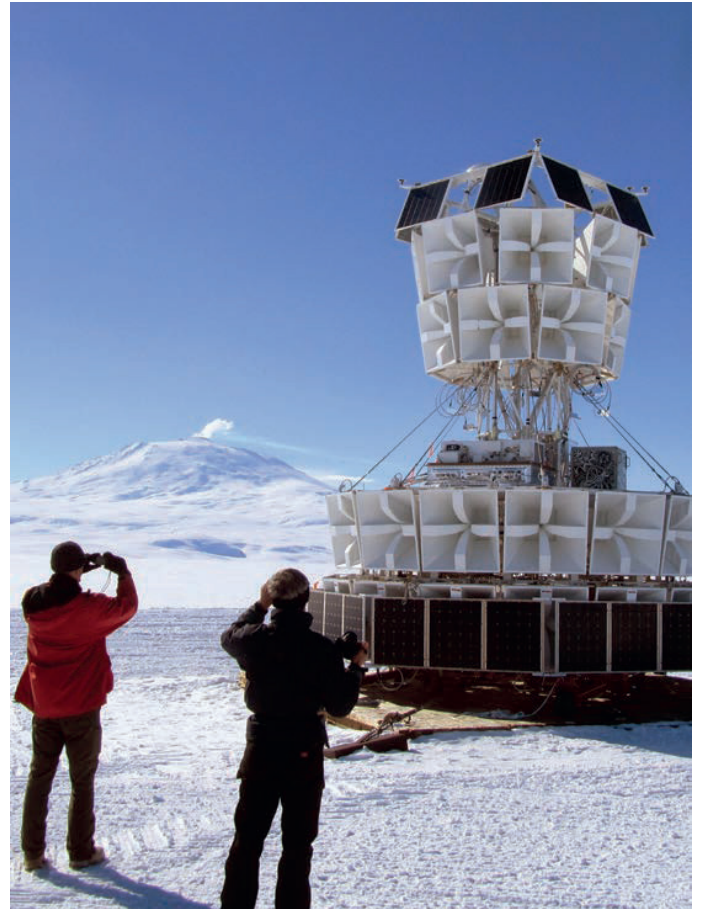
UCL is the most successful institute in collaborative research in Europe

UCL is committed to using our collective expertise to address global problems, developing partnerships within and beyond the education sector, to inform the work that we do and increase our positive impact on the world around us.

Our researchers are currently working with global institutions on projects to make climate change predictions cheaper and more widely accessible, help patients recovering from strokes, and remove pollution from contaminated water.

Recent research successes include an outstanding performance in the Horizon 2020 programme, with eight senior UCL academics awarded ERC Advanced grants for pioneering projects in areas ranging from urban development to ophthalmology and UCL has been awarded more than £40m funding for seven centres for Doctoral training by EPSRC part of UK Research & Innovation.

UCL is second in the UK for research strength in the Research Excellence Framework 2021. 'Research power' is calculated by taking the overall quality of our submission multiplied by the FTE researchers submitted.



Strategic Partnerships

UCL works in partnership with business, industry and academia

In the field of health, UCL is a partner in the Francis Crick Institute for biomedical research, and the UCL Partners Academic Health Science partnership comprises more than 40 partners from the NHS, social care and academia who are committed to working together to support improvements in healthcare. UCL is also partnering with the NHS to improve student mental health support.

In technology, UCL has a longstanding partnership with Cisco, who have hosted over 100 students as interns and, with UCL Engineering, are launching a new AI research centre as part of a \$100m investment in the UK.

In education, the IOE is the largest HE provider of initial teacher education in the UK, and regularly provides consultation to the DfE, and international governments and agencies to improve education provision and life changes locally and across the globe.

UCL was the first university in England to become the sole sponsor of an academy school. Seven years on, our strategic collaboration is as strong as ever, with students and staff from both partners engaged in research, teaching and learning and mentoring initiatives. Lucie Green, UCL Professor of Physics, is Chair of Governors of UCL Academy.



Delivering global impact

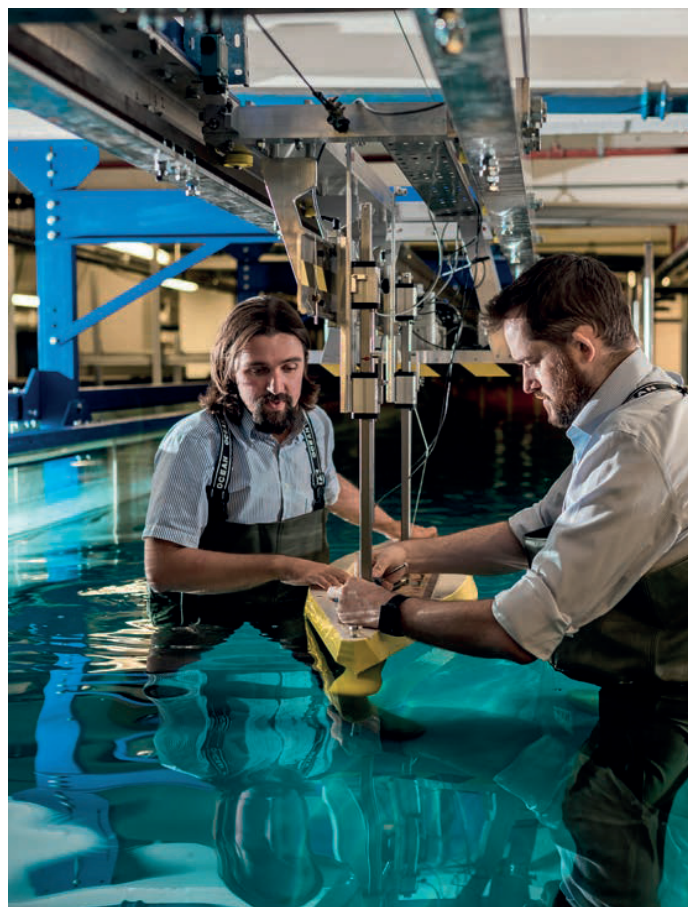
Commitment to international partnerships

UCL's Global Engagement is based on a commitment to international partnerships and the belief that bringing together different perspectives and diverse experience accelerates the process of discovery and global impact.

UCL is a founder member of the new U7 Alliance, bringing together more than 30 leading universities from across the G7 countries to tackle the world's most pressing challenges.

UCL's strategic global partnerships, developed from the 'bottom up', continue to grow with support from the Global Engagement Office. UCL has two 'anchor' or strategic global partners, Peking University and University of Toronto and five institutional partners: Max Planck Society, Paris Science et Lettres, University of Hong Kong, Osaka University and Yale.

UCL's strategic partnerships with University of Toronto and Peking University support collaboration, led by UCL academics, that span all of UCL's 11 faculties with strong research and education links in a broad range of areas, including, but not limited to child health, cities, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, education research, medical humanities, social sciences and business. These partnerships provide enhanced opportunities for UCL academics across faculties to work together with colleagues from partner institutions to have greater global impact together.



Transforming UCL

Supporting UCL's growth as we continue to build now and for the future

Transforming UCL is the largest capital programme in the university's history, supporting UCL's growth as we continue to build now and for the future. We are investing over £1 billion over ten years to refurbish and develop some of our most iconic buildings and promote new world-class buildings such as our new Student Centre (one of only 320 globally to achieve BREEAM's highest 'Outstanding' classification for sustainability).

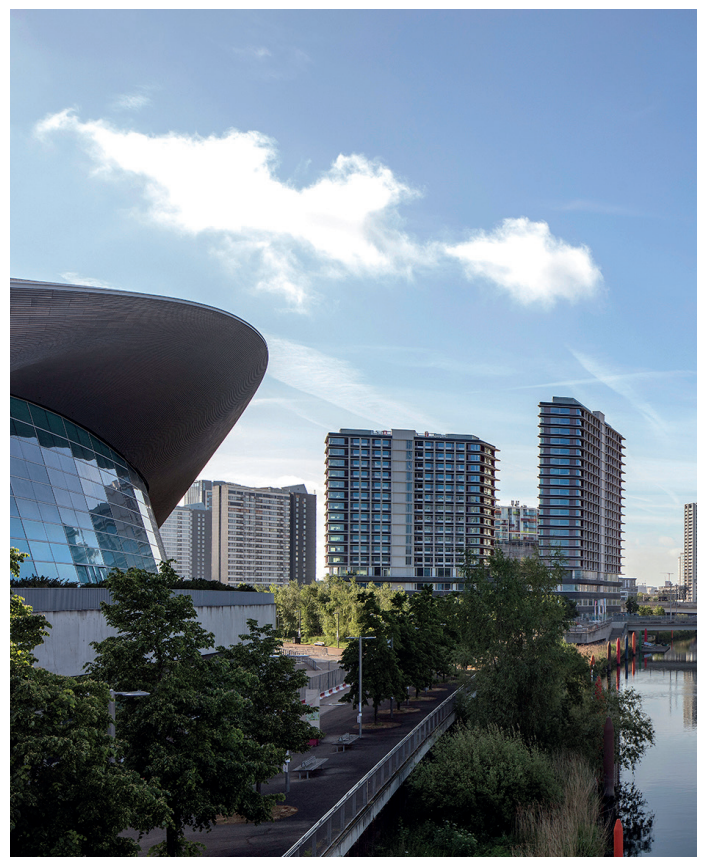


UCL East

Our new East London campus

UCL's new campus at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, is the biggest development in our nearly 200-year history, giving us the scale and space, we need to continue finding solutions to the biggest problems facing people and the planet. The campus forms the biggest cultural development in London for decades, joining organisations including the V&A, London College of Fashion, Sadler's Wells and the BBC.

It will stimulate world-class research, education, entrepreneurship and innovation in the areas of transport, culture, disability innovation, manufacturing, real estate and urbanism, health and environment, and business and finance.



Equality, diversity and inclusion

UCL is considered a sector-leader on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We are the only university in the UK to hold both an Athena SWAN Silver institutional award (for gender equality) and a Bronze Race Equality Charter award.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion team is part of the Office of the President & Provost and permeates the culture and ethos of the institution.

The institution has in place a number of ambitious programmes to remove differential attainment rates for black and minority ethnic students, improve career progression and support for under-represented, or marginalised groups and extensive equality-based networks for peer support and consultation.



Role

Director of Strategic Communications

Department: VP External Engagement

Reports to: Vice-President, External Engagement

Grade: 10

Location: Hybrid: with a minimum of 20% of working time at UCL campus in Bloomsbury, London, W1

Context

Communications and marketing are represented at the highest levels in UCL. The Vice-President, External Engagement reports into UCL's Provost & President, UCL's lead academic and chief executive.

The Vice-President External Engagement team (VPEE) coordinates UCL's engagement with a range of external and internal audiences, raising the university's profile and influence, and managing its reputation. They promote the public value of UCL's research and education, both within the UK and globally. It is a service-driven team of communications and marketing professionals who deliver sector-leading institutional communications, media relations, public affairs, brand and integrated marketing, student recruitment, and events.

Main purpose of the role

The Director of Strategic Communications is a new post created to provide strategy, insight and planning capacity at senior level in VPEE, to maximise the impact of our output across all audiences. Working collaboratively in a fast-paced and often reactive environment, the successful candidate will provide strategic leadership, keeping focus on the overall campaign plan for UCL's proactive communications and engagement.

Reporting to the Vice-President External Engagement, the Director of Strategic Communications will work in partnership with senior colleagues in VPEE and across the university, supporting colleagues to deliver compelling, relevant and impactful internal and external engagement to drive UCL's influence, profile and long-term success. This post has a strategically important role in promoting and protecting the UCL brand through the development of effective campaigns and storytelling. The Director and their team will provide additional capability and capacity to complement team-based expertise, bringing additional insight into audiences, the most effective interventions and approaches, and understanding of wider policy and societal changes on higher education.

This role will guide and influence the wider communications community at UCL, beyond VPEE, including colleagues based in academic departments, research institutes and faculties, as well as other central professional services teams.

The Director of Strategic Communications and their team will be directly responsible for three key areas:

- **Data & insight:** measure, evaluate and share the impact of communication and engagement activity to track impact and value, refine our approach, support active learning in our teams and provide visibility of progress for the Executive. Develop (and working in partnership with VPEE and other VPEE Directors) oversee the delivery and evaluation of the UCL Communications Strategy
- **Storytelling & content:** work collaboratively with colleagues, develop compelling narratives, messaging and content to drive effective engagement, and maximise usage of centrally produced content across the university.

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- Planning & campaigns: build, own and manage the communications planning process for VPEE based on key themes aligned to core strategic objectives and work collaboratively with colleagues to plan integrated communications campaigns which are co-ordinated across VPEE and the wider institution. The post holder will need to have the sensitivity, awareness and presence to work closely with other senior communication professionals at UCL, to align activity in the best way possible to add value and reduce duplication in communication and engagement. The role will involve:
 - Leading cross-institutional communications and brand campaigns to tell UCL's narrative across multi-platform communications channels underpinned by research and insight.
 - Developing ideas, commissioning research to gain insight and ensure activity, content and messaging is positioned to reach UCL's target audiences and stakeholders.
 - Leading a data and insight team to understand UCL's audiences and the context it is operating in, and to spot long-term trends, risks and opportunities.
 - Be responsible for leading the team that delivers UCL's successful podcast series and setting the direction to ensure it reaches target audiences and delivers impact.
 - Provide an essential check and balance in a very busy and complex environment, to make sure activity, content and messaging is positioned correctly, aligned to agreed priorities, and coordinated and evaluated to drive impact and value.
 - Work closely with colleagues in VPEE and across UCL to support relationship building with key stakeholders.

Duties and responsibilities

- Research, write and gain institutional-wide agreement/buy-in on the UCL Communications Strategy, setting out how comms and marketing teams across the university will work together to help deliver the UCL Strategic Plan 22-27.
- Develop and own the UCL communications planning process, using a campaign approach to align with UCL's strategic plan and values, which optimises the skills and experience of our media, public affairs, campaigns, staff engagement and student engagement teams, and our executives and leading academics.
- Make sure colleagues in VPEE input into and are aligned on compelling narratives, messaging and content to drive the effectiveness and consistency of their activity. Through data and insight, provide regular feedback on outcomes of planned work based on agreed evaluation metrics and suggest ways to drive further impact.
- Build positive relationships across VPEE and the wider university to gather insight and intelligence on opportunities and risks to help shape activity and be the 'radar' for the team
- Manage, motivate and coach direct reports, ensuring their teams perform at a consistent high level, to achieve their targets for delivery, in line with strategic direction.
- Raise risks - such as pressures on demand which are impacting on agreed plans - proactively with the VPEE and senior team and suggest mitigations.
- Encourage innovation, piloting new ways to drive the success of VPEE and the university.
- Deputise for the Vice-President, External Engagement at key meetings where necessary.

As an active member of the VPEE team, work at four graduation ceremonies and three open days for prospective students each year.

Any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job, the title of the post and it's grading as requested by the line manager.

Note: This job description reflects the present requirements of the post. All duties and responsibilities may change according to the needs of the university.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application/Interview)
Experience & Knowledge		
Experience working at senior level in a fast-paced and highly complex communication and engagement team	Essential	Application/Interview
Strong understanding of communication, engagement and marketing, across a range of digital and traditional channels.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience leading and managing high-performing teams of people, with a diverse range of specialist communication skills and of building cross-functional teams and fostering collaboration in organisations.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of using tracking and evaluation tools to gauge the effectiveness of planned activity	Essential	Application/Interview
Financial skills, including the ability to manage and monitor large, complex budgets and allocate resources effectively	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of working in a large and complex organisation, such as higher education, the public sector, corporate, or a charity.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of working with, or in, a similar strategic communications function.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Knowledge of the Higher Education context and an understanding of current challenges within the sector	Desirable	Application/Interview

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application/Interview)
Skills and abilities		
An inspiring communicator, with excellent skills in writing (strategies, releases, documents, presentations) and in person (stakeholder meetings, client meetings, presentations, events)	Essential	Application/Interview
Well-developed leadership, interpersonal and influencing skills and the ability to build up and maintain effective working relationships across the organisation and at all levels; gravitas and maturity to present and network at a senior level	Essential	Application/Interview
Able to develop inclusive communications that reflect the voices in our diverse UCL community, and that engage diverse audiences, including those currently under-represented at UCL.	Essential	Application/Interview
Strong project management skills and ability to flex and adapt at short notice in a highly pressured and evolving environment	Desirable	Application/Interview
UCL Ways of Working for professional services		
Presenting a powerful, strategic vision that aligns with long term aims of UCL	Essential	Application/Interview
Ensuring robust project/task review and demonstrate evidence-based action planning.	Essential	Application/Interview
Encouraging teams to work and communicate across UCL	Essential	Application/Interview

Next steps

Ellwood Atfield recruits for organisations that are seeking to influence their external environments.

We are specialist head-hunters recruiting communications, public affairs, corporate affairs, sustainability, public and regulatory policy, and media relations professionals.

Following interviews with Ellwood Atfield successful candidates will be invited for interview with UCL.

We are committed to diversity and proud that, in acting for our clients, we select candidates regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, being or becoming a transsexual, being pregnant, married or in a civil partnership and age. Please contact Gavin Ellwood or Geraldine Hetherington for an initial discussion.

Please note that applications for this position will close at 9am, 27th June 2023. Your application should include your CV and a supporting statement. Following interviews with Ellwood Atfield, successful candidates will be invited to interview with UCL in July.



Geraldine Hetherington

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Geraldine Hetherington is a Board Director of Ellwood Atfield and qualified solicitor. With sixteen years' headhunting experience she specialises in senior appointments. Prior to this Geraldine was the Chief Operating Officer of Hudson Global, Inc. in the UK and the former HR Director of Monster and TMP.



Gavin Ellwood

+44 (0)7768 927 209 gavin@ellwoodatfield.com

Gavin Ellwood is the founder of Ellwood Atfield and has twenty-five years' headhunting experience. He advises the Boards of a diverse range of organisations and global brands on the appointment of communications and advocacy experts. Gavin is a Past Master of the City of London Company of Communicators.

