

## Candidate Brief

# Press and PR Officer

**Reference:** R180054

**Salary:** Grade 7, £25,728 to £30,688 per annum

**Contract Type:** Continuing

**Basis:** Full Time

**Closing Date:** 23.59 hours GMT on Monday 05 March 2018

**Interview Date:** Wednesday 21 March 2018

EXCELLENT  
DIFFERENT  
DISTINCTIVE  
ASTON



## **Job description**

### **Job Purpose:**

The University's two press officers will support the head of brand reputation and events in raising the profile of the University and its research to external and internal stakeholders on a local, national and international level. The current vacancy is for a press officer to cover the Schools of Engineering & Applied Science, Life & Health Sciences and Aston Medical School. The postholder will also take shared responsibility for University-wide corporate media stories and crisis communications.

This largely involves supporting the head of brand reputation and events in planning and carrying out press and media campaigns aligned with the strategic priorities outlined in the Aston University Strategy, responding to media enquiries, cultivating relationships with journalists, having frequent contact with staff at all levels across the University, and monitoring the media coverage.

The role will involve researching, writing and distributing press releases. Working closely with academics the post holder will be expected to proactively seek out excellent stories from within the University. With a proven track record in building relationships with journalists you will have a dynamic and proactive approach with an eye for a good story.

### **Main Duties/Responsibilities:**

- ▶ Write articles for the University website and write and distribute press releases for the media.
- ▶ Interview, research, write and develop stories with academics and students for University website and media. Building good relationships with academics and other contacts within the University.
- ▶ Research additional background information including stories and suitable publications/journalists to whom we could be sending the material.
- ▶ Build excellent relationships with journalists locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- ▶ Develop complex research based academic papers/scientific articles into easily accessible articles for website and general public.
- ▶ Under the direction of head of brand reputation and events, coordinate and plan press campaigns to promote University research and other positive news stories. Working closely with academics, writing press releases, and liaising with the media.
- ▶ Act as point of reference for academics wishing to seek advice and guidance on media related issues including running PR walk-in clinics to promote engagement with the press office within the Schools.
- ▶ Act as point of contact for press which involves sourcing academics who are available and qualified to comment for journalists.
- ▶ Help to maintain the news section of the University website.
- ▶ Arrange media interviews both on and off campus.
- ▶ Help to arrange photography shoots for PR, website and/or publications.
- ▶ Post content on the latest news, research and expert comment on the press office Twitter account.
- ▶ Assist with events, such as media launches, inaugural lectures, graduation ceremonies.
- ▶ Write, update and maintain academic profiles on the University experts' directory.

- ▶ Monitor media coverage and produce reports for the of brand reputation and events and provide weekly updates for the Schools on press office activity, including new and upcoming media coverage.
- ▶ Answer media enquiries – both positive and negative agendas.
- ▶ Assist the head of brand reputation and events in dealing with crisis communications. This involves liaising with the press and senior management to ensure damage limitation is achieved, such as responding efficiently to the journalist's inquiry and composing official statements.
- ▶ Other tasks as requested by head of brand reputation and events.

### **Additional responsibilities**

- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development activities to develop themselves and support the development of others.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ▶ Carry out duties in a way which promotes fairness in all matters and which engenders trust.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity and support diversity and inclusion as well as working to support the University's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.

## Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
<b>Education and qualifications</b>	Qualified to a minimum of undergraduate degree level or equivalent.	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Experience of working in journalism and/or marketing and public relations.</p> <p>Experience of writing and editing high quality documents i.e. press releases, documents for a wide range of audiences.</p> <p>Experience of undertaking research and writing documents.</p> <p>Proven track record in building relationships.</p> <p>Experience of successfully working on individual projects.</p> <p>Experience of working in busy office environment.</p>	Application form and interview
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	<p>Accuracy and an attention to detail.</p> <p>Excellent written English language skills with strong proof reading and editing skills.</p> <p>Dynamic, proactive approach with an eye for a good story.</p> <p>Diplomatic and sensitive in difficult situations, e.g. for crisis communications.</p> <p>Good IT skills and knowledge of MS Office software.</p> <p>Ability to manage individual projects and work productively as part of a team.</p> <p>Excellent organisation and planning skills and the ability to prioritise workload manage competing demands and work under pressure.</p> <p>Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to handle a wide range of contacts tactfully and persuasively.</p> <p>Ability to handle a number of tasks simultaneously, and work well under pressure.</p> <p>Basic analytical and research skills.</p> <p>Ability to empathise with the goals and values of the Schools and University.</p> <p>Flexible approach including willingness to work unsociable hours when necessary.</p>	<p>Application form and interview</p> <p>Interview</p>

	Desirable	Method of assessment
<b>Education and qualifications</b>	A professional qualification in marketing/PR or journalism.	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	Experience of web editing and managing web pages. Experience of filming and editing video content.	Application form and interview
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	Knowledge of, and interest in, the UK Higher Education Sector.	Interview

## How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website [www.aston.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.aston.ac.uk/jobs). Applications should be submitted by 23.59pm on the advertised closing date. All applicants must complete an application form.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted. If you require a manual application form then please contact the Recruitment Team via [recruitment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@aston.ac.uk).

## Contact Information

### Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Sue Smith

Job Title: Head of Brand Reputation and Events

Tel: 0121 204 3521

Email: [s.p.smith@aston.ac.uk](mailto:s.p.smith@aston.ac.uk)

### Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via [recruitment@aston.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@aston.ac.uk) or 0121 204 4500.

## Additional Information

Visit our website [www.aston.ac.uk/hr](http://www.aston.ac.uk/hr) for full details of our salary scales and benefits Aston University staff enjoy

**Salary Scales:** <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/payroll-pensions-and-benefits/salary-scales/>

**Benefits:** <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/payroll-pensions-and-benefits/>

**Working in Birmingham:** <http://www.aston.ac.uk/birmingham/city-living/>

**Employment of Ex-Offenders:** Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they applying for is listed an exception under the act.

**Eligibility to work in the UK:** Candidates who are not citizens of the United Kingdom, or another EEA member country, should check their eligibility to enter or remain the UK in advance of making any job application via the UKVI website <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas>. Before applying you should ensure that you meet the requirements, including meeting the English language standards. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful

**Equal Opportunities:** Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level.



The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form.

**Data Protection Act 1998:** Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment. Individuals will not be identified by name



Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at [www.aston.ac.uk/hr](http://www.aston.ac.uk/hr)