

**Reference:** R210008

**Salary:** Grade 8 - £33,797 to £40,322 per annum

**Contract Type:** Fixed term until March 2022

**Basis:** Full Time

**Closing Date:** 23:59 GMT on 24 January 2021

**Interview Date:** TBC

## Press and Communications Manager



# Job description

## **Job Purpose:**

The University's Press and Communications team is responsible for supporting the promotion of the University and Colleges to its core beneficiaries (Our Students, External Organisations, Birmingham and the West Midlands). The team is a key part of the overall Marketing, Recruitment and Communications department, tasked with successfully promoting the University - local, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Press and Communications team is responsible for proactively handling the University's primary communications, through liaising with media, distributing press releases and providing expert commentary and analysis for journalists.

These roles will be allocated to one of two Colleges (College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, College of Business and Social Sciences), with the aim of building strong and deep communications relationships to drive the reach, credibility and authority of these academic communities with their key audiences.

Working closely with academic colleagues, the post holder(s) will be expected to proactively seek out excellent stories from within the University and research, write and distribute content for use across all channels. With a proven track record, you will have a dynamic and proactive approach with an eye for a good story and experience of working with complex subject matter. The postholder(s) will also take shared responsibility for University-wide corporate media stories, reputational issues and crisis communications and other related duties.

Supporting the Head of Press and Communications in:

- Proactively planning and carrying out press and media campaigns aligned with the strategic priorities in the Aston University strategy,
- Cultivating relationships with academics and journalists and helping to build a culture of media engagement among researchers,
- Providing communications contact with staff at all levels across the University and monitoring and reporting on the media coverage.
- Leveraging multimedia journalism skills to quickly cover the channels and drive our overall reach and performance
- Reactively responding to in-bound media enquiries, using professional journalism experience to manage / respond accordingly

## **Main Duties/Responsibilities:**

### **College Press and Communications Lead**

- Commit to becoming a subject expert with the relevant College, taking an active / keen interest in the subject depth and breadth
- Under the direction of the department head, co-ordinate communications to drive an effective forward planner in the promotion of the College's business, research and engagement activities
- Research and write stories including developing complex research-based academic papers / scientific articles into accessible content for multiple channels
- Act as point of reference for academics wishing to seek advice and guidance on media-related issues, including best practice workshops to promote engagement with the Press and Communications team with our academic colleges
- Help to plan and deliver media training for academic colleagues
- Act as point of contact for press including sourcing academics who are available and qualified to comment for journalists, and arrange relevant media interviews both on and off campus

### **Relationship Management**

- Proactively pitch academics for expert commentary and thought leadership pieces to relevant journalists
- Build good relationships with academics and other contacts within the University.
- Build good relationships with relevant journalists locally, regionally and nationally
- Write, update and maintain academic profiles on the University experts' directory

### **Technical Expertise**

- Proactively drive the content for the communication and news sections of the University and College website, ensuring relevant content can be deployed across multiple channels for maximum reach and impact to support recruitment performance
- Be a digital native with hands-on experience of generating content (written, video, audio) for a range of broadcast channels
- Combining written, technical and video experience to capture and edit the story, for rapid deployment across the relevant channels

### **Team player**

- Assist with corporate events and activity as appropriate – including media launches, inaugural lectures and graduation ceremonies
- Attend senior management team and research group meetings to give presentations and provide verbal updates on outcomes achieved, forward planning and so on
- Assist the department head in dealing with reputational issues and crisis communications including liaising with the press and senior management and composing official statements.

### **Reporting Performance**

- Monitor media coverage and produce reports for the department head
- Collaborate with College Marketing leads to provide regular updates for the Schools and Colleges on Press and Communications activity

### **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.
- Display the behaviours in the Aston University behaviour framework
- 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, preferably with a postgraduate qualification in Multimedia Journalism, and/or NCTJ-trained	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 content, e.g.: press releases, vlogs, blogs and documents for a wide range of audiences.</p> <p>Experience of undertaking research and writing documents and of working with complex subject matter.</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>Professional digital communication skills and knowledge; creating, editing and deploying content for multiple channels – web, blog, vlog, podcast, social media etc.</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>Application form and interview</p> <p>Interview</p>

	Essential	Method of assessment
	<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 as and when necessary.</p>	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	Knowledge / interest in the UK Higher Education Sector.	Interview

## How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs>. Applications should be submitted by 23.59pm on the advertised closing date. All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

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 [jobs@aston.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@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 [jobs@aston.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@aston.ac.uk) or 0121 204 4500.

## Additional Information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits  
Aston University staff enjoy

**Salary scales:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

**Benefits:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/Benefits-and-Rewards/index>

**Working in Birmingham:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

**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 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.

**Data Protection Act 1998:** Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the DPA and from 25 May 2018 with the GDPR. The University's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. 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.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policy>



