

Communications Manager



OPPORTUNITY

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gets real.



Reference: 0508-25

Grade: Grade 08

Salary: £38,249 to £45,413, per annum, depending on experience

Contract Type: Permanent

Basis: Full Time

Job description

Job Purpose:

Aston University's communications team is responsible for promoting the University to key audiences such as students, businesses and other external organisations, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The team is a key part of the marketing, communications and student recruitment department. Liaising with the media, producing compelling press releases, providing expert commentary and analysis for journalists and producing podcasts, are among the team's core activities.

You will support with corporate communications and manage communications for the College of Business and Social Sciences with the aim of building strong and deep relationships to drive the reach, credibility and authority of these academic communities with key audiences. You will also manage the production of strategic podcasts.

Working closely with academic colleagues, you will proactively seek out excellent stories from within the University then 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. You will also support with managing reputational issues and crisis communications as well as other related duties.

You will support the head of communications with:

- Proactively planning and carrying out press and media campaigns aligned with the priorities in the Aston University strategy
- Cultivating relationships with academics and journalists and helping to build a culture of media engagement among researchers
- Engaging with employees at all levels across the University
- Leveraging a variety of media skills for optimum coverage across key channels and to drive our overall reach and performance
- Reactively responding to in-bound media enquiries, using professional experience
- Monitoring and reporting on media coverage

Main Duties/Responsibilities

Communications manager

- Research, write and promote corporate stories that promote Aston University and highlight the excellent results achieved as part of its strategy
- Commit to becoming a subject expert with the College of Business and Social Sciences, 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 plan for 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 the point of reference for academics wishing to seek advice and guidance on media-related issues, including best practice workshops to promote engagement
- Help to plan and deliver media training for academic colleagues (with external support)
- 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

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

Podcast production

- Support with developing Aston's podcast strategy
- Provide guidance and support to teams across Aston setting up/running podcasts
- Manage the production of Aston's corporate and College of Business and Social Sciences podcasts, including Game Changers and Writing Wrongs
- Manage podcast promotion to drive growth, including social media, video and audio clips

Technical expertise

- Proactively drive the content for the communication and news sections of the University and College website pages, ensuring relevant content can be deployed across multiple channels for maximum reach and impact
- Hands-on experience of generating content (written, video, audio) for broadcast channels
- Combining written, technical and video experience to capture and edit stories, for rapid deployment across relevant channels

Team player

- Assist with corporate events and activity as appropriate – including media launches, inaugural lectures, open days and graduation ceremonies
- Attend senior management team and research group meetings to give presentations and provide updates on plans and results achieved
- 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 communications updates

Additional responsibilities

- Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development of self and others
- Display the behaviours in the Aston University behaviour framework
- Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of employees 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 practice

Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified to a minimum of undergraduate degree level or equivalent 	Application form
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in journalism and/or marketing and public relations • Writing and editing high-quality content, e.g. press releases, videos, blogs and documents for a wide range of audiences • Undertaking research and writing documents and of working with complex subject matter • Producing and promoting podcasts • Proven track record in building relationships • Successfully working on individual projects • Working in a busy and dynamic environment 	Application form and interview
Aptitude and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy and an attention to detail • Excellent written English language skills with strong proof reading and editing skills • Dynamic, proactive approach with an eye for a good story • Diplomatic and sensitive in difficult situations, e.g. for crisis communications • Professional digital communication skills and knowledge; creating, editing and deploying content for multiple channels such as web, blog, video, podcast and social 	Application form, interview and written assessment

	Essential	Method of assessment
	<p>media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to manage individual projects and work productively as part of a team • Excellent organisation and planning skills as well as the ability to prioritise workload and manage competing demands and work under pressure • Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to handle a wide range of contacts tactfully and persuasively • Ability to handle a number of tasks simultaneously and work well under pressure • Basic analytical and research skills • Ability to empathise with the goals and values of the Aston University, its Colleges and Schools • Flexible approach including willingness to work unsociable hours as and when necessary 	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A postgraduate qualification in Multimedia Journalism and/or NCTJ-trained 	Application form
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge/interest in the UK Higher Education Sector 	Application form and interview

University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University. In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them.

Values + Behaviours

**Innovation**

We strive for excellence within ourselves and others, providing solutions to new and existing challenges.

**Collaboration**

We work best when we are collaborative, working together to contribute to the Aston community.

**Ambition**

We strive together for improvement and innovation looking ahead to see the bigger picture.

**Inclusion**

We treat everyone in our community equally and how they would like to be treated.

**Integrity**

We are open, honest and fair. We take ownership of the way we work and how we treat each other.

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 recruitment@aston.ac.uk.

Contact information

Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Loretta Milan

Job Title: Head of Communications

Email: l.milan@aston.ac.uk

Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via recruitment@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: [Benefits and Rewards | Aston University](#)

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: You should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements, including meeting the [English language standards](#). If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful. Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

With the end of free movement for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals from 1 January 2021, the UK's new immigration system applies to all non-UK/Irish nationals who require a visa.

Where an individual is subject to UK immigration control, they will require a visa to work in the UK.

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

The main routes available for those who need a visa to work in the UK are **Skilled Worker**, **Global Talent** and the **Graduate Route**.

You can find further information about each of these visa routes on our candidate immigration page.

If you will conduct research in your role, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application. Please see below for further details.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):

If you will conduct research in your role and you apply for a Skilled Worker or Temporary

Worker GAE visa, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application.

This process can take at least 6 weeks to process, and Aston will consider this when confirming your expected start date. Processing times will increase between April and September and can longer to complete.

There is no fast-track option available. ATAS certificates will be processed in order of receipt.

You can find more information about ATAS on our candidate immigration page.

Before you start and Right to Work

90-day entry vignette

If you have applied for your visa outside of the UK, you will receive a vignette in your passport which is usually valid for 90 days. Please make sure to travel to the UK within the 'valid from' and 'valid to' dates on this visa. If you entered the UK before or after these dates, you would not 'activate' the visa and you would need to leave and re-enter the country.

You will also receive a decision letter confirming details about your immigration permission and where to collect your Biometric Residence Permit.

Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents in and around Birmingham that can help you find suitable accommodation. The Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme provides a list of professional agencies and landlords who have applied with them for accreditation. Whilst accreditation is not a guarantee of quality, it provides some reassurance about the standard of the service they provide.

You can also use property search websites such as Rightmove or Zoopla.

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

Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) ("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/policies>

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