

Policy Adviser

Basic information

Scale: 2

Job family: External & Customer Services

Terms: Permanent

Location: Cheltenham

Reports to: Senior Policy Unit Manager

Direct Reports: N/A

Team: Policy

Business unit: CEO

Date reviewed: January 2021



Job purpose:

The Senior Policy Adviser role will be responsible for a specific policy area, owning the agreed deliverables within this area to improve UCAS' reputation as a source of thought leadership and policy expertise within their area.

The Senior Policy Adviser will work closely with the Senior Policy Unit Manager to agree and deliver the objectives within their designated policy area.

The core purpose of the role is to:

- Hold a deep understanding of a specific policy area.
- Input into UCAS's position and public narrative regarding their specific policy area through high quality outputs, as agreed on the UCAS policy grid.
- Develop high quality outputs in their area.
- Highlight, understand, and propose any mitigations against any reputational risks of UCAS's policy work in a specific area.
- Establish the stakeholder engagement plan in their area, and own stakeholders at a senior to middle level.
- Support both the public affairs and strategy leads to deliver effectively on their responsibilities.
- Deputise for the Senior Policy Unit Manager as required.

Alongside these responsibilities, the Senior Policy Adviser will support the Senior Policy Unit Manager in advising the Executive Head of Strategy & Public Affairs and wider UCAS Executive on relevant policy and the broad range of issues facing UCAS, including beyond the remit of policy.

Key accountabilities:

- Ownership of the work within their designated area, with responsibility for the quality and accuracy of outputs, and measuring their success.
- Identify, analyse, and support the management of risks associated with their areas work, including both commercial and political risks.
- Support and enable UCAS to build effective relationships with key external stakeholders in their areas of specialism.
- Contribute inputs into the UCAS Policy output grid, liaising with the Senior Policy Unit Manager and the Head of Marketing, Content and PR.
- Support the Executive Head of Strategy, Policy, & Public Affairs and Senior Policy Unit Manager to deliver commercial value from the team's policy work.
- Manage navigation of complex policy questions faced by UCAS in their designated area with a high level of autonomy to develop innovative solutions that work in the real world.
- Act as an ambassador for UCAS at external meetings, conferences and forums, ensuring that UCAS' reputation and interests are upheld.
- Act as a mid-to-senior level stakeholder contact across their designated area.
- Ensure the integration of policy and sector intelligence into UCAS product and service development to ensure they remain appropriate for a changing landscape.
- Ensure the effective internal flow of policy intelligence regarding their specific area.
- To deliver high quality analytical reports to time and quality, in line with UCAS brand guidelines and tone, maintaining the integrity of the UCAS brand
- To embrace agile methodology and work effectively in a self-organising team of data scientists.
- To perform high quality research, with relevance to a wide range of groups and forums, as well as publication
- To own research ideas and see their conclusions accurately derived and disseminated through the most appropriate channels.
- To adhere to and enhance data science standards within the team and wider business unit.
- To contribute back to the wider team any outputs or research outcomes
- To maintain awareness of changes to relevant policy and trends within the higher education sector, which may provide context or lead to new publications.

Skills, qualifications, and experience:

- Experience of producing high quality policy and research outputs.
- Deep understanding of a specific policy area within post-16 education and training. For example, international policy, or apprenticeships.
- Evidence of building long-term, effective relationships with stakeholders at all levels.
- Experience and confidence in independently engaging senior external and internal stakeholders.
- Strategic thinker, with ability to quickly undertake impact assessments of potential and real change.
- Knowledge of how to influence and deliver government policy change.

This role profile sets out the scope and main duties of the post at the date when it was drawn up. Such details may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the level of the post. All UCAS employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their role and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of their role and their level of responsibility.

Our values in action:

Customer-focused – We understand what our customers want, and we act on their changing needs.

Collaborative – We collectively create an engaging and positive work environment.

Accountable – We take ownership of our individual and organisational performance.

Service excellence – We realise, grow, and maximise our potential.

Trusted – Individuals are trusted to make informed decisions and take appropriate risks.