Job Description

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| **Job Title:** | Associate Director, Government Relations and Communications |
| **Department:** | Office of the Vice President, Research and International |
| **Reports To**: | Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives |
| **Jobs Reporting:** | Manager, Communications |
| **Salary Grade:** | USG 13 |
| **Effective Date:** | February 2023 |

## Primary Purpose

Working directly with the VPRI, Executive Director Strategic Initiatives and Associate Director, Research Strategic Initiatives, the Associate Director, Government Relations and Communications is responsible for supporting the VPRI's connections with governments, developing policy and communications strategies, and executing key communication materials in the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International (VPRI). The Associate Director conducts background research, provides advice, and acts as a liaison on directing government relations strategy and on communication priorities and objectives of the VPRI including within the Office of Research, Waterloo Ventures, and Waterloo International (referred to as the Office of the VPRI). The Associate Director writes and facilitates key policy reports and communications for the VPRI.

## Key Accountabilities

**Government Relations plans and priorities**

- Works closely with the Associate Vice-President, Government Relations to develop and maintain integrated government strategy across the University.
- Provides public policy advice related to advancing research priorities of the Office of the VPRI
- Develops a comprehensive matrix of critical relationships and recommends, coordinates and tracks priority relationships on matters of public policy related to advancing research and higher education.
- Participates in a University-wide Government Relations Network.
- Develops a public policy mandate, agenda and process that support goals of the Office of the VPRI.
- Identifies opportunities for the VPRI to participate in and influence the development of public policy, government initiatives and programs in areas central to advancing research at Waterloo.
- Holds key accountability for the development and maintenance of key connections with ISED, Tri-Council funding agencies, Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities to provide expert advice through in-depth knowledge and anticipation of government issues and directions.

**Communications**

- With Manager, Communications, develops for the VPRI written materials and messaging for memos, reports, presentations, remarks, and other materials
- Writes key communications for the VPRI, including national and international speaking engagement notes and development of presentations.
- Develops and reviews letters of support for significant funding grant applications
- In conjunction with the Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives develops a communication strategy for the VPRI portfolio.
- Has day-to-day operational responsibility for the communications team within the Office of Research
- Develops the visuals and storytelling to the Board of Governors and Senate reports and presentations (e.g., Leadership Updates), including annual reports.

- Works with University Relations and other internal stakeholders to build relationships and ensure alignment with overall University strategy and positioning.
- Develops, and oversees, compelling content, social media, and communication strategies to effectively drive stakeholder engagement.

**Oversight of Content Management for VPRI portfolio**

- Develops a content distribution network by way of social media channels.
- Drives online conversation, both minute-by-minute and in support of selected messaging from the VPRI and Office of the VPRI.
- Engages the University and broader community through smart, strategic and timely communications.
- Guides Centres and Institutes, Waterloo International, and Waterloo Ventures to promote a cohesive and consistent voice for the VPRI, while building shared identity and a sense of community.
- Supports and educates colleagues managing Centres and Institutes, Waterloo International, and Waterloo Ventures' social media accounts. Ensures these accounts contribute effectively to the overall research community and adhere to the research brand.
- Builds and maintains online relationships and manages external partnerships, such as with the Tri-Council funding agencies, that amplify the VPRI's Office reach and reputation.
- Oversees original content including: blog posts, articles, newsletters, communications materials, tweets and posts for various social media channels.
- Ensures Office website is continuously updated and maintained
- Oversees the VPRI and VPRI Office's social media feeds; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn, as well as ensuring a presence on new platforms by keeping abreast of emerging social media platforms and trends.

**Supervision and leadership:**

- Manages and coaches direct reports to ensure optimal service offerings
- Provides guidance and leadership to additional communications roles in associated Centres and Institutes
- Deploys staff most productively to meet department goals and objectives
- Develops and monitors operational processes for effective and timely development of communications activities and initiatives
- Conducts Annual Performance reviews with direct reports, and ensures adherence to Annual Performance review processes within the department
- Supports the professional development of team
- Develops measurable targets to support communications objectives and ensure operations meet desired outcomes

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

**Required Qualifications**

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**Education**

- Undergraduate degree in policy studies, political science, communications, journalism, or related field, but post-graduate degree would be preferred.

**Experience**

- 10+ years government, policy, and communications experience,
- Demonstrated expertise in the development, planning, and implementation of policy related to advancing research and business strategies and plans.
- Demonstrated expertise in relationship / partnership building

**Knowledge/Skills/Abilities**

- Experience in or with government, political offices and or public affairs capacities
- Previous experience leading a team
- Exceptional communication (oral and written), interpersonal, relationship building, customer service, negotiation, consultation, presentation, analytical, leadership and organizational skills
- Strong proficiency with a variety of computer software applications including word processing, spreadsheet, database management and web design software is required
- Tact, judgment and diplomacy are essential
- An ability to work independently and as a member of a team
- Discretion to identify risk and opportunities in user-generated content.
- Effective time management skills, ability to multitask, confidence in decision making under pressure.
- An advanced understanding of digital behavior and the ability to apply these insights to develop better digital experiences.
- Demonstrated capacity to engage and communicate highly complex issues such as those relevant to higher education and advancing research.
- Ability to identify and implement social media process related to the development, posting and measurement of content and to make continuous improvements.
- Ability to ensure the strategic and tactical use of social media to leverage our differentiators to enhance the University's reputation and further inform and engage stakeholders.
- Understand how paid, owned and earned media interact.
- Critical thinking and analytical skills to understand the complex nature of higher education and the issues of concern to stakeholders.

**Nature and Scope**

- **Contacts:** Internally, the position will be in regular contact with different positions and units across the Office of the Vice President, Research and International.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** This position is expected to be self-directed in executing their accountabilities. The role has a mix of defined, specialized, routine, and non-routine tasks and requires sound judgment, tact, and discretion in juggling and executing these responsibilities. This position will make recommendations to the VPRI for improvements and new initiatives.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**: Mostly office work with periodic travel to Ottawa and Toronto. Ability to manage multiple and competing priorities in a changing environment with shifting priorities.
- **Working Environment:** Regular working hours with flexibility to work evenings or weekends to facilitate specific initiatives. Occasional travel and off-site work will be required. There can be a lack of control over work pace due to irregular and/or high volumes of work, multiple and/or tight, deadlines, and frequent interruptions.