Job Description – Senior Public Affairs Manager

About the role
The Senior Public Affairs Manager works to maintain and develop the University’s relationships with politicians predominantly, as well as civil servants, and other external stakeholders in order to influence public policy and funding priorities set by the UK Government. You are effectively the University’s ‘eyes and ears’ in Westminster.

You will work very closely with other members of the Government & External Affairs team and within the Strategy Office, as well as across the University with relevant departments and with public affairs colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that the University presents a joined up approach to the legislative bodies and devolved governments across the UK.

Key responsibilities
Devise a public affairs strategy and translate the strategy into an action plan.

Manage relationships with politicians and officials, identifying advocacy opportunities in Westminster, securing meetings, providing expertise, and responding to requests for help and advice as appropriate.

Attend meetings and conferences with Ministers, other politicians, officials, key stakeholders as required. Attend Parliamentary business as necessary.

Organise and advise on visits and events involving political figures and other VIPs. Work closely with the Senior External Affairs Manager in delivering programme visits.

Prepare high quality briefings for the Vice-Chancellor and other senior staff in advance of meetings with politicians and others.

Through the Senior External Affairs Manager, manage relationships with umbrella bodies, mission groups, think tanks, campaigning organisations and other universities.

Provide advice and guidance on visits and events across the University that are of a political nature.

Manage projects and tasks on behalf of the Head of Government and External Affairs as circumstances require.

Attend all Party Conferences to provide support to the Vice Chancellor, Pro – Chancellor and Head of Government and External Affairs, and manage and develop the University’s activity at party conferences (e.g. fringe event planning and one to one meetings).

Liaise with public affairs colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that the University presents a consistent approach to each of the legislative bodies and devolved governments across the UK.
Support the Nation Directors and their staff in their dealings with legislative bodies and devolved governments across the UK.

Skills and experience

Direct Westminster parliamentary experience or relevant experience working in the public affairs sector influencing the UK Government.

Excellent understanding of the political landscape across the UK and, in particular the workings of Westminster and Whitehall.

Excellent inter-personal skills and an ability to establish strong working relationships with senior figures outside and within the University.

Well-developed and effective communication skills, including an ability to write fluently and clearly, and to speak engagingly, authoritatively and convincingly.

Well-motivated and with an ability to self-manage across a complex brief, and exercise judgement within a broad area of responsibility.

Strong analytical skills, including an ability to gather, analyse, interpret and present information effectively and to comment on its significance.

Good organisational and project management skills.

The ability to harness effectively the contributions of colleagues from different offices and professional backgrounds.

A first degree or equivalent qualification or experience.

Appropriate professional qualifications or evidence of professional development.

A willingness to work flexible hours (some evening and weekends).

A good understanding of the funding and policy environment for Higher Education within the UK is desirable but not essential.