Job Description
Prospect Researcher

Department/School: Campaigns & Alumni Relations Department (CAR)
Contract type: Fixed-term (12 months) / Hybrid
Advertising length (weeks): Approx. 3 weeks

Overview

We have an exciting opportunity for a Prospect Researcher to help drive major gift fundraising at the University of Sheffield, a world top 100 university.

As we enter the closing stages of a successful philanthropic campaign, *Forged in Sheffield*, we are seeking someone who can use insight and analysis to shape our future donor pipeline.

You'll be based in Campaigns and Alumni Relations (CAR), the department responsible for fundraising and graduate engagement. We raise donations that benefit the University in many ways - from supporting students in financial need to powering research that brings about real change. We also build lifelong relationships with 300,000 alumni (former students) and supporters worldwide through a range of communications and events.

As Prospect Researcher, your work will enrich conversations our staff and senior management have with the University's alumni, donors and friends. Working directly with our major gifts team, you will play a key role in sourcing fundraising intelligence and finding new donors with a capacity to make five-, six- and seven-figure gifts.

We are looking for a highly accurate, analytical and curious individual. You will have the skills to locate, link and distil complex data into user-friendly briefings and reports for non-data specialists.

You will have excellent time management skills and be motivated to work independently, whilst being a supportive teammate with a flexible approach to work. You will ideally have experience of prospect research and portfolio management within a fundraising organization or business setting, or if not, equivalent relevant experience.

Main duties and responsibilities

- Identify, research and assess potential major gift prospects, individuals or organisations capable of making donations of £10,000 or more, using internal, public and subscription-based information sources.
- Produce targeted prospect and alumni lists in response to requests from colleagues and fundraising staff, identifying individuals and organisations that meet specific criteria.

- Produce research briefings on alumni, trusts, foundations, companies and other stakeholders to support fundraising activity and strategic engagement.
- Support the preparation of due diligence reports, highlighting philanthropic potential, reputational considerations and any associated risks.
- Develop and maintain prospect pools to ensure a strong pipeline of fundraising opportunities.
- Manage prospect assignments within the University database, ensuring information remains accurate, up to date and aligned with prospect management processes.
- Review fundraiser portfolios regularly, identifying opportunities, risks and replacement prospects where appropriate.
- Support frontline fundraisers, including the Director and Associate Director of Fundraising, through the use of PowerBI reports.
- Maintain the quality, integrity and compliance of prospect data through regular auditing, validation, record updates and continuous improvement of prospect development systems and processes.
- Identify opportunities to improve processes, systems and ways of working within areas of responsibility.
- Provide guidance and training to colleagues on prospect management processes, reporting and database best practice.
- Recruit, train and supervise temporary or casual staff where required.
- Demonstrate the professional behaviours expected within the Sheffield Professional Framework and undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade of the role.

Person Specification

Our diverse community of staff and students recognises the unique abilities, backgrounds, and beliefs of all. We foster a culture where everyone feels they belong and are respected. Even if your past experience doesn't match perfectly with this role's criteria, your contribution is valuable, and we encourage you to apply. Please ensure that you reference the application criteria in the application statement when you apply.

Criteria	Essential or desirable	Stage(s) assessed at
Educated to degree level or equivalent work experience	Essential	Application
A sound understanding of the role of fundraising and prospect research in a Higher Education setting	Essential	Application, interview and task
Experience gathering and cross-referencing information from a wide range of sources, especially from online and electronic media	Essential	Application and interview
Ability to investigate and link a variety of data sources in order to provide productive	Essential	Application and interview

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business intelligence		
Effective communication skills, both written and verbal, including skills in report writing and presentations	Essential	Application, Interview and task
Experience of working effectively within a team and ability to collaborate with colleagues from different teams	Essential	Application and interview
Well developed organisational and time management skills	Essential	Application and interview
Ability to understand and accurately implement formal processes	Essential	Application and interview
Good understanding of data protection regulation and a proven ability to handle sensitive information with integrity and in accordance with legal requirements.	Essential	Application and interview
Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills	Essential	Application, Interview and task
Experience of portfolio or prospect management in a charity, educational or business setting	Desirable	Application
Experience of using Raiser's Edge or other relationship management database	Desirable	Application
Experience of using PowerBI or other interactive data visualisation software	Desirable	Application

Further Information

Grade	5
Salary	£27,865 - £31,861 per annum. Potential to progress to £34,630 per annum through sustained exceptional contribution.
Work arrangement	Full-time
Duration	12 months
Line manager	Research and Due Diligence Officer
Direct reports	None
Right to work in the UK	If you do not currently hold the right to work in the UK, you can find more information here to help determine your visa eligibility. Additional guidance is also available on the UK Visa & Immigration website.
Our website	https://sheffield.ac.uk/alumni https://sheffield.ac.uk/alumni/welcome-car

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For informal enquiries about this job contact Aleesha Begum, Research and Due Diligence Officer: on **a.begum@sheffield.ac.uk**

Next steps in the recruitment process
It is anticipated that the selection process will take place on **Thursday 7th January 2026**. This will include an in-person interview on campus in Sheffield and a task. You will also meet other members of Campaigns and Alumni Relations. We plan to let candidates know if they have progressed to the selection stage on the week commencing 21st December 2026.

If you need any support, equipment or adjustments to enable you to participate in any element of the recruitment process you can contact **Kirsty Duke** (k.duke@sheffield.ac.uk)

Our vision and strategic plan
We are the University of Sheffield. This is our vision: sheffield.ac.uk/vision (opens in new window).

What we offer

- A minimum of 38 days annual leave including bank holiday and closure days (pro rata) with the ability to purchase more.
- Flexible working opportunities, including hybrid working for some roles.
- Generous pension scheme.
- A wide range of discounts and rewards on shopping, eating out and travel.
- A variety of staff networks, providing opportunities for social interaction, peer support and personal development (for example, Race Equality, LGBT+, Women's and Parent's networks).
- Recognition Awards to reward staff who go above and beyond in their role.
- A commitment to your development access to learning and mentoring schemes; integrated with our Professional Services Shared Skills Framework
- A range of generous family-friendly policies
    - paid time off for parenting and caring emergencies
    - access to menopause support in the workplace
    - paid time off and support for fertility treatment
    - and more

More details can be found on our benefits page: sheffield.ac.uk/jobs/benefits (opens in a new window).

We are a Disability Confident Leader (opens in a new window). If you have a disability and meet the essential criteria for this job you will be invited to take part in the next stage of the selection process.

Job Advert

Job Reference Number:	
Working Pattern: (applicable if fractional, specify days if a business requirement)	Full time / Hybrid
Faculty: (if applicable)	Professional Services
School:	Campaigns and Alumni Relations Department (CAR)
Closing Date:	Monday 14th December 2026

Are you naturally curious, analytical and motivated by making a difference? Do you enjoy uncovering insights, connecting information and helping organisations build meaningful relationships? If so, this could be the perfect opportunity to develop your prospect research career at one of the UK's leading universities.

We're hiring a Prospect Researcher to join our Campaigns and Alumni Relations (CAR) department. And you'll be joining at an exciting time. As we approach the final stages of our ambitious fundraising campaign, your work will help shape what's next and ensure we're making the most of opportunities to engage our community.

As part of the Prospect Research and Insight team you'll be working in a department that helps build relationships with more than 330,000 alumni worldwide.

Working closely with major gift fundraisers, you'll help identify and engage potential supporters whose philanthropy can transform opportunities for students, advance world-leading research and support projects that make a real difference locally and globally.

This is a role where your research has a real purpose. You'll help colleagues understand the interests, backgrounds and potential of alumni, donors and supporters, providing insights that inform conversations and strengthen relationships. You'll also help manage the pipeline of potential supporters, ensuring fundraisers can focus their time where it will have the greatest impact.

Your work could include:

- Identifying alumni, donors and friends of the University with the capacity and inclination to support strategic priorities.
- Producing high-quality prospect briefings and background research for meetings, events and fundraising activity.
- Analysing wealth, biographical and philanthropic information from a range of sources to assess philanthropic potential.
- Managing prospect pipelines and helping ensure fundraising opportunities are progressed effectively.
- Supporting fundraising events by researching attendees and helping colleagues prepare for meaningful conversations.
- Working with colleagues across the University to uncover new engagement and

fundraising opportunities.

We're looking for someone who will:

- Thrive on applying their research to better engage people for our cause and bring us together to achieve more
- Have a knack for spotting connections and opportunities
- Be skilled at locating and linking relevant data from a variety of sources into user-friendly briefings
- Be able to effectively communicate with non-data specialists and colleagues at all levels of seniority within the organisation
- Have excellent organisational and time management skills

We're one of the best not-for-profit organisations to work for in the UK. The University's Total Reward Package includes a competitive salary, a generous Pension Scheme and annual leave entitlement, as well as access to a range of learning and development courses to support your personal and professional development.

We build teams of people from different heritages and lifestyles from across the world, whose talent and contributions complement each other to greatest effect. We believe diversity in all its forms delivers greater impact through research, teaching and student experience.

The University of Sheffield is a remarkable place to work. Our people are at the heart of everything we do. Their diverse backgrounds, abilities and beliefs make Sheffield a world-class university.

We offer a fantastic range of benefits including a highly competitive annual leave entitlement (with the ability to purchase more), a generous pensions scheme, flexible working opportunities,a commitment to your development and wellbeing, a wide range of retail discounts, and much more.

Find out more at sheffield.ac.uk/jobs/benefits and join us to become part of something special.

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