

Head of Communications and Engagement (12-month contract - maternity cover)

About TASO

The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) is an affiliate What Works Centre, and part of the UK Government's What Works Movement. Our vision is to eliminate equality gaps in higher education (HE). Our mission is to improve lives through evidence-informed practice.

TASO was set up in 2019 and became an independent charity in April 2021. Our work focuses on the generation, synthesis and dissemination of high-quality evidence about effective practice in widening participation and student outcomes. We primarily focus on developing and disseminating causal evidence.

The Role

The Head of Communications and Engagement will lead TASO's communications and engagement work plan to raise the profile of the organisation. They will also lead on TASO's evidence mobilisation work plan, working with the Chief Executive, to ensure TASO's research and evaluation outputs are effectively disseminated.

This will involve ensuring a strategic approach to all communications activities, leading on the delivery of external-facing materials and publications, overseeing a vibrant social media presence and events programme. The role will have overall responsibility for a website redevelopment project over the next year.

- Ensure a strategic and effective approach to communications, dissemination and stakeholder engagement.
- Lead on the design, branding and dissemination of innovative and engaging communications – both print and online, including oversight of the editorial and publication process for all TASO research reports and resources.
- Lead on TASO's evidence mobilisation plan, working with the Chief Executive and Research and Evaluation Team to ensure research outputs are effectively disseminated and achieve impact.
- Support the Chief Executive on delivering TASO's policy aims. Lead on engagement with and monitoring of Westminster activities (e.g. select committees, reports, consultations) and liaise with key communications and policy stakeholders in the Department for Education, Office for Students and other relevant bodies.
- Take overall responsibility for TASO's online and social media presence. This will involve overseeing a critical website redevelopment project over the next year and also includes oversight of the creation, upkeep and management of digital channels and content.

- Lead on TASO’s media relations, producing high quality press releases and news stories for the website, liaising with journalists, as appropriate.
- Lead on the delivery of a programme of stakeholder engagement events for a wide range of audiences. The events will range from small training sessions to larger events including publication launches and an annual conference.
- Provide line management for communications staff who will support all activities – including two direct reports and overseeing a team of three.
- Undertake projects and duties as required or requested by the Chief Executive or broader team.

The attributes we are looking for in a Head of Communications and Engagement (12-month – maternity contract):

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate their skills and experience against the following criteria in their written application and at interview, for those short-listed.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge / skills		
Excellent knowledge of a broad range of communications activities (media, websites, events, marketing social media and publications)	X	
Excellent communications skills, both written and oral with a proven ability to adapt style for a variety of channels and audiences	X	
Excellent IT skills (including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, social media, Google Analytics) and knowledge of content management systems (WordPress)	X	
Proven ability to research and identify communications opportunities	X	
Proven track record of devising and delivering communications and engagement strategies	X	
Ability to balance competing, shifting priorities on behalf of a small team under pressure and workload	X	
Effective project management skills	X	
Coordinating and influencing diverse stakeholders to deliver strategic priorities	X	

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Experience		
Developing and implementing communications and engagement plans and strategies using digital and traditional media	X	
Running a large-scale website redevelopment project and developing content for online platforms	X	
Delivering complex projects involving a diverse group of individuals and competing demands	X	
Working proactively with relevant trade media, maintaining contact lists and circulating relevant news items and articles		X
Developing policy submissions, responses to inquiries and engaging with Westminster.	X	
Line and project management of staff with a range of development needs, including developmental coaching and performance management	X	
Experience of working within a higher education environment or What Works Centre		X
Personal characteristics/other requirements		
Determined, resilient and optimistic approach to work	X	
Collaborative attitude to work, supporting others, demonstrating tact and diplomacy	X	
Ability to build effective links and relationships with a range of stakeholders, and influencing on strategic priorities	X	
Values		
Commitment to eliminating equality gaps in higher education; a passion for the agenda of What Works Centres and the broader agenda around evidence-based policy and practice in public services	X	
A natural collaborator and convener who makes connections and brings others together	X	

Package

- Remuneration: £54,000 per annum
- Location: Central London. This post will be hybrid with the expectation that the post holder will be in the office two days a week in addition to attending office-based project meetings. Candidates must have the right to work in the UK.
- Term: Full-time, 12-month contract (maternity cover)
- Holiday: 27 days per year, plus public/bank holidays and a day off for your birthday
- Wellbeing: flexible working and a personal wellbeing budget
- Training and development: systematic performance reviews, personalised learning and development objectives and access to a training and development fund
- Pension: Employer contribution 8%

How to apply

To apply, please send a CV and supporting statement (more details below) outlining clearly how you meet the above criteria to info@taso.org.uk, citing “Head of Communications and Engagement” in the subject of the email.

Please structure your supporting statement in response to the below points:

- Why do you want to work for TASO? (200 words)
- Describe your **experience, insights and values** which make you are a good fit for the role (300 words)
- Please outline how your **knowledge and skills** meet the requirements of the role as outlined in the person specification (300 words)

We also ask that you fill out our online [EDI monitoring form](#) when you submit your application. The form is anonymous.

Shortlisted applicants may be asked to complete a task before or during the interview stage. If you would like to have an informal conversation about the role, please get in touch with Zoe Arthur, Head of Communications and Engagement zoe.arthur@taso.org.uk

TASO welcomes applications from all underrepresented communities and groups. As part of our commitment to increasing diversity within both our own workforce and the policy making sector in general, we offer pre-application discussions to candidates from black, asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds. Please contact omar.khan@taso.org.uk for more details.

Deadline for applications: Monday 9am 29 April 2024

Interviews are expected to be held on w/c 13 May 2024.