IMPERIAL

Head of Advocacy and Influence

Department/Division/Faculty:	Imperial College Union
Campus/Location:	Mainly South Kensington, but work at other sites will be required
Job Family/Level:	Professional Services Level 4 (Salary scales)
Responsible to:	Director of Membership Services
Line management for:	Representation function; Advice Manager
Key working Relationships (Internal):	Director of Membership Services, Officer Trustees, Senior Management Team, student volunteers and representatives, Marketing and Communications team, Governance and Executive Manager, Student Activities team, Head of IT and Systems, Imperial academic staff, Imperial Student Support Services, Institute for Lifelong Learning, Centre for Higher Education Research, Education Office
Key Working Relationships (External):	University policy and public affairs contacts; sector research and policy bodies (e.g. NUS, Wonkhe, HEPI, RGSU); Advice UK; UKCISA; other students' unions
Contract type:	Full time; Open Ended

Purpose of the Post

The Head of Advocacy and Influence is responsible for ensuring Imperial College Union (ICU) an effective, trusted, and evidence-led voice for all members of ICU.

This role will lead the Union's advocacy and influencing work, utilising multiple strategies and tactics to ensure ICU is excellent at influencing Imperial to achieve its ambition of delivering a world-leading student experience. It will also build upon a research culture which adds real value to the Imperial community - working in partnership with the institution whilst also delivering the appropriate challenge to its practices.

The post will lead ICU's representation function and is the primary point of engagement with Imperial academic staff and University stakeholders on matters affecting the student experience. As well as delivering key student voice functions, it will enable ICU to build an evidence base on the Imperial student experience, shape the Union's policy positions, and equips elected student representatives and

Officer Trustees to influence decisions at a University, London, national, and international level.

The role also retains oversight of the Union's Advice Service, ensuring it continues to deliver high-quality casework support to students, and that insight from casework informs the Union's wider advocacy and influencing work.

Working closely with the Director of Membership Services, Officer Trustees, and the Governance and Executive Manager, the post-holder will develop and deliver the Union's research and insight plan and policy and public affairs approach, and lead the following functions:

- Student Representation and Academic Engagement
- Research and policy direction
- Advice Service (oversight)

Key Responsibilities

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Strategic Leadership on Advocacy and Influence

- Lead the delivery of the Union's approach to advocacy and influence, in line with the ICU strategy.
- Provide strategic advice to Officer Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team on how to build and use evidence, policy positions, and academic relationships to translate issues into impact for students.
- With the Director of Membership Services, set and monitor annual objectives and key results for the Advocacy and Influence function, and report progress to SMT and relevant Committees.

Deliver the Union's Research, Insight and Policy Function

- Own and deliver the Union's research and insight plan, positioning the Union as the expert voice on Imperial students.
- Proactively manage the Union's planning, coordination, and analysis of research into student trends and issues at Imperial and across the sector.
- Develop and manage, in collaboration with Officer Trustees and Union staff, the Union's processes for collecting student feedback, and effectively analysing and communicating findings.
- Manage the Union's processes for monitoring and responding to university policy and consultations, student survey results, external consultations, and current and future student trends.
- Ensure research findings are translated into accessible briefings, reports, and recommendations for the University, student representatives, and internal teams.
- Develop and deliver policy activity that supports the Union's objectives, working with the University and external stakeholders as directed.
- Monitor the external policy landscape affecting Imperial students (e.g. higher education funding and regulation, freedom of speech legislation, international student policy) and advise Officer Trustees and SMT on implications and opportunities - as well overseeing formal responses to external and internal consultations.
- Oversee the Union's policy networks and relationships with sector bodies, government, and other Students' Unions to strengthen the Union's influence and horizon-scanning capability.

Support and Empower Student-Led Representation

- Manage the system of support for student representatives across a multi-campus Union, including Academic and Wellbeing Representatives, Constituent Union leaders, and Liberation & Community network members
- Ensure representatives are adequately supported, effectively trained, and empowered to deliver in their roles as representatives and community leaders using community organising approaches.
- Oversee the Union's democratic functions, including the Union elections cycle, Union Council and its sub-committees, ensuring that they are run effectively, are representative of the Imperial student body, and their outcomes influence the practice of the Union and the University.
- Provide support, training, and advice for elected Officer Trustees to maximise their effectiveness with key University and external stakeholders, as well as developing their proficiency in community building and communicating their impact across all Imperial campuses.
- Manage the way the Union works with the University to ensure the systems of Academic and Wellbeing Representation, as well as those which represent marginalised groups are used to provide feedback on, and positively impact, the student experience.
- Oversee the support of student-led campaigns, ensuring they are pro-actively considered in the overall approach to advocacy and influence.
- Co-develop the Union reward and recognition scheme for student volunteers, including Union awards.
- Allocate disciplinary panels to student leaders and provide briefings and debriefings with them to ensure issues or trends are communicated effectively to the University.

Oversee the Union's Advice Service

- Maintain oversight of the Advice Service, ensuring it continues to operate in line with sector best practice, is publicised across all Imperial campuses, and that members receive high-quality, confidential support and advice that meets their needs.
- Ensure quantitative and qualitative data from student casework is collected, analysed, and used to inform the Union's research, policy, and advocacy work.
- Ensure the Advice Service is a key function in the Union's advocacy and campaigning functions through regular discussions with Union staff and Officer Trustees.
- Oversee the implementation of service standards for the Advice Service and report on adherence to these standards.

Staff Management

- Plan, coordinate, and monitor the workloads of direct reports, ensuring staff levels and resources are adequate and efficient to deliver innovative work.
- Support and monitor the performance of direct reports in line with Union policy and identify learning and development needs.
- Assist in the development of direct reports by encouraging a learning and development culture.
- Practice an inclusive leadership style, working with the Director of Membership Services to create an equitable culture across the directorate.
- To take a whole-organisation view in all that you do, balancing the needs of your own team with those of colleagues across the Union, and working constructively with peers to deliver the ICU strategy.

Financial Management

- Be responsible for the Representation budget and maintain oversight of the Advice budget.
- Provide input into the Union's resource planning process by producing an annual operating plan for Representation and budget for areas of responsibility in line with organisational goals and objectives.
- Oversee the development of the Advice annual operating plan in line with organisational goals and objectives.
- Ensure the finance department receives all relevant financial information promptly and in accordance with the Financial Procedures.

Committees, Working Groups and Meetings

- Attend relevant Union committee meetings and be involved in time limited working groups (including Officer Project Working Groups). Where appropriate the post-holder will act as administrator for the meeting or project
- Accompany student officers and representatives to University committee meetings and external meetings or conferences to offer support, continuity, and advice, where appropriate.
- Attend (and occasionally present at) regular staff team meetings within the Union as well as meetings with relevant staff members in the University.

Other Duties

- Attend appropriate meetings and develop reports as and when required by the Union.
- Abide by the Union's Constitution, policies, and procedures, and all relevant University policies and regulations at all times.
- Contribute to the positive image of the Union with students, the University, and the local community.
- Undertake other tasks and responsibilities compatible with the level and nature of the post as required.
- Carry out the above duties at other University sites as necessary.

Person Specification

Requirements Candidates/post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:	**Essential (E)/ Desirable (D)**
Education	
Educated to degree level or significant relevant experience	(E)
Postgraduate research qualification in a relevant field (e.g. public policy, education, social research)	(D)
Experience	
Experience of leading research or policy work, including translating evidence into influence and change	(E)
Experience of building and maintaining senior stakeholder relationships, including with academic staff, for the mutual benefit of both parties	(E)

Experiencing of leading inclusive teams to deliver at high performance	(E)
Experience of managing budgets	(E)
Experience of creating, developing, and evaluating training or development programmes, including facilitating training	(E)
Experience of working effectively in a membership-led environment	(D)
Experience of leading or overseeing an advice or casework service	(D)
Experience of working with under-represented groups, using evidence and community organising	(D)
Experience of leading or overseeing democratic processes	(D)

Knowledge

Knowledge of the structures, issues, and trends affecting UK Higher Education policy and regulation	(E)
Knowledge of research methods and how to build a credible, evidence-led research programme	(E)
Understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion issues in practice	(E)
Knowledge of community organising principles and approaches	(D)
Knowledge of community organising principles and trends in best practice around volunteer management	(D)
Knowledge of how students' unions are governed	(D)
Knowledge of professional standards and excellence in advice provision	(D)

Skills and Abilities

Excellent communication (written and oral) skills and political nous, with the ability to navigate complex stakeholder environments and influence people at all levels with credibility - including University leadership	(E)
Strong analytical skills, with the ability to process and synthesise complex qualitative and quantitative information into clear, actionable insight	(E)
Excellent administration, organisation, and time management skills in a fast-paced and changing environment, under pressure and to deadlines	(E)
Ability to work collegiately within a management team, and respond constructively to feedback	(E)
Strong project management skills	(E)
Ability to demonstrate adherence to the Union's values of Integrity, Inclusion and Innovation	(E)

Competent IT skills: Microsoft 365, social media platforms, and digital/online research tools	(D)

Further Information

Please note that job descriptions cannot be exhaustive, and the post-holder may be required to undertake other duties, which are broadly in line with the above key responsibilities.

Our values are at the root of everything we do and everyone in our community is expected to demonstrate Imperial:

- Respect
- Collaboration
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Innovation

Employees are also required to comply with all Imperial policies and regulations.

We are committed to equality of opportunity, to eliminating discrimination and to creating an inclusive working environment for all. We encourage candidates to apply irrespective of age, disability, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment, sex, or sexual orientation. You can read more about our commitment on our webpages.

November 2026