



Deputy Director Of Communications And Engagement

Grade 10 – competitive salary



**UNIVERSITY
OF LEEDS**

The University of Leeds

The University was founded in 1904, but our origins go back to the nineteenth century with the founding of the Leeds School of Medicine in 1831 and the Yorkshire College of Science in 1874. Today, we are one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK, and globally renowned for the quality of our teaching and research.

We are a member of the Russell Group of research intensive universities, and part of the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), which comprises 23 research-intensive institutions spanning six continents.

The strength of our academic expertise, across a wide breadth of disciplines, offers a wealth of opportunities for our students and staff, and has a real cultural, economic, societal, and environmental impact around the globe.

Our institutional strategy, 'Universal Values, Global Change' 2020 – 2030, sets an ambitious, transformative roadmap over 10 years. It is a blueprint for a values driven University, rooted in our desire to make a difference in the world. Our University harnesses expertise in research and education to help shape a better future for humanity, working through collaboration to tackle inequalities, benefit society and drive change.



Our Core Values

The University's core values are:

Integrity

We are open and honest in our words and actions.

Inclusivity

We are a community where everyone is welcomed and belongs.

Compassion

We are caring and considerate in our words and actions.

Collaboration

We work together to achieve our goals and ambition.

Our Strategy

Further information about the University and our Strategy 2020-2030, can be found [here](#).

Our Strategy identifies three core areas of focus:

- **Culture** – recognising that collaboration rather than competition is fundamental to yielding excellence in research, education and societal impact.
- **Community** – recognising the importance of diversity, partnership and innovation in forging strong communities internally and externally.
- **Impact** – recognising the need to develop the next generation of global citizens and to focus our research efforts on areas in which we can be truly globally leading, while harnessing the potential of digital innovation to enhance both.





Student Education

We have a clear and committed focus on meeting the needs and aspirations of our global student community.

We provide a distinctive, research-based education for high quality students from diverse backgrounds and nationalities – equipping them with the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful and make an impact in an increasingly complex world.

Our Student Education Strategy builds upon our international reputation for academic excellence. We aim to deliver a world class education with an exceptional student experience by having a student-focused approach, grounded in active learning and supported by ambitious digital transformation.

Highlights

- We have an enduring commitment to widening access and participation right across the student life cycle, from primary school to graduation, and our contextual admissions programme – Access to Leeds – is the largest in the sector.
- The High Fliers Survey has ranked Leeds in the top 5 most targeted universities by graduate recruiters.
- Leeds University Union was the first students' union in the UK to be awarded 'excellent' status under the National Union of Students' Quality Accreditation Scheme, and is the first to retain this hard-won accolade.
- Many of our courses have a study abroad option, and we have more than 300 partnerships with universities worldwide.

Research

Research is at the heart of university life.

We are an outstanding research university, in the UK's top 15 and achieving significant increases in research quality, income, and impact, building on existing research strengths and our commitment to interdisciplinary working.

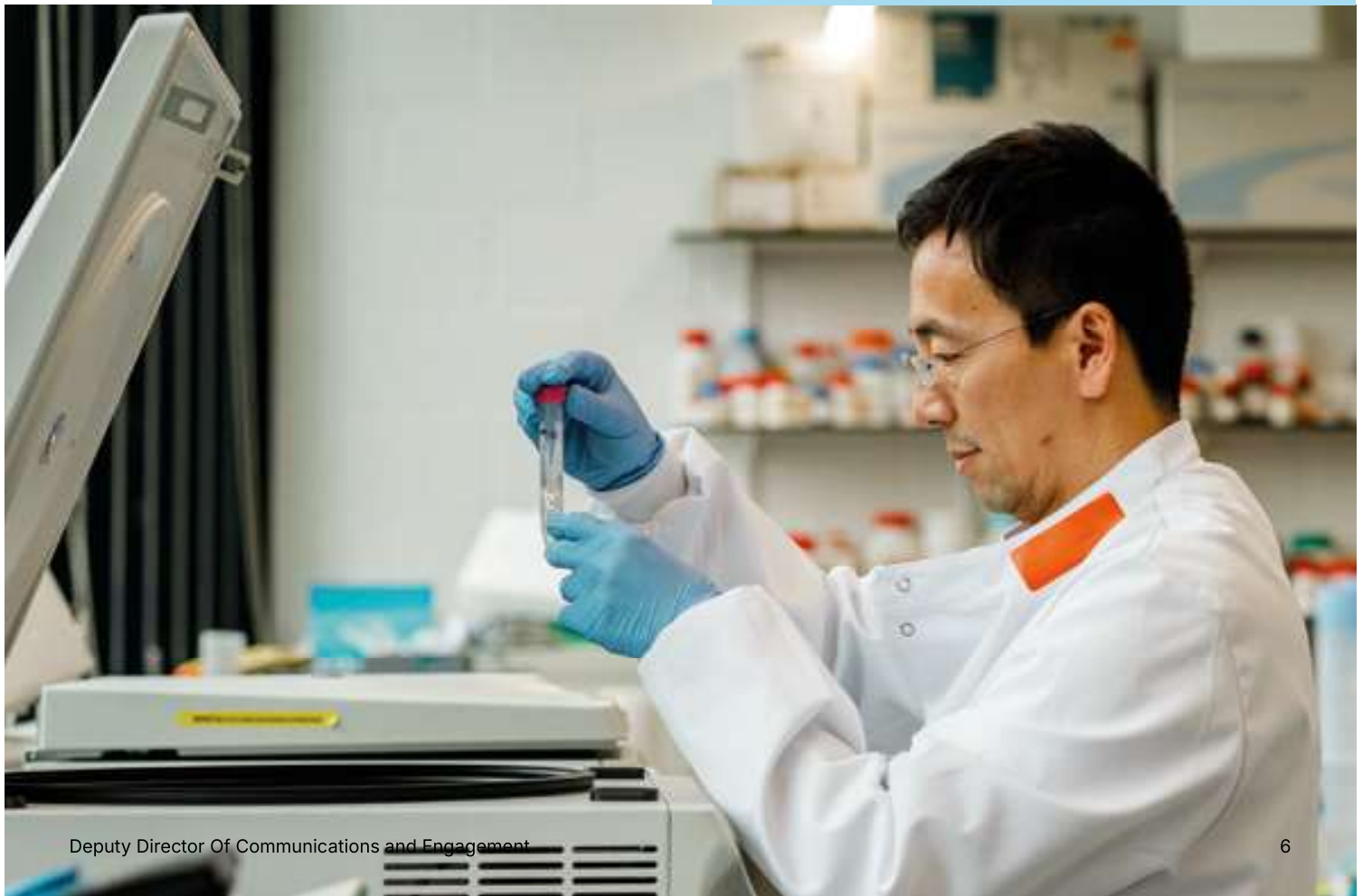
Excellent research takes place in every part of our campus; the breadth of subjects studied, the possibilities for interdisciplinary working and the quality and impact of our research are all contributing to the needs of the wider economy and society.

We are active in the main national institutes, have an outstanding track record of success in the government's Global Challenge Research Fund, industrial strategy and nationally funded doctoral training centres, all resulting from our own investment in technology and talent and a strong University-wide commitment to interdisciplinarity.

Highlights

Our research highlights include:

- A Queen's Anniversary Prize – the UK's highest accolade for universities and colleges – for research into tropical weather systems and climate science.
- A total of £174m in new research awards.
- Lead for The Alan Turing, Rosalind Franklin and Henry Royce Institutes on urban analytics, high throughput drug discovery, and atoms and devices, respectively.
- A range of flagship partnerships, including with the Met Office on atmospheric science and climate impacts and National Centre for Atmospheric Science.





Business Engagement and Enterprise

Business Engagement and Enterprise is a fundamental strategic priority for the University of Leeds and underpins our vision to positively shape our world, reducing inequalities and delivering positive impact.

Our ambition is to transform how we work with partners to drive innovation and enterprise, working effectively with other universities, businesses and organisations to solve pressing global challenges.

The breadth and excellence of our research means that we are ideally placed to help organisations from all sectors solve their business challenges. We have an impressive track record in working with business ranging in size from start-ups to multinationals.

Through research collaborations, consultancy, knowledge transfer, access to facilities, and professional learning we are able to offer a comprehensive approach to address business challenges. We aim to build on existing strengths and enhance our partnership model, identifying new and exciting opportunities for strategic partnership working.

As an anchor institution, the University of Leeds has an important leadership role to play in the development of local and regional innovation ecosystems. Regional innovation is supported through the Leeds Innovation Arc, an innovation neighbourhood formed around the University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds City Council and a network of private sector organisations in a world-class hub for research and innovation.

This aims to stimulate innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future for Leeds and the world. We are already seeing positive movement with increased levels of investment into the city. Being at the heart of the city region, we have benefited from being located within a strong performing economy, with the complexity and density to attract human capital, industry and investment.

Central to the University's Business Engagement and Enterprise Strategy is Nexus, our innovation hub and community. Located on the University campus, Nexus is a vibrant community for innovators and entrepreneurs.

It provides bespoke support to its member businesses, helping them to stimulate innovation and deliver rapid commercial impact facilitating seamless connections and access to research, talent and facilities across the University and City Region.

Nexus also provides incubation facilities and professional support for students, graduates and staff.

Our university enterprise ecosystem is supported through development opportunities such as:

- the Michael Beverley Innovation Fellowships, where we work with Early Career Stage Researchers to equip them through taught modules and mentoring to think about translation of concepts and ideas and to give them the tools and skills to work more effectively with industry;
- the SPARK student enterprise programme that supports around 55 student businesses every year, generating nearly £2.5m in revenue and £500k external funding;
- the Northern Gritstone investment company, set up by the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester to deliver a £500m investment fund that will be one of the largest investors into academic spin-outs in the United Kingdom.





The Role: Background

In an increasingly competitive higher education sector and a frequently challenging communications environment, it is vital to build and maintain the University's reputation and profile through the development and delivery of compelling communications and engagement to global news and digital media, our community of 10,000 staff and 38,000 students, and key stakeholders at regional, national, and global level.

Reporting to the Director of Communications & Engagement, the Deputy Director of Communications & Engagement is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operational management and delivery of activity by three Assistant Directors - External & Advocacy, Community Engagement, and Digital, Content & Creative - and their specialist teams of more than 90 staff working in digital and brand, news and corporate communication, public affairs, internal communication and engagement.

An expert in process and team design, the post-holder will support the Director in developing the strategic business plan, structures, processes, and evaluation techniques required to foster innovation, collaboration, and a more agile way of working across the Directorate to build on current activity and prepare for future opportunities.

Experienced in crisis management, the Deputy Director will lead senior level operational communications in response to the incidents and crises, providing strategic advice and tactical delivery to manage these and ensure the return to business continuity at the earliest opportunity.

Well-versed in public affairs practice, the Deputy Director will help establish a strategic approach for managing the University's relationships with key political and policymaking influencers and to map, plan and coordinate the University's engagement at local, regional, and national level.

The Deputy Director will also lead discrete strategic communications projects on behalf of the Director, act as strategic communications adviser to senior University leaders including Executive Deans of Faculty and be a member of selected University groups and committees.

A key part of this role is to ensure communications and engagement is appropriately integrated in supporting activity to deliver the University Strategy and how the University drives leadership, change and innovation in a challenging internal and external environment. As such, visible and effective collaboration is required with executive and senior leaders, the academic and research community - as well as professional service directorates - to deliver cross-functional communications and engagement activities.

The post is permanent and full-time is the successful candidate is expected to work at least 2 days per week on campus, rising to 3 days per week during 2024/25 (in accordance with University policy). The post-holder will be expected to work at all times in accordance with the University's policies, procedures, and to promote communications excellence in-line with the [University Values](#) of collaboration, compassion, inclusivity, and integrity.

The Role: Key responsibilities

Leadership and Management

- Be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operational management and the delivery of the activities of the three Assistant Directors - External & Advocacy, Community Engagement, and Digital, Content & Creative - and their specialist teams of more than 90 staff. In doing so, you will ensure that all activity is coordinated to present a consistent, strategic, and positive narrative in supporting the delivery of the University Strategy.
- Collaborate with the Director of Communications & Engagement to continually improve team structures, processes, and ways of working to build on activities and prepare for future opportunities and challenges.
- Deputise for the Director of Communications and Engagement in the delivery of strategic tasks and in building and maintaining relationships with senior colleagues. This will involve acting as strategic communications adviser to Executive Deans of Faculty, as well as membership of selected University governance groups and committees.
- Model and deliver leadership behaviours in line with the University's Values of collaboration, compassion, inclusivity, and integrity with a particular focus on personal drive, innovation, and self- initiative.
- Oversee operational budgets ensuring value for money, complete transparency of spend and following the University's financial systems and procedures.and procedures.





Strategic Operations

- Co-ordinate strategic communications and engagement activity to support institutional priorities, with a focus on creating integrated ways of working and campaign teams to devise, deliver and evaluate multi-channel, multi-audience communications.
- Develop, maintain, and oversee a Directorate-level forward plan of communications activity by the team of more than 90 staff to secure maximum impact for the University's communications, fully integrate the work of the Directorate's constituent teams, and manage their workloads effectively.
- Lead the Communications & Engagement team's approach to - and preparedness for - crisis communications, ensuring that there is effective integration with other relevant services and structures, and operating at senior level operational in the University's incident management procedures.
- Build networks of influence with senior communications and engagement and policy professionals in the Higher Education sector, the Leeds city-region, Whitehall and Westminster, NGOs, and research funding organisations. In doing so, to share and draw upon the insight and influence that such relationships provide for the benefit of the University's communications and engagement activity.
- Be a senior advocate for and representative of the Communications & Engagement team across the University community, the Higher Education sector and with key external stakeholders.
- Professionalise the communications activities of others within the University, providing guidance, training, and support to ensure that communicators in schools and service can deploy a good level of practice in timing, content and messaging within their own local activities.

Collaboration

- Collaborating with the Assistant Director for External & Advocacy, implement the new approach to Research Communications, ensuring research portfolios are prioritised and effectively communicated via the Highlight/Hub/Hygiene model and ensuring an integrated contribution by individual teams to communications activity.
- Collaborating with the Assistant Director for Community Engagement, review the University's approach to, and resourcing for, Change Communications with the institution's 10,000 members of staff, to ensure that communications for major programmes are clear, timely, engaging and elicit the desired response and action from colleagues.
- Collaborating with the Assistant Director for Digital, Content & Creative, Director of IT and Director of Marketing, jointly oversee a review of the University's digital governance and content strategy, as well as short- and long-term reforms to the University's web presence and CMS.
- Collaborating with the Director of Communications & Engagement and the Assistant Director for External & Advocacy, establish a strategic approach for managing the University's relationships with key political and policymaking influencers and to map, plan and coordinate the University's engagement at local, regional, and national level.



Essential criteria

- A relevant post-graduate professional qualification (or equivalent experience).
- Experience of leading, developing and motivating a large team of communications and engagement professionals, across the breadth of communications and engagement activities, and managing and deploying corporate budgets and resources.
- Demonstrable senior-level experience of developing and implementing communications and engagement strategies, operating successfully as a senior communications and engagement professional in a large and/or complex organisation, and with suitable credibility at Board level.
- Demonstrable innovative practice and success at senior level in internal communications and staff engagement, external communications and public affairs, crisis management, digital/social media, and leading brand development and reputation management for a complex organisation.
- Political, environmental, and cultural awareness, coupled with highly developed influencing skills, and the ability to persuade politicians and policymakers to advocate for the University and its strategic aims.
- Evidence of successful partnership working, relationship-building and networking with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders including an enthusiasm for engaging with staff, students, alumni and wider community at regional, national and global levels.

Desirable criteria

- An excellent communicator, both orally and in writing, who possesses creativity and exceptional judgement, with experience of developing original ideas and creative approaches.
- A collaborative and inclusive leadership approach, encouraging ideas, initiative and innovation from others, and promoting the development of a high-performance culture.
- Understanding the opportunities and challenges facing the higher education sector, together with a clear commitment to the University's purpose and values.



How to apply

You can apply for this role online; more guidance can be found on our How to Apply information page. Applications should be submitted by **23.59** (UK time) on the advertised closing date.

Your application should include the following:

- A two-page cover letter setting out your skills and experience with regard to the role and details of how you match the essential criteria.
- A comprehensive curriculum vitae, detailing your qualifications and experience. Please include your current salary details.
- You are also asked to provide details of three referees – please supply full names, affiliations and e-mail addresses. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without your prior permission.

Contact information

For queries about the application process, please contact:

Kate Bennett, Head of Operations and Strategic Communications Planning

Email k.bennett@leeds.ac.uk

For an informal and confidential conversation about the role, please contact:

Tim Watkinson, Director of Communications and Engagement

Email: t.d.watkinson@leeds.ac.uk



Additional information

Working at Leeds

We are a campus-based community and regular interaction with campus is an expectation of all roles in line with academic and service needs and the requirements of the role. We are also open to discussing flexible working arrangements. To find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area visit our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.

Our University

At the University of Leeds, we are committed to providing a culture of inclusion, respect and equity of opportunity that attracts, supports, and retains the best students and staff from all backgrounds. Whatever role we recruit for we are always striving to increase the diversity of our community, which each individual helps enrich and cultivate. We particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to Black, Asian, people who belong to a minority ethnic community; people who identify as LGBT+; and disabled people. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

Information for disabled candidates

Information for disabled candidates, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our [Accessibility](#) information page or by getting in touch with us at hr@leeds.ac.uk.

Criminal Record Information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending. Any offer of appointment will be in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations in our [Criminal Records](#) information page.