

BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Summary

Job title	Policy Engagement and Communications Associate, Government Outcomes & Effectiveness
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Blavatnik School of Government
Location	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £32,332 - £38,205 per annum
Hours	Full time. Part-time applications at 0.8FTE or above will also be considered
Contract type	Fixed-term 12 months, with possibility of extension subject to availability of external funding
Reporting to	Executive Director, Government Outcomes Lab
Vacancy reference	171723
Additional information	The closing date for applications is 12 noon (UK time) on Monday 8 April 2024

The role

The post holder will work across two flagship programmes hosted by the Blavatnik School of Government, namely the Government Outcomes (GO Lab) and the Blavatnik Index on civil service effectiveness.

The Government Outcomes (GO) Lab is a flagship research centre at the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government, known for research that makes a difference in the world. We are looking for someone who loves connecting people and building networks to help us get valuable research insights into the hands of the people who need them. We are known for our proactive engagement with government, business and civil society, and for helping people who work to improve social outcomes for vulnerable people. This means that we run a busy engagement and communications programme for the global community of policymakers and practitioners that we serve.

The Blavatnik School of Government is refreshing the international index on civil service effectiveness, previously published with partners in 2017 & 2019. The Index allows countries to compare how their national civil services are performing across key themes such as policy making, crisis management, employee engagement and digital services. The goal of the



Index is to improve comparative data and transparency on civil service effectiveness and to support Heads of Civil Services and their colleagues to use peer learning and evidence-based approaches in their civil service reform and improvement approaches.

We are looking for someone who is a natural connector and networker, comfortable engaging with stakeholders across different levels of seniority and professional backgrounds. You should have outstanding communication skills and a curious mind, able to seek out knowledge and have a talent for distilling complex information in an exciting and compelling manner. You should be enthusiastic about creating meaningful opportunities to share learning and research insights to improve public services. Organised and resourceful, you will be instrumental in the delivery of the expansive policy engagement work across both Programmes. You will have the flexibility to work across two programmes, integrating yourself into both teams – and spotting synergies and opportunities for leveraging common themes.

The Policy Engagement and Communications Associate will work with the GO Lab Engagement Team, wider GO Lab team, the Index team and the Blavatnik School Communications team to design and deliver policy engagement activities (peer learning groups, workshops, seminars, training programmes, the Social Outcomes Conference, the Index launch event etc.) and develop tailored knowledge resources and stakeholder communications (e.g. newsletters, policy briefs, case studies) for both Programmes. The activities must reflect GO Lab's standing as a leading centre of expertise on how government can develop fruitful cross-sector partnerships to deliver greater social impact and value and the status of the Index as one of the flagship initiatives of the School. The postholders will be responsible for liaison with a varied range of stakeholders from the UK and internationally. They will be required to represent the GO Lab, the Index and the School at external meetings.

The successful candidate will have excellent interpersonal skills, will be bustling with good ideas for effective engagement and communications to our audiences, and will be organised and meticulous in executing these ideas. They should be a self-starter, with lots of initiative, comfortable working collaboratively with others in a fast-moving and demanding environment. An entrepreneurial, proactive approach to spotting new opportunities to engage with our diverse, global community of stakeholders will be essential. Demonstrable experience of producing and managing online content for a varied range of audiences is also essential.

Responsibilities

Policy Research and Engagement

- Work with the GO Lab Engagement Team, the wider GO Lab, the Index team and the Blavatnik School communications team to deliver communications and engagement strategies for both Programmes;
- Lead specific strands within GO Lab and the Index's expansive programme of convenings. This includes planning and organising events from conception to completion, working closely with the rest of team, other teams within the Blavatnik School and other stakeholders;
- Select and implement appropriate systems for recording relevant information related to GO Lab and Index events, including evaluation and stakeholder feedback; Understand and apply the General Data Protection Regulation as it relates to holding

data on event participants;

- Disseminate research findings at convenings hosted by the GO Lab, the Index team and/or external organisations, ensuring key research findings are communicated effectively to senior policymakers and other relevant stakeholders;
- Create and manage internal and external policy research knowledge products associated to GO Lab and Index convenings (e.g. blog pieces, summary reports, briefing notes, presentation slides, and press releases).

Stakeholder management

- Manage stakeholder relationships with key partners, ensuring they access and use effectively knowledge resources generated by both Programmes, as relevant to their work;
- Coordinate GO Lab's network of peer learning groups, this includes supporting the smooth running of individual groups (as required) and coordinate external facing communications relating to the groups;
- Manage the Index's external advisory boards so as to maximise value to the participants and to the Programme. Develop a programme of impact and engagement activities, including with partners, to support the Index;
- Act as the first point of contact for GO Lab public enquiries and manage the team's shared inboxes: assess the emails received; quickly process routine requests; escalate non-routine items to more senior staff as appropriate;
- Identify and engage with a range of stakeholders and audiences, providing timely and relevant information to them as appropriate.

Knowledge & communications

- Write, edit and proofread a range of communications materials for broad audiences, including newsletters, blog posts, briefings and reports;
- Develop and update online communications for the GO Lab Knowledge Hub, the Index website and social media channels. Work with colleagues across the wider teams to generate high quality content that meets the needs of users; proactively identify and implement ways to enhance the user experience;
- Select and implement appropriate methods for evaluating communications activities, analysing the results to inform future strategy;
- Liaise with the web developers and the School's IT team to optimise functionality of the Knowledge Hub and Index website and interactive tools: adjust or develop new functions as required; swiftly address any issues occurring, identify practical solutions in response to the evolving needs and requirements of both programmes;
- Develop and implement communications and dissemination plans for original research pieces; Work with academic and policy colleagues and graphic designers to develop suitable formats for reports and other research work (ensuring accessibility standards are met); Oversee the production of promotional materials for research and events, including brochures and posters.

The postholder may also be required to perform any other duties appropriate to the grade and nature of the post.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Hold a first degree, ideally in a relevant subject (e.g. public policy, international development, social studies, public administration, social policy);
- Demonstrable success planning and delivering events (hybrid, online and in-person), including exceptional organisational skills and the ability to take initiative;
- A systematic, thorough, and well-organised approach to work, with the ability to prioritise work to deadlines;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to tailor written content for different media and audiences, and present confidently in a variety of professional settings;
- Demonstrable communications experience in print, digital and social media;
- Ability to produce effective web content, working with a content management system and liaising with web developers;
- An understanding of UK and international public sector/civil services, social policy and/or evidence-based policymaking.
- A committed team-player, able to operate outside their organisational silo, and able to work constructively with diverse collaborators in a fast-paced environment;
- Sound judgment working on sensitive topics, often with senior members of other organisations, with the ability to know when to use initiative and when to seek advice;
- Demonstrated ability to develop excellent professional working relationships with a wide range of colleagues, including the ability to cultivate external partnerships through first-rate interpersonal skills; experience of liaising effectively with individuals internationally and at all levels of seniority;
- Excellent IT skills including experience in the use of the Microsoft Office Suite, particularly Outlook, Word and Excel, with proficiency in creating and maintaining spreadsheets;
- A strong commitment to the values and mission of the Blavatnik School of Government and both programmes.

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience of working with senior stakeholders across the research-practice divide, preferably in an academic, public policy or government setting;
- Good understanding of the practice and emerging evidence around the use of outcomes-based approaches, comparative performance systems, and cross sector partnerships for the achievement of better social outcomes;
- Previous research, analysis or writing on public policy.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit

where you worked. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

The Blavatnik School of Government

Our vision is of a world better led, a world better served and a world better governed. We are a global school committed to improving the quality of government and public policymaking worldwide, through three routes: teaching current and future leaders; applied research; and engagement with government and practitioners.

The School was founded in 2010 and our founding dean is [Professor Ngaire Woods](#). We admitted the first 38 Master of Public Policy (MPP) students in 2012 and we currently accept around 140 MPP students and five doctoral students a year.

The Blavatnik School of Government holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all. You can find more information on the [Blavatnik School of Government's website](#).

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application, you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the HR team directly on recruit@bsg.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82** of 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of development opportunities. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme which is available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We have excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as places at many other private nurseries. See <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities for dependants of all types. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

Supporting disability and health-related issues (including menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>. For information about how we support those going through menopause see <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBTQ+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>