

Job Description

Job title	Senior Communications Officer (Oxford Policy Engagement Network)
Division	Social Sciences Division
Department	Social Sciences Divisional Office
Location	Hayes House, 75 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2BQ
Grade and salary	Grade 07S: £36,024 - £44,263 per annum
Hours	Full time (part-time hours at 0.8 FTE can be considered)
Contract type	Fixed-term to 31 July 2025 in the first instance (extension subject to availability of funding)
Reporting to	Research Communications Manager
Vacancy reference	173759
Additional information	<p>Hybrid working arrangements will be considered in consultation with the line manager, but with the expectation of working at least two days per week based in the Divisional Office or occasionally in client/departmental offices across central Oxford.</p> <p>This post will be based in the Social Sciences Divisional Office but has a University-wide remit.</p> <p>Applications for secondment from policymaking organisations are encouraged. This post may also be offered as an internal secondment opportunity. If you are applying for this role as an internal secondment, please note this in your supporting statement, and ensure that you have the approval of your employing department before applying. Please note that there are eligibility requirements for internal secondments.</p>

Context

Launched in 2020, the Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) continues to grow and already connects more than 1,000 researchers and professional services staff in more than 50 departments and faculties at the University who share a vision of public policy powered by the world's best available research evidence and expertise. OPEN's mission is to equip members to share knowledge and expertise



with the policymaking community so that, with them, they can contribute to better policies that protect what is valuable and change the world for the better.

The Policy Engagement Team (PET), which is hosted by the Social Sciences Divisional (SSD) Office, supports the development of the network and delivery of the OPEN Strategy.

The role

The role of Senior Communications Officer (OPEN) is a new one in the PET, created in response to the growing number of researchers, staff, policy professionals and related activities that the team supports. Under the supervision of SSD's Research Communications Manager, the post-holder will play a key role in developing a communications strategy to support the refreshed OPEN Strategy, and lead the development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. With support from the Communications and Events Officer (OPEN), whom the post-holder will supervise, they will produce a range of communications outputs, share these via internal and external channels with research and policymaking communities to alert them to opportunities, keep them informed, and contribute to more effective engagement.

For operational purposes, the PET is integrated into SSD's Research, Impact and Engagement (RIE) Team. The Senior Communications Officer (OPEN) will lend support when needed to the work of the RIE Team.

The RIE Team's core values are:

- Inclusion: we try to foster an open and welcoming research community built on mutual respect for our colleagues' unique backgrounds and experiences, enabling us to tailor our support and help everyone to thrive
- Collaboration: we aspire to work together effectively, leveraging diverse skills, experience and expertise, to share best practices across the division and beyond, and facilitate each other's achievements
- Excellence: we strive to make our best possible contribution to everything we do, responding to the evolving needs of our stakeholders with innovative and creative solutions

Responsibilities

- Work with the Research Communications Manager in developing a revised OPEN communications strategy. Develop and implement communications plans to deliver aspects of the communications strategy.
- Select and implement appropriate methods for evaluating communications activities, analysing the results to inform future strategy.
- Provide economic, efficient and effective day-to-day management of communications expenditure, identifying and contracting external suppliers, facilitating payment of invoices, anticipating, flagging and mitigating risks and issues.
- Manage and develop the Communications and Events Officer (OPEN), providing day-to-day guidance and allocating tasks.

- Oversee the Policy Engagement Team's digital channels (website and social media), working with the Communications & Events Officer (OPEN) to plan and disseminate content, and evaluate engagement.
- Commission, write, edit and proofread communications materials for broad audiences, including newsletters, blog posts, briefs, reports, and other digital content. Develop narrative and video case studies, and oversee social media management. Oversee the production of physical outputs, such as brochures, leaflets and posters.
- Ensure that communications follow OPEN's and the University's guidelines on branding, and encourage others to use them.
- Plan and manage online and in-person talk, workshops, and other events.
- Engage with a range of key stakeholders and audiences (including researchers, the Public Affairs Directorate, Research Services, and other relevant networks/groups) in support of OPEN's vision and mission.
- Be an active member of the University's Communication Community and other relevant networks/groups, to share information, develop and promote best practice, and ensure cross-University communications are effectively co-ordinated.
- Undertake at the request of the Research Communications Manager, Head of Policy Engagement and other senior Social Sciences Divisional officers' other comparable tasks as may reasonably be required to help deliver the University's research, engagement and innovation strategies.

Selection Criteria

Essential

1. Educated to degree level or equivalent professional experience.
2. Extensive experience in a communications, media relations or journalism role, including proven experience in producing effective print, digital and social media content.
3. Excellent writing skills and attention to detail, with a proven ability to communicate complex concepts to a non-specialist audience.
4. Excellent interpersonal skills, including diplomacy, the ability to inspire the confidence of senior colleagues, and experience of successful collaboration with people of diverse professional, national and cultural backgrounds.
5. Experience of planning and delivery of communications via multiple channels with policymakers or other non-academic stakeholders.
6. Experience of managing events involving internal and external audiences.
7. An ability to work independently in a complex environment, taking initiative when necessary and prioritising effectively to meet deadlines.

8. Proficiency in working with a range of computer-based and online applications, including website content management systems.
9. Excellent research and analytical skills, including the ability to interpret complex data.

Desirable

1. Professional qualification in public relations or marketing.
2. Experience of using Drupal.
3. Experience of working in higher education.
4. Knowledge of, or interest in, the challenges of connecting research and 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. 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 Social Sciences Division

The University's academic departments and faculties are organised into four large groups known as Academic Divisions (Social Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS), Medical Sciences, and Humanities). The divisions are responsible for academic strategy and operational planning, oversight of the teaching and research of their constituent departments and faculties, and for personnel and resource management. The social sciences at Oxford are distinctive for both their depth and breadth, with over 1,100 academic and research staff working across fifteen departments, faculties and schools. The Head of the Social Sciences Division is Professor Timothy Power.

The Division is a world-leading centre of research and education in the social sciences. The Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings returned the University of Oxford to the number one spot in the world for Social Sciences in 2022. We have placed first in three of the last five years (2018, 2019 and 2022).

More than 800 researchers were returned to Main Panel C (Social Sciences) for REF 2021 across a diverse range of subject area 'units of assessment' – from geography and business to archaeology and law. Over 55% of the research submitted from the Division was judged to be world-leading (4*, the highest score available). More than two-thirds (69%) of the research's impact was also recognised as world-leading (4*). Research from across the Division was also submitted to subject areas across Panels A (Medicine, health and life sciences), B (Physical sciences, engineering and mathematics), and D (Arts and Humanities), highlighting the enormous breadth and diversity of research expertise across the Division.

Our academic and research staff and students are international thought leaders, generating new evidence, insights and policy tools with which to address some of the major global challenges facing humanity, such as sustainable resource management, poverty and forced migration, effective governance and justice. Particular research highlights in recent years have included [COVID-19](#) and [Climate Change](#). As well as active interdisciplinary links with researchers in other divisions at Oxford, we engage and collaborate extensively with other universities and a wide range of governmental and non-governmental practitioner communities such as law, business, public health and welfare, international development and education around the world. The Division has an extensive portfolio of external funders, partners and supporters, with competitively-awarded external research income exceeding £50 million per year and philanthropic income over £25 million a year.

As part of our commitment to equality of opportunity, eleven of our departments have achieved Bronze awards under the Athena Swan Charter (a UK accreditation scheme recognising organisations' commitment to equality and

diversity, particularly in gender). Our School of Geography and the Environment holds an Athena Swan Silver award. In February 2023, for the first time, the University as a whole was awarded an institutional Athena Swan Silver award, acknowledging the progress that has been made in addressing a number of gender gaps across the University over the last five years.

The Division delivers an exceptional range of high-quality educational programmes all underpinned by the innovative research being undertaken by our academics. The student body is made up of over 2,000 undergraduate students, nearly 3,000 students studying postgraduate taught programmes and 1,200 postgraduate research students. The programmes we offer are wide-ranging, often interdisciplinary and include professionally-oriented provision in areas such as business, law and education. The Division is home to several of Oxford's most widely recognised teaching programmes, such as Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at undergraduate level; and at the Masters level programmes such as the Bachelor in Civil Law (BCL), Environmental Change and Management, International Relations, and Social Data Science.

For more information, please visit: www.socsci.ox.ac.uk.

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 recruiting department directly at recruitment@socsci.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.

Interview expenses

We are able to reimburse reasonable travel expenses incurred by candidates attending an interview in Oxford. We encourage the use of public transport wherever possible. Please note that we do not offer reimbursement for flights, accommodation, or meals.

For further information please review the [claimant guide for travel expenses](#) and guidance on [how to claim expenses](#). If you have any questions about what expenses can be met please contact us before incurring any costs.

Please submit your claim and receipts within one month of the interview date (the guide sets out the evidence required) to recruitment@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

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**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 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, flexible working options, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional 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, 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

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector. Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. 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 (inc 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, LGBT+ 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>