



UK Research
and Innovation

Deputy Director, External Affairs & Communications

UK Research & Innovation

Candidate Prospectus
October 2025

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Candidate Prospectus
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About UKRI

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is an independent, non-departmental public body, which invests £8bn per annum in research and innovation. We bring together nine executive council partners (the seven Research Councils, plus Innovate UK, and Research England) with a shared vision to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. UKRI also provides coordinated strategic advice to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on the balance of funding between research disciplines.

We employ 8,000 staff who support some of the world's most exciting and challenging research projects. We develop and operate some of the most remarkable scientific facilities in the world and work collaboratively with industry, academia and government in exciting partnerships. We are pushing the frontiers of human knowledge through blue skies research and delivering benefits for UK society and the economy through world-class research and business-led innovation.

About the role

As Deputy Director, External Affairs and Communications, you will play a pivotal leadership role, responsible for shaping and delivering an integrated communications strategy that enhances the organisation's visibility, credibility, and influence.

This is a new role, central to creating awareness and understanding of UKRI's mission, impact, and priorities, developing and leading high-impact campaigns, with targeted and insight-led communications to support UKRI's brand, organisational goals and narrative.

As a senior leader, you will play a key role in the External Affairs and Communications function, building capability, fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation, and ensuring UKRI's voice is coherent, compelling, and aligned with national priorities.

Key accountabilities

The Deputy Director, External Affairs & Communications (EAC) is accountable for key areas some of which include:

Key areas of responsibility:

- Working closely with the Chief of External Affairs and Communications and other senior leaders across UKRI, leading on the development, delivery and evolution of UKRI's communications strategy.
- Developing and leading the strategic planning and campaigns approach needed to ensure successful implementation of our communications activity, based on insight, evaluation and effective partnerships.
- Acting as a senior advocate for the communications profession within the organisation and across government.
- Leading, inspiring, building capability, and motivating team and wider EAC colleagues.
- Developing exceptionally strong relationships with communications colleagues in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and across government.
- Building positive relationships internally & externally across key partners and stakeholders within the R&I community
- Leading on developing portfolio led campaigns to deliver our agreed objectives.
- Delivering the communications evaluation function for UKRI, incorporating best practice from the Government Communications Service and other relevant communications bodies
- Define and lead the development and implementation of new policies, procedures, and standard ways of working for communications and engagement.
- As a senior leader, model excellent behaviours in line with organisational values and our people standards.
- Provide sound strategic communications advice to colleagues across the organisation.
- Use your strong interpersonal and negotiation skills along with in-depth knowledge of all communications channels to provide professional leadership to the Communications and Engagement team and the wider organisation.
- Build positive relationships internally with the CEO's office, Executive Committee

About you

You will have the following essential skills and experience:

- A strong track record of shaping and leading high-impact communications and campaign activity across complex, multi-stakeholder environments, including internal teams, academia, industry, government, and the wider public.
- Proven ability to build and sustain effective partnerships across organisational, sectoral, and functional boundaries to deliver strategic objectives and drive collective impact.
- Experience of leading and supporting teams through periods of change and organisational transformation
- In-depth knowledge and experience of driving innovation in communications to improve reach, influence, and organisational effectiveness and senior audiences.
- Recognised as a credible voice within academic, industry, and government communities, with the ability to represent the organisation at senior levels and foster trust and engagement.
- Strong strategic mindset combined with the flexibility to adapt to shifting priorities, manage risks, and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to absorb and distil complex information and influence, negotiate, and persuade across varied and senior audiences.
- Demonstrate high emotional intelligence, resilience under pressure, sound judgement, and the ability to operate effectively in an ambiguous, fast-paced environment.

Terms of appointment

Band: UKRI-Band X

Salary: £94,931 - £117,800 (dependant on skills and experience)

Hours: Full time/Part Time (Minimum of 0.8 FTE)

Contract: Open Ended; secondees and transfers welcome. Job shares also considered.

Location: London or Swindon – hybrid working available with regular office attendance and travel across UKRI offices.

Timescales and selection

The selection process will include a panel interview and presentation. In addition, there will be a Staff Engagement Exercise and further fireside discussions. Interviews will be held in person in London. Please note, dates and details are subject to change.

Process

Closing date

Shortlist panel meeting

Panel interviews

Date

Sunday 2nd November 2025 at 23:55

Thursday 13th November 2025

Wednesday 3rd December in-person
at our London office



How to apply

Please submit your application via the
Careers Portal by 23:55 on Sunday 2nd November 2025

You will need to supply:

- A curriculum vitae (up to two pages).
- A supporting statement/ cover letter (up to two pages).

Your Statement of Suitability should provide specific information about why you believe you would be suitable for appointment for this role. Think about your knowledge, skills, experience, personal attributes, and vision for the organisation, and take full advantage of the space available. Use practical examples where possible and ensure you refer to which of the essential criteria your application is aligned to. Again, please aim for no more than 2 A4 pages.

Please note, failure to provide a supporting statement/cover letter or failure to address the above points may result in your application not being considered further.

You will only be assessed on the content of your CV and supporting statement, and not the 'experience' section of the application of Careers Portal.

To apply via the UKRI Careers Portal you will receive a notification confirming your profile has successfully been created (if you have not previously set up an account) and a second notification confirming your application for this role has been submitted. If you do not receive the second notification confirming your application for this role has been submitted or experience issues applying, please contact seniorrecruitment@ukri.org, so we can ensure your application has been received.



General information



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UKRI believes that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our board and executive positions and bringing in talent, regardless of its origins. We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. We also value diversity of thought and experience and are committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured throughout their time with us.

As a Disability Confident Leader, UKRI will offer interviews to disabled candidates who meet the published minimum requirements for a job or role. Whether you choose to apply under the Disability Confident scheme or not, you can still ask us to make particular adjustments for you when attending an interview.

We know actions speak louder than words. For further information, please visit the UKRI web page: [‘How we support EDI in the workforce’](#)

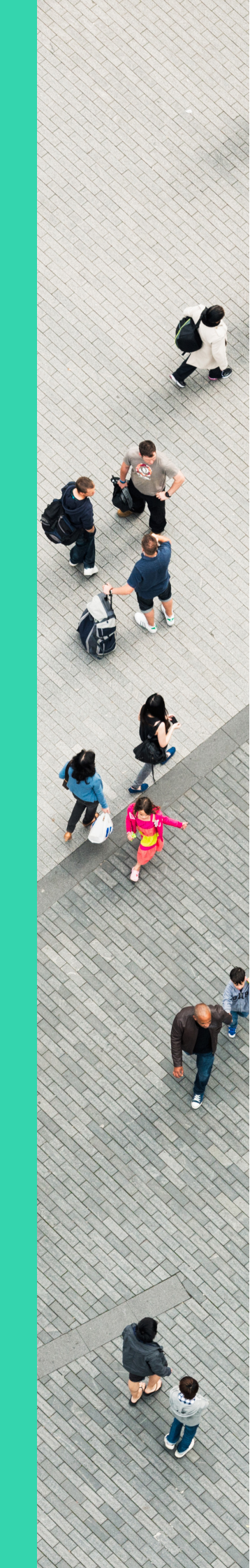
Pre-employment screening



To enable us to hire the very best people and to safeguard our people, our assets and our important role we will conduct a comprehensive pre-employment check on successful applicants as part of the recruitment process.

UKRI supports research in areas that include animal health, agriculture and food security, and bioscience for health which includes research on animals, genetic modification, and stem cell research. Whilst you may not have direct involvement in this type of research, you should consider how this aligns with your personal values or beliefs. Our pre-employment requirements include a security check and an extreme organisation's affiliation check.

The role holder will be required to have the appropriate level of security screening/ vetting required for the role. UKRI reserves the right to run or re-run security clearance as required during the course of employment.



Standards

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

Consistent with the Commissioner's Code of Practice, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates will need to uphold the standards of the UKRI Code of Conduct and conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life, which are:

Selflessness: Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: Carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Complaints Procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Senior Appointments team (SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org) who will make every effort to deal with this and respond to you within 48 hours.

If your complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, you can find information about the steps you can take under [UKRI Complaints Procedure](#).



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