

Role Profile

Role title:	Head of Policy
Salary:	£36,301 - £40,560 per year
Full/Part Time:	Full-Time
Contract term:	Permanent
Accountable to:	Associate Director Student Influence
Accountable for:	Policy Intern (if we're able to secure match funding for this post)
Hours:	35 Hours per Week
Location:	Hybrid: Usually located at the main Students' Union Building (3 days a week) with an option to work some hours remotely
Eligibility:	Open to applicants with relevant skills and experience who are eligible to work in the UK
Benefits:	We offer a great range of benefits. You can see them here .

Our Organisation

We are Manchester Students' Union, the biggest SU in the country, supporting over 47,000 students throughout their time at university. We help to make student life the best it can be by supporting students to campaign for change, creating opportunities to meet new people, providing employment opportunities, providing advice and support and being a safe place on campus.

We are a values-centred organisation that employs around 90 permanent, full-time members of staff. We recruit a wide range of roles throughout the year within all our departments from our Commercial team operating Manchester Academy Venues, 13 Media, Bar 532 & Kitchen and Corridor Coffee to our Student Activities, Student Engagement, Marketing and Communications, Finance, HR and Facilities teams. Our team of around 400 part-time, studying staff are instrumental in providing support to all departments as well as leading major projects like Student Angels. When you join UMSU, you'll be immersed in an environment that empowers staff to make great things happen and we're always on the lookout for innovative, passionate, and proactive people to join us.

Our staff team is led by our senior leadership team who are instrumental in driving our strategy at UMSU. It's made up of our CEO, COO and 3 Directors. We are governed by our trustees and Exec Officers, you can find out more about that [here](#). All our permanent, full-time roles are graded (Grade A-E) which means that there is a clear path to your development and progression whilst at UMSU.

Our Organisational Values

Our values are really important to us and shape the work that we do every day. As part of our recruitment process, we want you to demonstrate how your experiences, behaviours and skills align with our values.

Our values are

- We put students at the heart of what we do
- We provide a 'great experience' service
- We believe in improvement and progression
- We are a community
- We are open and transparent
- We are inclusive

You can find more detailed explanations of our values on [our website](#).

Role Overview

Our context provides a unique and exciting challenge. We are led by a changing political leadership (Exec officer team) every year. We work on a broad range of issues, from housing to transport, from nighttime safety to academic assessment practices, from harm reduction approaches to drugs to decolonising education. We have varying levels of relationship and influence across the university, city and nationally. We are not a single-issue changemaking organisation. We are comfortable with a variety of change making approaches (sometimes multiple approaches deployed at the same time). Our members are diverse and have diverse needs. Our elected leadership have different priorities and different beliefs about which methods create effective change every year. In this context, the student influence team will find ways to create coherence between the things that students care about, the mandates of elected officials, the timings of decisions and discourse in the university/city/nationally and deploying different methods of achieving change. They do this in a way that serves the long-term interests of students and makes the most of short-term opportunities.

The Head of Policy will develop and deliver bold, evidence-based policy work that reflects the lived experiences of students and aligns with the political approach of elected Executive Officers. Working closely with colleagues across the organisation and sector, you'll inform decision-makers, respond to developments affecting the academic and student experience and ensure students' voices are at the heart of the change we seek.

To deliver this role well, all of UMSU's values are important. The ones that most closely align are; putting students at the heart of what we do by using the rich insight and expertise we have on Manchester students to bring about a better academic and wider student experience; and; we are open and transparent, because we must provide transparent reasoning in policy positions to earn the trust of students, staff, and stakeholders.

Key Result Areas

Responsible for	Contributor to
Develop and lead the systems and process to deliver influential policy work. This should be grounded in student-led, evidence-informed arguments for change across the university, Manchester City Region, HE sector bodies and Westminster.	Oversee the production of relevant, valuable, valued, and impactful student experience reports.
Monitor policy developments on issues affecting students and students' unions. Assess and prioritise which consultations or developments the union should respond to from the university,	Support the Associate Director Student Influence to plan and deliver our strategic external engagement in order to focus and drive our wider influencing work. Track progress

local government, regulators, and Westminster. Project manage and finalise these responses, drawing in external expertise where necessary.	against our influencing goals and ensure our actions remain targeted and impactful.
Develop accessible and compelling policy outputs (briefings, consultation responses, reports, speeches, and presentations) for a range of stakeholders, including university leaders, MPs, government officials, and sector partners. Translate complex ideas into clear, persuasive communications that support positive change. Ensure UMSU Executive Officers can use and speak to the work in a confident and engaging way.	Contribute to external coalitions and alliances, attending meetings, aligning with others' work, and championing UMSU's policy priorities. This work will also be done by Executive Officers and senior UMSU staff so it's important to feed insight back into the organisation.
Work closely across the organisation to ensure our policy influencing work is grounded in practice and informed by those delivering services. Ensure UMSU's policy stances are coherent across democratic outputs, Executive Officer team views, student insight and staff expertise. This role will be bridging the gap between corporate and democratic policy implementation.	Ensure a productive working relationship with Greater Manchester Students' Partnership, aligning policy work with GMSP where relevant.
Build strong relationships with policy professionals across the university (e.g. policy and procedures officers, Unit M, Policy at Manchester), local government and public bodies (integrated care board, police and crime commissioner), sector bodies, and Westminster. Using insight from these to feed into work and programmes.	
Build policy skills across the organisation to help teams use the resources we have to be persuasive in their spheres of influence. This involves ensuring this information is held in a central and visible place.	

Organisational Stewardship & Leadership Responsibilities

- You'll guide the work of the team, participating in the development of annual operating plans to support the achievement of strategic aims, holding teams accountable for delivery against these plans
- You'll contribute to the development and delivery of risk mitigating strategies as they relate to departments area of work
- You'll ensure all team are assisting in key students' union events throughout the year such as Welcome week and elections and proactively identify opportunities to support the officers in delivering their plans

- You'll lead teams acting as an exemplar of the Union behaviours ensuring all staff are given appropriate support in line with the Union management framework and teams are consistently held accountable for delivering against expected performance standards (both role performance and behaviours)
- You'll be accountable for the financial performance of area of responsibility taking prompt action where financial targets are at risk. Contribute to the forecasting & budgeting exercises in line with the organisational framework
- You'll own the policy as it relates to departmental activity, have good working knowledge of the Union policy and procedure framework as it relates to the team's function and ensure that all teams activities are conducted in line with this framework
- You'll proactively contribute to maintaining the communal spaces and ensuring whole team share responsibility for managing team stores and keeping areas clean and tidy

Person Specification

Criteria	Assessed at:			
	Application Form	Interview	Interview Task	All
Education				
We accept candidates from any educational background.				
Skills				
Excellent writing skills - able to craft persuasive policy briefings, consultation responses, and reports with clarity and purpose.	x		x	
Strong research and analytical skills - able to sift through evidence and develop insight-driven policy recommendations. Able to learn new concepts		x	x	
Creative thinking – great at thinking outside the box, coming up with new ideas and not being afraid to try different ways of doing things			x	
Communication – confident communicator, displays radical candour through giving and receiving feedback, uses data and knowledge to provide rationale for decision making, is able to flex delivery depending on audience and type of communication (formal report, blog, presentation, committee space)		x	x	
People management – experience of people management which includes; setting clear expectations, holding to account to those expectations, ensuring	x	x		

development of team members, using a coaching approach, resolving challenges in a timely and considered way				
Experience/Knowledge				
Policy or equivalent background - Proven experience to succeed in a policy role and demonstrable experience of using policy and evidence to influence outcomes.				X
Stakeholder engagement – demonstrable experience in building and managing relationships with senior stakeholders and external partners whilst trying to influence them.	X	X		
Organisation and prioritisation- Highly organised, adaptable, and comfortable working in a fast-paced, evolving environment. Enables team to do the same.	X	X		
Personal Attributes				
Accountable – takes ownership over own areas of work, able to own mistakes and resolve accordingly, confident to hold others to account		X		
Interested - Passionate about students and students' issues	X	X		
Growth mindset – willingness to constantly improve, engage in training, ask questions, being curious, looks for ways to improve processes	X	X	X	
Values & Behaviours				
Align with the SU's values and behaviours both personally and professionally				X
Insight driven – always looking for ways to collect data from a range of sources to measure the impact of your work on the student community or to inform your work	X			
Collaborative – great at working collaboratively with team members, seeks ways to ensure all voices are heard, works with colleagues to problem solve		X		
Active Bystander – continually seeks to dismantle barriers, ensures all working practises are accessible, seeks to ensure		X		

all voices are heard and factored in when making decisions				
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Our Recruitment Process

The way that we recruit is designed to be fair, transparent, and inclusive as well as being an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. You should expect to receive great communication and a warm, welcoming experience.

Every member of staff is recruited the same way, by submitting an application form and attending an interview. We use a recruitment platform called StaffSavvy where you'll submit your application and book interviews, if successful.

Our process allows you to show us your authentic self, gives you a platform to display your skills and knowledge in relaxed and welcoming setting. We'll never put you under any necessary pressure on you, ask you trick questions or interrogate you in an interview and we'll support you all the way through our process.

You can find more information about our recruitment process on [our website](#).