

JOB DESCRIPTION

Strategic Communications Lead

College Background

Since its foundation in 1869, Girton College has led the way in educational empowerment. Founded as the UK's first residential institution for the higher education of women, Girton was part of a global movement for the full participation of women in political, professional, and scholarly life.

Fully mixed since 1979, Girton remains an inclusive and supportive community, with academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, and widening participation at its core. Today, the College is home to around 900 students, 150 Fellows, and over 135 professional and operational colleagues.

Set in more than 50 acres of greenbelt, Girton combines rich Victorian heritage with outstanding contemporary facilities, offering a distinctive collegiate environment just outside the centre of Cambridge. The College provides a holistic educational experience, combining academic rigour with a vibrant cultural and social life, and extensive opportunities for personal development.

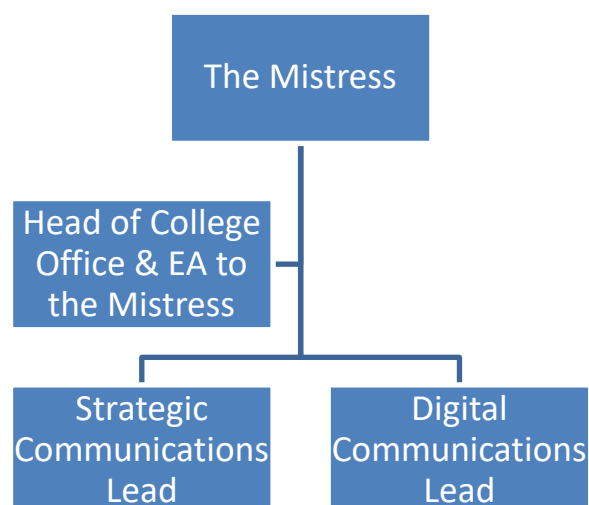
Girton's global community extends well beyond Cambridge, with more than 12,000 alumni in 116 countries. Our founding belief remains as relevant today as it was in 1869: that education can transform individual lives and help shape a better, more inclusive future.

Role Purpose and Department Structure

Team/ Department: Communications Team / College Office

Reporting to: The Mistress – Strategic direction
Head of College Office – Operational day-to-day

Close working with: Digital Communications Lead, Philanthropy and Alumni engagement Office, College Office, Fellows, Student Services, Global Programmes and senior stakeholders across the College.



Purpose of Job

This is a strategic communications role focused on strengthening Girton College's reputation through strategic communications, institutional storytelling and external engagement.

Working closely with the Mistress, Head of College Office and key stakeholders across the College, the post holder will develop and deliver strategic communications that enhance the College's profile, support institutional priorities and build meaningful engagement with external audiences.

The role will lead on media relations, institutional messaging, reputation management and high-profile communications campaigns, working collaboratively with the Digital Communications Lead to ensure communications are effectively delivered across the College's digital channels.

The role complements the Digital Communications Lead by focusing on strategic communications, while the Digital Communications Lead leads the College's digital communications strategy, digital channels, audience engagement and creative delivery.

The role operates collaboratively within the wider Communications team and does not include formal line management responsibility.

Role Duties and Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities of the role are listed below. Please note these are not exhaustive.

External Communications & Reputation

- Develop and deliver strategic communications that strengthen the College's reputation and external profile.
- Identify and develop opportunities to promote Girton's achievements through proactive media engagement and institutional storytelling.
- Develop and maintain clear, consistent messaging that reflects the College's values, priorities and strategic objectives.
- Build and maintain productive relationships with media, external partners and other key stakeholders.
- Provide communications advice and support in relation to reputationally sensitive or high-profile matters.

Strategic Communications & Institutional Storytelling

- Develop strategic communications plans for major College priorities, campaigns and institutional initiatives.
- Build relationships across the College to identify stories, research, achievements and initiatives that showcase Girton's academic excellence and wider community.
- Work closely with Fellows, professional services and the Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement Office to develop compelling institutional stories for a range of audiences.
- Lead the communications approach for major College announcements, campaigns and high-profile projects, including New Courts.
- Support the Mistress in strengthening the College's national and international profile through strategic communications activity.

Media & External Engagement

- Act as the principal communications contact for media enquiries and proactive media opportunities.
- Develop and deliver media opportunities that enhance the College's reputation and profile.
- Prepare briefing materials and key messaging for external engagements.
- Support the Mistress and senior colleagues in preparing for media interviews, presentations and significant external events.
- Develop thought leadership opportunities that promote the expertise of the College, its Fellows and wider community.

Communications Planning & Collaboration

- Develop strategic communications priorities for major College initiatives and campaigns.
- Coordinate messaging across significant communications activity to ensure consistency and alignment with College priorities.
- Work in partnership with the Digital Communications Lead to ensure strategic communications are effectively translated into engaging digital content and campaigns.
- Collaborate with colleagues across the College to support effective planning, coordination and delivery of communications activity.
- Contribute to the continuous improvement of communications planning and ways of working across the College.

Innovation & Continuous Improvement

- Identify opportunities to strengthen strategic communications through innovation, emerging technologies and improved ways of working.
- Promote the effective and responsible use of AI-enabled tools where they enhance communications quality, consistency and efficiency.
- Keep abreast of developments in strategic communications, media and stakeholder engagement, recommending improvements where appropriate.

General

- The post holder will be required to work in accordance with College policies and procedures.
- The post holder will be expected to participate in training designed to minimise occupational risks. This may include manual handling training, safe use of Display Screen Equipment, PREVENT, GDPR and other data protection training and Health & Safety training as advised.
- Any other reasonable duties as requested by the Mistress and Head of College Office & EA to Mistress.

Every job description in the organisation will be subject to a review on an annual basis at the time of the PDR meeting and may be reviewed as a result of a change in strategic direction or operational requirements.

It is the shared responsibility of the role holder and their line manager to ensure that job descriptions are kept up to date.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Short-listing will be based on the following specification, which candidates should bear in mind when preparing their application to ensure that their application and suitability reflects the essential requirements of the role.

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment
Relevant degree or equivalent professional experience.	✓		CV and Cover Letter
Evidence of continuing professional development	✓		
Professional qualification in Communications, PR, Marketing or Journalism.		✓	
Skills and Experience	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment
Significant experience delivering high-quality strategic and external communications	✓		CV and Cover Letter Interview References
Experience developing strategic communications, institutional messaging and reputation-building campaigns.	✓		
Excellent written communication and editorial skills.	✓		
Experience of media relations and proactive press engagement	✓		
Experience managing sensitive or reputationally important communications	✓		
Strong organisational and prioritisation skills	✓		
Excellent judgement, diplomacy and political awareness	✓		
Experience working within a higher education or similarly complex stakeholder environment.	✓		
Experience supporting fundraising, alumni or donor communications.		✓	
Experience using technology and AI-enabled solutions to improve communications	✓		
Experience supporting major events, campaigns or institutional announcements.	✓		
Personal qualities	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment
Ability to build collaborative relationships with senior stakeholders	✓		Interview
Ability to work strategically whilst remaining hands-on in delivery.	✓		
Calm, resilient and able to work effectively under pressure	✓		
Highly self-motivated with the ability to work independently and use initiative	✓		
Flexible, adaptable and solutions-focused	✓		
Strong attention to detail and commitment to high standards	✓		
Pragmatic and delivery-focused, with a willingness to take a hands-on approach	✓		
Curious and open to innovation, with the confidence to challenge existing approaches and introduce new ways of working.	✓		

As an employer, we care for and look after our employees, ensuring fair and equal treatment. Any necessary adjustments will be considered to the above in keeping with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

EMPLOYMENT

Salary	USSS Point 37 - 42 - £34,630 to £39,560 per annum (FTE) (depending on skills and experience).
Working arrangements	Full Time, 35 hours per week.
Contract term	Permanent, subject to a six-month probationary period.
Annual leave	Pro-rata of 26 days paid holiday plus 8 public holidays.
Other	We also offer: - Life Assurance 3 X Annual salary - Employee Assistance Programme - Workplace Pension - Health Cash Plan (MediCash) - Cycle to Work Scheme - Electric Car Scheme - Gym & swimming pool - Free Staff Lunch and refreshments - Staff discount to hold private events in College - Local Discounts via the University - Access to a Holiday Playscheme <i>Some of the above are non-contractual</i>