Senior Policy Analyst role

1. Background

The Russell Group represents 24 leading UK universities which are committed to maintaining the very best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and unrivalled links with business and the public sector. You can find out more about us on our website: http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk.

We aim to ensure that higher education and research policy development is underpinned by a robust evidence base and a commitment to improving life chances, raising aspirations, contributing to economic prosperity and innovation, and to civic responsibility.

Our work on higher education (HE) policy encompasses a wide range of important public policy areas including the economy, industry, the labour market, research and development, tax, welfare and public finances, children and families, regional development, public services and education.

It is an exciting time for HE policy and this post presents an opportunity to make a real contribution to the evolving HE landscape The Russell Group is a leading voice in the sector and provides strategy, policy development, intelligence, communications and advocacy for our member institutions.

2. The Role

2.1 We are looking to recruit a Senior Policy Analyst to undertake research and to provide robust and clear evidence to support the delivery of the Russell Group’s objectives which are to:

- Strengthen the status of Russell Group universities as world-class institutions; and
- Strengthen the ability of Russell Group institutions to compete in a global market.

2.2 The Senior Policy Analyst reports to the Head of Policy (Research and International) and the role is focused on achieving a policy environment which supports our universities’ priorities.

2.3 The role will involve (but not be limited to):

- Taking responsibility for leading the development and direction of Russell Group policy within a defined set of policy areas (see 3.1 below), including the initiation of new areas of activity where needed.
- Managing research projects and outputs.
- Carrying out analysis and research in a number of policy areas (see 3.2 below) in collaboration with Russell Group colleagues and drawing upon inputs from Russell Group universities as appropriate.
- Writing and contributing to high quality, persuasive and evidence-based briefing papers (internal and external), consultation responses, reports and publications on relevant issues for a variety of audiences including government, member universities, and policymakers.
• Contributing to the strategic vision for the Russell Group programme.

• Pro-actively monitoring relevant policy developments to identify potential issues, opportunities, and challenges to inform the development of the Russell Group work programme and develop ideas for evidence-based policy solutions.

• Fostering strong working relationships with existing key partners and stakeholders and identifying and building new relationships where needed.

• Collecting and maintaining information about key activities and developments within Russell Group institutions which relate to Russell Group policy priorities.

• Working very closely with communications staff and contributing directly to outputs including press statements, blogs, opinion pieces and media interviews.

• Representing Russell Group interests externally at events and meetings with stakeholders and policy makers, including public speaking.

• Organising and contributing to Russell Group events, for example by identifying speakers and roundtable participants.

2.4 The Senior Policy Analyst will occasionally be required to carry out other policy or project work in response to work load and capacity requirements within the organisation.

3. Specific areas of responsibility

3.1 This post is to provide maternity cover in the Policy team and the recruitment is being carried out simultaneously with that for a Policy Analyst fixed-term contract/secondment position (also maternity cover) in the same team. Specific areas of responsibility will be agreed with the successful candidates based on their expertise but are likely to include one or more of the following:

- Immigration and visas
- Research
- International
- Innovation

4. Person specification

4.1 We are looking for an experienced, motivated, and flexible individual to undertake research, analysis and policy development. Prior experience of policy analysis and/or policy development is essential.

4.2 Direct experience of research and innovation or immigration policy developed in a relevant role in the civil service, public sector, higher education, or third sector, is desirable. Candidates with policy knowledge and skills gained in other sectors will also be considered.

4.3 Candidates should:

- Have a good track record in policy analysis and development, and strong project management skills
- Take ownership of their projects and require minimal oversight
• Have direct experience of networking and influencing diverse and senior groups of stakeholders as they will directly engage with Vice-Chancellors and senior academics, parliamentarians, business leaders, and policy makers

• Be able to communicate diplomatically in person as well as in writing.

4.4 The following are the key competencies we are looking forward in a Senior Policy Analyst:

Initiative and judgement:

• Prioritise and shape the relevant policy agenda, analysing risks associated with decisions and making recommendations, and then taking accountability for the results

• Demonstrate political sensitivity and think creatively about policy issues

• Propose policy solutions which demonstrate sensitivity to different viewpoints

Management:

• Manage policy projects from start to finish, including managing and motivating others to deliver a project where appropriate

• Lead on stakeholder engagement, developing understanding of the needs of others, the constraints they face and the levers to their engagement; build alliances to establish mutually beneficial working

Communicating and influencing:

• Ensure work across a broad range of areas is persuasive, credible, evidence-based and adapted appropriately to the audience; identify gaps in the evidence base and design solutions to address this

• Work closely with the comms team leading on outputs in policy areas and proactively developing comms strategies

Expert knowledge:

• Continually develop and apply expert knowledge, gathering intelligence from varied sources, analysing and testing it, and drawing evidence-based conclusions. These should be underpinned by an understanding of the broader policy and political environment and reflect a high level of political awareness.

• Use a range of data sources related to policy areas competently, to produce detailed data analyses

• Proactively undertake horizon-scanning activities to identify future challenges and opportunities and develop proposals for action. Where evidence gaps are identified, manage research projects and outputs working with colleagues and external stakeholders where appropriate.
Team working and positive attitude to work:

- Maintain good working relationships with colleagues as part of a small team and build effective alliances with key stakeholders
- Be flexible and adapt positively to sustain performance when situations change, workload increases, tensions rise or priorities shift

5. Terms and Conditions

5.1 This appointment is full time on a 12 month fixed-term contract/secondment (Maternity Leave cover) and will be based in central London.

5.2 The salary will be in the scale of £44,000 - £48,000 dependent on skills and experience. A higher amount may be available for an exceptional candidate.

5.3 Benefits include a generous career average pension and access to a canteen subsidised by the Russell Group.

Application Procedure

Please submit the following to rg.1@russellgroup.ac.uk by the closing date (5pm, Wednesday 3rd July 2019):

1) An up-to-date CV including:
   a. details of your current and past employment including your current salary and your salary expectations
   b. your degree qualification(s)
   c. two references: your current or most recent employer; and a former line manager who could be contacted during the process

2) A supporting statement (maximum 500 words) addressing the following two points:
   a. how your knowledge, skills and experience meet our requirements
   b. why you are interested in working for the Russell Group

The first round of interviews will be carried out in week commencing 8th July 2019.

A second round of interviews for selected candidates will be held in week commencing 15th July 2019.

For a confidential discussion, please contact Paul Purcell on 020 3816 1300.