Strategic relations manager

Role brief

1. Background

This is a new role leading a key part of the customer experience directorate.

The directorate is charged with designing, developing and delivering a cohesive customer experience strategy and organisational approach that ensures and reflects a deep and sustained understanding of our customers’ needs, delivers joined up engagement and support and which informs and drives all Jisc’s operational and strategic priorities – moving Jisc increasingly from a ‘product’ organisation to a ‘solution’ organisation.

All parts of the directorate will champion the customer throughout the engagement lifecycle (forging lasting relationships) and enabling them to get best value from us. The directorate will integrate and direct all “front of house” activity so that Jisc services are more accessible and it is easy to work with us as preferred partners, it will ensure that our supporting infrastructure is modern, innovative and effective and that, in this context, our customer engagement working practices are cohesive and leading edge. Furthermore it will ensure, and support, all this activity with excellent PR, modern and effective internal and external communications and the development of a strong and positive overall Jisc identity and brand.

2. Purpose and scope

The prime purpose is to ensure that Jisc is meetings its aim to develop mutually advantageous partnerships and relationships with organisations in the UK and abroad.

A key element is to be responsible for ensuring that Jisc’s formal partnerships, international collaborations, visiting delegations, and engagement with other organisations are managed effectively.

Another crucial aspect is to ensure that effective systems are developed and implemented so that the Jisc group can have accurate and up to date information on all our key relationships, allowing everyone to engage consistently with personnel in these organisations.

The strategic relations manager will sit within the Jisc group sector intelligence area and the director Jisc group sector intelligence will hold the formal reporting line.
3. Key accountabilities and role outputs

Responsibilities will be expected to be developed and finalised over time and will include but will not be restricted to:

- Develop, review and revise a strategic relations strategy for Jisc, developing and implementing policies and procedures for Jisc’s engagement with formal partners, international organisations, visiting delegations and other organisations. Provide ongoing advice and guidance on the use of these policies and procedures
- Manage international coordinator
- Oversee international engagements and developments and ensure policy and process in line with organisational objectives
- Develop systems to maintain information on all existing key relationships, providing information and briefings on the current status of relationships and activities and their relevance to the Jisc strategy, to Jisc leadership team (JLT) and other key managers as required
- Report to the Jisc JLT on a regular basis and provide a formal annual report on strategic relationship activities. Reports to consider the following:
  - Relevance of all relationship activities to the Jisc strategy
  - Resources, both human and financial, involved in activities
  - Communications between members of JLT and other senior managers and key external organisations
  - Risks, ‘environmental’ factors and long-term impact
  - Evaluate of the overall success of individual relationships, providing advice and recommendations for future activity.
- Maintain a watching brief on relevant organisations, agencies, associations and commercial organisations that operate in areas relevant to the pursuit of the Jisc strategy. Anticipate new relationships, identifying new opportunities for potential formal partnership or collaboration
- Facilitate members of Jisc and the partner organisation through the process to formal partnership, by brokering new arrangements, managing formal memorandums of understanding and establishing suitable management arrangements for the life span of the collaboration.

4. Skills, knowledge and experience

Essential

- Degree or equivalent professional qualification
- Excellent communication, facilitation and interpersonal skills including:
  - An excellent understanding and experience of suitable mechanisms for communicating with a wide variety of stakeholders
  - An ability to negotiate, influence, network and use diplomacy
  - A strong ability to communicate complex information clearly
- A high level of analytical skills and the ability to use initiative, apply creativity and develop innovative solutions to problems
- Several years previous experience of working in an environment of complex inter-organisation operations, preferably at a senior level and within an education or research context, involving substantial partnership activities including managing and brokering partnerships
- Previous experience of collaborating with individuals and coordinating their efforts and previous experience of working with and influencing senior managers and academics

Desirable

- A good understanding of both the further and higher education sectors and of the agencies and organisations that operate in these sectors in the UK and abroad
- A good knowledge of applications of current developments in information and communications technology to the education sector

5. Key contacts
• Jisc chief executive
• Executive director customer experience
• Heads of Jisc corporate functions and senior managers across the organisation
• Jisc leadership team members and teams
• Higher education/further education stakeholders
• Customer and sector representatives at all levels
• Jisc partners and collaborators including commercial providers

Important additional information

The director group sector intelligence will discuss all elements of the role brief with the appointee on appointment and after six months, recognising that some elements may need changing.