

Job Title:	Head of Communications
Reporting to:	Chief Executive
Location to:	Home Based
Date:	June 2025

1. About JCQ

JCQ is the representative body for eight leading awarding bodies offering general and vocational qualifications in the UK including T Levels. The UK awarding body sector is amongst the most diverse in the world and a vital part of the education landscape. JCQ is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, funded by its members: AQA; City and Guilds; CCEA; NCFE; OCR; Pearson, SQA, and WJEC.

JCQ's mission is to reduce bureaucracy for schools and colleges by facilitating and delivering common administrative arrangements for examinations. JCQ helps members work collectively with UK qualification regulators and government departments and undertakes a wide range of activities including publication of VTQ, T Level, GCSE and A level results.

JCQ's core aims are:

1. Reduce bureaucracy for schools and colleges by facilitating and delivering common administrative arrangements for examinations.
2. Provide a forum for strategic debate, information exchange and expression of common interest amongst awarding bodies.
3. Enable member awarding bodies to jointly express views and collectively respond to national issues.
4. Provide a channel for collective discussion with key stakeholders including schools and colleges, the HE sector, teachers, lecturers, examination officers, heads of centres and their representative organisations.

The main objective of JCQ is to enable its members to act together by providing common administrative arrangements for examinations and communicating with a single voice to the media, regulators, government departments, and other stakeholders.

2. Job Purpose

The Head of Communications is an essential senior post at JCQ, interfacing with JCQ members and key external stakeholders, including regulators and government departments across the UK. The appointee will proactively lead, develop and implement JCQ's communications strategy and annual plan of communication activity. This will include oversight of JCQ's website and its media profile, leading on relationships with press and communications colleagues in all of the organisations JCQ works with on a regular basis.

The role will involve:

- Leading the development and implementation of a communications strategy for JCQ, defining and implementing a rolling communications plan to protect and enhance JCQ's reputation.
- Leading on general and vocational and technical qualifications communications activity while representing JCQ at all key regulator and other senior stakeholder meetings.
- Responsibility for managing all JCQ digital content ensuring audience focussed and relevant material is provided in a clear, consistent and timely manner in consultation with JCQ colleagues, members and stakeholders.
- Leading and delivering high impact annual communications strategies and plans on all aspects of JCQ's work, helping to promote awareness of JCQ's annual calendar of support to centres, plus management of additional information and support activities as they arise.
- Ability to explore and utilise customer relations management systems and measure the impact of JCQ's communications work, to continually enhance the performance and reputation of JCQ.
- The Head of Communications will drive forward JCQ's work and reputation, proactively engaging and collaborating with JCQ staff, JCQ members, and external stakeholders including regulators, government departments, teacher associations, learner representative bodies, the media and public across the UK.
- The role requires an individual with excellent interpersonal and communication skills, strategic thinking, an outcome focus, creativity and the capacity to drive forward improved communication channels, enabling JCQ to meet its strategic targets.

3. Principal Responsibilities / Objectives

- Ownership and development of the JCQ's communications strategy, delivery of the communications plan with continual monitoring, annual evaluation and reporting with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Lead engagement with, and develop positive relationships with key opinion leaders, colleagues within the regulatory organisations such as Ofqual, awarding bodies, government departments across the UK, and key customer groups, as required.
- Inspire, lead and develop JCQ's approach to communication with stakeholders, media and the public.
- Proactively assess and monitor usage and trends relevant to JCQ's work to redevelop and shape communications activities so that JCQ's information and services are as accessible as possible.
- Responsible for sharing insight and intelligence with other JCQ staff to help shape JCQ's future work programme so it achieves the best outcome for centre staff and its members. Act as a strong ambassador for JCQ, able to represent JCQ at external conferences and different media channels.
- Provide overall leadership, management and development of the JCQ member Communications Group and Teacher Association Forum.
- Lead the JCQ's annual results days briefings with the support and input of JCQ staff and members.
- Oversee the work associated with the JCQ Teacher Associations' Forum meetings, ensuring JCQ maximises its contact and works collaboratively.

- Work closely and proactively with all areas of the organisation including Chairs of JCQ's network of committees, enabling them to meet their communication objectives.
- Develop and implement the JCQ's strategy and annual operating plan from a communication function perspective.
- Lead on relationships with press and media and be responsible for JCQ's media profile and social media strategy and operation, including writing of press proactive and reactive lines to take, blogs and presentations.
- Provide guidance and direction in terms of technological platforms in relation to customer facing communications (i.e. website, social, customer relationship management, webinars).
- Support the management of managers across JCQ including any communications staff, temporary contractors and external agencies involved in supporting the work of JCQ from time to time.
- Manage the communications budget, forecasting and cost control.
- Lead on all aspects of JCQ's website redevelopment project and ongoing performance monitoring.
- Deputise for the JCQ Chief Executive as required from time-to-time.
- Any other relevant tasks as directed by line manager.

4. Person Specification

The post holder will have:

Criteria	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)
Demonstrable experience of developing and implementing an effective communications strategy.	E
Essential Proven experience of producing high quality written communications, including speeches and presentations.	E
Essential Experience in managing multi-disciplinary communications teams to achieve challenging outcomes.	E
Essential Demonstrable experience of working successfully with the media	E
A successful track record of influencing and working with senior stakeholders, internally and externally, to develop and maintain effective, open and productive working relationships and achieve consensus.	E
Experience of managing and developing the quality of communications products and channels.	E
Experience of leading the development and implementation of highly effective internal communications strategy.	D

Technical Qualifications/Knowledge:	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)
Level 6 qualification or equivalent experience	E
Understanding of government and awarding body communications	E
Understanding of effective and strategic approaches to communications	E
Institute of Public Relations membership/qualification or equivalent postgraduate or professional communications qualification or demonstrable level experience	D
Good understanding of the education sector, qualification delivery and assessment, political and policy context	E

Excellent project management skills, able to use a range of tools to facilitate collaborative working.	E
Understanding of content management systems and optimisation, web analytics and search engine optimisation (SEO) tactics.	E
Procurement and supply chain management experience, using external agencies to support website maintenance and development and managing budgets to achieve value for money.	E

5. JCQ value based competences

Results Focused

- Strives to meet or exceed ambitious performance objectives and quality standards.
- Has pride in the JCQ and in their own working practices.
- Adds value by delivering results through continually finding sustainable improvements in methods and processes.
- Seeks to improve their performance and sets themselves demanding standards.

Member and Team Focussed

- Demonstrates a desire to help members and customers in a way that best meets their needs.
- Makes efforts to understand member and stakeholder expectations and providing a high quality service for a long-lasting and mutually satisfactory relationship.
- Personally contributes to effective team working by working collaboratively with others.
- Understands the needs and goals of others and adapts their own views and behaviour when appropriate.
- Accepts help from others.
- Communicates constructively, honestly and openly with colleagues.
- Takes responsibility for events or outcomes.
- Holds self and others accountable for decisions, actions and commitments.

Development Focussed

- Clearly communicates and reinforces the importance of development and learning as a priority.
- Identifies and understands personal strengths and improvement areas for self and others.
- Seeks and is open to improvement in ability and skills.
- Seeks to develop the knowledge, skill and motivation of self and others.
- Actively encourages others to exercise initiative and judgment.
- Observes others and gives specific and regular constructive feedback.

Leadership

- Helps create an environment and culture that shares the vision and direction of the JCQ.
- Be a champion of diversity and inclusion consistent with the values of JCQ and its members.
- Sets clear goals and work parameters for others to follow and help others to develop plans.
- Ensures expectations are clear and specific.
- Provides regular constructive feedback and recognises the accomplishment of others, privately and publicly.

Communication

- Can communicate at all levels using various, appropriate methods of communication.
- Communicates in a clear and persuasive manner within and outside the JCQ.
- Actively listens taking others' views into account, is able to put forward arguments and influence decisions and achieve positive outcomes.
- Gains respect by operating in a professional and credible manner.

Change

- Seeks opportunities to improve processes and drive change. Proactively initiates innovative ideas and actions.
- Is flexible and open to new ideas.
- Manages or participates in the change process.
- Remains positive despite setbacks, changes and ambiguities.

6. Benefits

- **Salary:** £65,000 - £85,000 – dependent on experience and current package.
- **Annual Leave:** 25 days rising by 1 day per full year of service to a maximum of 30 days.
- **Pension:** Enrolment in the JCQ pension scheme upon joining the organisation, with an employer contribution of 10%.
- **Home Based:** with occasional travel to stakeholder and company meetings, standard travel costs reimbursed.
- **Life Cover:** 3 x annual salary.
- **Family Friendly Policies:** Enhanced leave and pay available.
- **Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health:** 24/7 wellbeing support, counselling, mobile app promoting physical and mental wellbeing.

7. How to Apply

To apply for this exciting opportunity, please email your CV and a supporting letter outlining how your experience and skills match the requirements outlined in the job description above to recruitment@jcq.org.uk. **Any applications that do not include a detailed cover letter addressing the criteria, knowledge, qualifications, and experience required for this role will be automatically rejected.** The desirable requirements will be used to determine shortlisted applicants if there is considerable interest in the post.

If you wish to have a confidential discussion about this role, please contact recruitment@jcq.org.uk.

- The closing date for applications which must include a covering letter and CV is 4 July 2025 4pm.
- Shortlisting will take place the week commencing 7 July 2025.

JOB DESCRIPTION



Joint Council for
Qualifications ^{CIC}

- Interviews will be held circa week commencing 21 July 2025.
- Unfortunately, interviews cannot be arranged for alternative dates.