
Senior Communications Officer

Recruitment pack

June 2026



The Institute for
Research in Schools

researchinschools.org

Senior Communications Officer

Recruitment Pack- June 2026

Role: Senior Communications Officer

Responsible to: Head of Communications

Working hours: 30-37.5 hours per week

Location: Home-based with occasional travel throughout the UK

Benefits: £42,000 pro rata, 10% pension, 30 days leave plus public holidays, CPD, employee assistance programme

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) wants to change the culture in UK education so that authentic research and innovation is part of every young person's experience. We're looking for a skilled and thoughtful communications professional to join our small, collaborative and ambitious team as Senior Communications Officer. This is a hands-on role for someone who can turn organisational priorities into clear, useful and engaging communications across a range of channels and audiences.

Reporting to the Head of Communications, you'll play an important role in helping IRIS deliver communications activity that supports our strategic objectives and strengthens our profile, reputation and reach. You'll work across content, campaigns, publications and PR, helping to translate organisational priorities into clear, accurate and effective communications for different audiences and channels.

What you'll be doing:

- **Support the planning and delivery of communications campaigns** – helping to shape clear objectives, audiences, messages and timelines in line with IRIS' communications strategy
- **Create strong content independently and collaboratively** – writing and editing stories, articles, blogs, scripts and campaign copy that is accurate, engaging and accessible
- **Contribute to media and external communications activity** – drafting press materials, responding to enquiries and helping to identify opportunities to raise awareness of IRIS' work across education, STEM and policy conversations
- **Maintain quality and consistency across outputs** – coordinating a busy pipeline of resources, publications and materials, including content for colleagues across the organisation, and supporting work on reports, briefings and other policy-related outputs

This is an exciting time to join IRIS. As we continue to grow our reach and influence, this role will help ensure our communications are thoughtful, high quality and aligned with our wider organisational priorities.

We are keen to recruit from as wide a talent pool as possible, in terms of both personal and professional background. We welcome applications from any individuals regardless of age, sex, disability, ethnicity or personal circumstances.

About IRIS

The Institute for Research in Schools (IRIS) was founded on the belief that young people have the capacity to change the world. If their education empowers them with the right tools, school-aged students can contribute to the community of scientific research right now.

Despite the evolution of IRIS over the last few years, this founding belief continues to be central to what we do. Our mission is to change the culture in UK education so that authentic research and innovation is part of every young person's experience. We do this by:

- Creating opportunities for students to participate in cutting-edge STEM research and collaborate with leading universities and institutions while still at school
- Evidencing the impact of students carrying out research while still at school
- Facilitating a research culture by influencing and demonstrating best practice of STEM research and innovation in schools.

As a charity, everything we do is driven by our moral purpose; to capture talent and break down barriers that impact underrepresented young people in STEM.

How to apply

We are inviting applications via completion of an [IRIS application form](#). Applications in different formats will not be considered. All applications should be accompanied by a completed [Diversity Monitoring form](#).

Applications should address:

- Why you wish to take on this role.
- What you can bring to the post.
- How you meet the criteria as stated in the job description and person specification.

If you wish to have an informal conversation about the role prior to applying, please contact Kersti Fourcin, Head of Communications by email at info@researchinschools.org ensuring that the subject of your email is ***Inquiry – Senior Communications Officer***.

The key dates to note for the recruitment process:

- **Sunday 21 June 2026:** Deadline for applications, which should be emailed to info@researchinschools.org with the subject heading ***IRIS Application – Senior Communications Officer***.
- **Wednesday 1 July 2026:** first stage candidates will be invited to online shortlisting interviews. If you have not received an invitation to a shortlisting interview by 28th June 2026 you should assume that your application has not been taken forward to this stage.
- **Monday 13 July 2026:** formal interviews in Leeds for shortlisted candidates.
- **September / October 2026:** the successful candidate will commence in post.

Please note that candidates must have the right to live and work in the UK. The successful candidate will be employed under UK law. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. An online search based on the information provided by shortlisted candidates will also be conducted. Appointment will be contingent on a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check. All applications and recruitment records for unsuccessful candidates will be retained for a period of 12 months before being securely deleted.

Job Description	Senior Communications Officer
Responsible to	Head of Communications
Working hours	30 - 37.5 hours per week
Contract	24-month fixed term (extension subject to Trustee approval)
Location	Home working
Benefits	£42k pro-rata + 10% pension + 30 days leave plus public holidays, CPD, employee assistance programme

Purpose of the Job:

Reporting to the Head of Communications, the Senior Communications Officer ensures the delivery of communications activity that advances IRIS' strategic objectives and strengthens the organisation's profile, reputation and reach. The postholder will play an important role in translating organisational priorities into clear, accurate and effective communications across a range of channels and audiences.

The role has particular responsibility for supporting the planning and delivery of high-quality content, campaigns and publications, alongside contributing to and advising on IRIS' media and external communications activity. This includes identifying and developing stories, drafting and editing content across IRIS channels, supporting proactive and reactive press work, and helping to ensure consistency of messaging, tone and quality across outputs. Working closely with colleagues across the organisation and with external partners, the Senior Communications Officer will support communications activity that raises awareness of IRIS' work, engages key stakeholders, and strengthens IRIS' voice across education and policy conversations.

Main Duties

Campaigns and Content

- Advise on, plan and deliver integrated communications campaigns in line with IRIS' communications strategy, setting clear objectives, audiences, key messages and timelines.
- Write and edit content for IRIS-owned channels, working with colleagues to source stories and evidence.
- Write blogs, articles and thought-leadership pieces (and support others to contribute), ensuring accuracy, clarity, accessibility and consistency of tone.
- Write scripts and supporting copy for video and animation, coordinating with the Digital Communications Officer and Graphic Designer to deliver final assets.
- Identify and draft stories and impact case studies for IRIS channels, working with the Digital Communications Officer to publish and optimise content using performance insights.
- Build and maintain relationships with partners across the science and education sectors to support collaborative content, joint communications and shared learning.

Operational Communications

- Maintain editorial standards across published materials, ensuring consistency of messaging, tone and quality across the organisation's outputs.
- Coordinate the production pipeline for IRIS' 150+ resources for schools each year, ensuring quality, consistency and alignment with brand guidelines.
- Work with the Digital Communications Officer to provide and refine website content, ensuring published information is accurate, current and aligned with wider communications priorities.
- Provide operational support for communications around major events including conferences and policy activity.

Media and External Communications

- Draft and distribute press releases, media statements and reactive communications, working closely with the Head of Communications.
- Respond to routine media enquiries and journalist requests, escalating to the Head of Communications where strategic judgement is required.
- Spot and develop media opportunities, pitching stories and placing spokespeople and content where appropriate, in line with IRIS priorities and agreed messaging.
- Build and maintain a media contacts database relevant to IRIS' priority audiences in education, STEM and policy.
- Source and coordinate PR and communications materials from across IRIS' programmes, including case studies, photography, video and school stories.

Policy Communications

- Advise on communications outputs to support IRIS' policy objectives.
- Support the Head of Communications and colleagues in Policy and Impact to produce content for policy outputs, including briefings, reports, collaborative communications, Trustee papers and press materials.
- Contribute to the development and maintenance of IRIS' core narrative and messaging framework, ensuring it is applied consistently across all outputs.

This is not an exhaustive list of the duties that may need to be undertaken. It may be necessary to undertake other duties to fulfil the objectives of the charity.

Person Specification

Person Specification	Senior Communications Officer	
Criteria	Essential attributes	Assessment
Education and Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Degree-level qualification or equivalent professional experience in communications, PR, marketing, journalism or a related discipline.• A high standard of written and spoken English.	Application
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of managing communications output in a busy organisation, including editorial, digital and print production.• Experience of coordinating the work of others and working collaboratively across teams to deliver to deadline.• Significant experience of managing a production pipeline for multiple publications or resources to deadline.• Experience of brand management and ensuring consistency across a range of outputs.• Hands-on experience of press office work, including responding to journalist enquiries, drafting press releases and reactive statements, with sound judgement on risk, approvals and escalation.• Experience of contributing to communications strategy and translating organisational priorities into clear, effective communications activity.• Experience of leading communications campaigns from development to delivery and evaluation, with	Application / Interview

	<p>clear objectives, audience focus and measurable outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working within the education and/or charity sector (desirable). 	
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working understanding of website content management, social media platforms and email marketing, sufficient to collaborate effectively on digital delivery. • Knowledge of editorial processes, including copyediting, proofreading and production management. • Understanding of how communications supports organisational strategy in a charity context. • Awareness of the media landscape relevant to education and STEM (desirable). 	Application / Interview
Skills and Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent editorial and writing skills, with the ability to produce clear, engaging content for diverse audiences. • Strong organisational and project management skills, with the ability to manage multiple deadlines and competing priorities. • Ability to coordinate input from colleagues and suppliers, prioritising tasks to maintain quality and pace across multiple deadlines. • Ability to interpret channel metrics and apply insights to improve content and campaign performance. • Good interpersonal skills, with the ability to work collaboratively across an organisation and manage expectations from multiple internal stakeholders. • Proficiency in content management systems, Microsoft Office and design or publishing tools. • Attention to detail and commitment to quality across all outputs. 	Application / Interview
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised, reliable and able to keep a busy communications operation running smoothly. • Proactive and practical, able to anticipate issues and respond independently with good judgement. • Collaborative and supportive, with the ability to work within a small, interdependent team. • Confident working with senior colleagues, able to flag issues and recommend priorities to the Head of Communications. • Committed to IRIS' mission and values. • Professional and calm under pressure. 	Interview
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able and willing to travel within the UK on occasion to support events, conferences and school visits. • Able and willing to work outside normal office hours on occasion, with TOIL accrued. 	Application / Interview