



wada

Global  
Learning and  
Development  
Framework



# Communications and Media Relations Role Descriptor

The role descriptor will support the anti-doping industry by clarifying the main characteristics of key anti-doping roles. It can be used to support the development of a job description when an Anti-Doping Organization (ADO) aims to recruit a communications and media relations practitioner. ADOs should tailor this role descriptor to their specific needs and realities.

The communications and media relations role descriptor provides a high-level overview of this role and includes:

Key purpose of the Communications and Media role

Role summary

Key responsibilities

Qualities and attributes

Qualifications and experience

Typical employer organizations

Example of job titles

Career progression and professional development opportunities for the practitioner undertaking this role



## Key purpose of the role

The communications and media relations role contributes to the ADO's anti-doping program by informing and engaging stakeholders to build confidence and trust in anti-doping, helping to protect the credibility of sport.

The allocation of functions covered by this role to one person or a team of people across the anti-doping organization (ADO) will depend on the size and capacity of the organization, as well as the national and/or international context.



## Role Summary

The communications and media relations role is responsible for the creation and publication of content that will showcase the ADO's activities and operations, and to respond to and to (re)act/respond with communication measures to evolving situations and inquiries.



## Key responsibilities

The responsibilities of the communications and media relations role typically involve:

Developing communications and public relations plans and strategies to inform internal processes and to inform external stakeholders and the ADO's various target audiences

Researching, writing and/or producing, editing, and proofreading communication content, including brochures, website copy, presentations, speeches, briefing notes

Respond to media inquiries and provide writing support for a variety of media, including backgrounders, speaking notes, articles, news releases, for distribution or publication

Managing owned communication channels and monitoring all relevant media.

Developing organization-wide communication standards, processes, formats, tools, and media channels

Building beneficial and trustful relations with athletes, sport and anti-doping stakeholders, public authorities, and media partners

Managing internal communication.

Maintaining contact with the media, arranging interviews and news conferences



## Qualities and attributes

Common and looked after values in the anti-doping industry, which should be checked for in candidates to the position, are:

**Integrity** (equity, justice, fairness, courage, accountability)

**Excellence** (professionalism, innovation, quality, competence)

**Respect** (honesty, openness, inclusion, diversity)

**Collaboration** (engagement, teamwork)

**Dedication** (passion)

The Core Competency Framework for Anti-Doping Practitioners further describes these core values with

descriptive statements and captures the competencies that are common across the various roles of the anti-doping industry. It is a useful tool to refer to if the ADO seeks to further develop the list of qualities and attributes that a candidate to any position in anti-doping should be able to demonstrate.

The communications and media relations role involves responding to evolving situations and inquiries as well as dealing with people, with time constraints and reputational stakes for the organization. Therefore, soft skills (as opposed to the required qualifications and experience described below) are of particular importance for this role.

Based on the results of a survey that was circulated among communications and media relations practitioners across the anti-doping industry in 2021, a list of skills was identified as necessary for the profession. The following list details skills deemed as essential by 75% of respondents. Such skills should be assessed in candidates applying for a communications and media relations role:

- Writing
- Ability to deal with internal and external stakeholders
- Planning
- Ability to work with sensitive information and maintain confidentiality
- Ability to present complex technical content & topics in engaging plain language/formats
- Ability to appropriately target communications to the audience
- Ability to give and receive feedback
- Teamwork collaboration
- Goal setting
- Time management/ prioritization
- Willingness and ability to learn
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Analytical and logical thinking
- Attention to detail
- Being able to use word processing spreadsheets, social media, data visualization and email communication
- Ability to work in compliance with code, standards, ethics
- Listening
- Strategic thinking
- Emotional intelligence
- Ability to multi-task
- Speaking
- Ability to adapt writing style to platform



## Qualifications and experience

The functions to be covered by the communications and media relations role are to some extent different depending on whether they pertain to communications or to media relations, and therefore may require different types of qualifications and prior experience. Candidates for the role might be able to display an academic and/or professional background that is more strongly suited to one or the other aspect. Some ADOs might have the capacity to recruit different profiles to accommodate the required versatility and breadth of experience for this role, but others may only have one position available, in which case the organization may need to look into either outsourcing part of the functions to external service providers (such as communication agencies) or investing in the professional development of in-house staff to acquire the required skills and competencies. Experience in assessing media landscapes would be useful for this role.

In terms of qualifications, holding a degree in journalism, mass communications, public relations, communication and media, media science, sports management, marketing, or an equivalent qualification is a requirement for this role.

With regards to prior professional experience, candidates to the position should be able to demonstrate:

- For candidates with more of a media relations profile: experience in print or broadcast journalism, or in public relations/media liaison, preferably in a sports-related field
- For candidates with more of a communications profile: experience in communications and/or marketing, with a demonstrated ability to develop communications strategy and produce content, as well as a familiarity with social media platforms and other relevant channels

Although not indispensable, prior knowledge and/or experience in the following areas are important assets for a communications and media relations position in anti-doping:

- Working knowledge of the sport and anti-doping systems' structures at national, regional, and international level
- Understanding of the relevant technical and governance aspects of anti-doping at national and international level
- Knowledge of the Code and of the international standards



## Examples of job titles

Media Officer/Manager

Media Relations Officer/Specialist/Manager

Communication Officer/Manager

Digital communications Officer/Manager

Engagement specialist

Content Lead/Manager



## Typical employer organisations

National Anti-Doping Organization (NADO)

Regional Anti-Doping Organization (RADO)

International Sports Federation (IF)

Major Event Organization (MEO)

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)



## Career progression and professional development

Career progression opportunities for communications and media relations practitioners in the anti-doping industry aren't necessarily linear. However, the nature of their daily activities within ADOs enables them to develop critical soft skills (such as crisis-management, time-management, strategic thinking, ability to work under pressure and to be responsive to quickly changing contexts) and transversal knowledge about anti-doping programs and their different components, that positions them for organic progression towards decision-making roles.

In order to foster their lifelong learning capital, communications and media relations practitioners can invest in further professional development which may include professional certifications in computer applications, project management, video / new media production, marketing, education (e.g. delivery of media training), crisis communication management, media planning/digital marketing, leadership training, corporate communication, public affairs, sustainable communication, presentation design and delivery skills. Membership in diverse communication groups, conferences/congresses on trends in the profession could further the development as well.

## Collaborators

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WADA, while leading the standard setting work to develop the role descriptors, works collaboratively with stakeholders and WADA technical teams. The development work for Communications and Media was conducted by a Technical Working Group composed of Communications and Media practitioners:

- Aditya Kumar - AIU
- Andy Colquhoun - South African Rugby Union
- Elvis Gitau - ADAK
- Eva Bunthoff – NADA Germany
- James Fitzgerald - WADA
- Marta Nawrocka - ITA
- Megan Cumming - CCES
- Vanessa Reid-Ledford - JADCO

This group was chaired by Education practitioners from the anti-doping industry:

- Catherine Coley - AFLD

## Quality Management

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### Version: 1.0

*\*While WADA will update this document regularly to ensure it remains up-to-date, version 1.0 specifically is published as part of a pilot project and will be reviewed at the conclusion of the pilot.\**

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## GDLF Overview

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One of WADA's six priorities under the World Anti-Doping Agency's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is to 'Grow Impact'. As one of the key initiatives under this priority, the Agency has committed 'to developing training programs and qualifications standards for anti-doping professionals to improve professionalism and enhance the capabilities of the anti-doping workforce'.

Accordingly, in April 2020, WADA's Education Department commenced development of a Global Learning and Development Framework (GLDF), through which specific, standardized training for a range of anti-doping roles are being developed and made available for Anti-Doping Organizations (ADOs) and other stakeholders worldwide within the anti-doping ecosystem. The GLDF establishes role descriptors, professional standards and global learning and development activities for practitioner roles in the anti-doping industry.

The role descriptors have been used by WADA to develop competency-based training programs. They can be read alongside:

- (1) the professional standards for the corresponding role, which describe the expected standard of competence for a given role
- (2) the anti-doping core competency framework, which details the values and competencies that are common across the various roles in the anti-doping industry.

*\*\* The Professional (occupational) Standards are the benchmarks of good practice and describe the expected standard of competence for a given role. They should not be confused with the International Standards, which are a set of documents that, along with the World Anti-Doping Code, seek to harmonize anti-doping policies, rules and regulations among Anti-Doping Organizations (ADOs) for specific technical and operational parts of anti-doping programs.\*\**