

UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY



Communications Policy

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Definition of Terms

Brand Identity: The collective perception of UMU, defined by its visual elements (logo, colors, and design), messaging tone, values, and overall reputation. It reflects the university's uniqueness and strengthens its competitive positioning.

Channels of communication- specific means or mediums used to transmit messages.

Communication: The dynamic exchange of information through verbal, written, digital, and visual means to achieve mutual understanding among stakeholders. This encompasses formal and informal interactions, ensuring messages are accessible, accurate, and impactful.

Confidentiality- means any information that requires protection from unauthorized access or disclosure this includes but is not limited to stakeholders' personal details and information, sensitive University information, proprietary knowledge, legal agreements including information protected under non-disclosure agreements.

Crisis Communication: A systematic approach to managing and disseminating information during critical incidents, such as emergencies, scandals, or natural disasters, to safeguard UMU's reputation and ensure stakeholder confidence.

Digital Platforms: Technology-based tools and channels, including UMU's official website, social media accounts, email systems, and online learning platforms, are utilized for sharing information, engaging audiences, and providing real-time updates.

Engagement: The active involvement and participation of stakeholders in UMU's initiatives, fostering collaboration and shared ownership of its mission and vision.

Ethical Communication: Adherence to principles of fairness, respect, and integrity in all interactions, ensuring that all communications are truthful, respectful, and free from bias or manipulation.

External Communication: Strategically crafted messages directed toward audiences outside UMU, such as prospective students, parents, alumni, government agencies, and the media. This form of communication aims to enhance the university's public image, build meaningful relationships, and convey UMU's contributions to society.

Feedback Mechanism: Established channels through which stakeholders can provide input, suggestions, or concerns, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and mutual respect.

Holistic Education: An approach to learning that goes beyond academics to integrate intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and ethical growth, preparing students to be innovative, compassionate, and socially responsible leaders.

Internal Communication: A structured approach to information sharing and coordination within UMU. It includes circulars, emails, meetings, newsletters, and other mechanisms aimed at fostering teamwork, ensuring clarity of roles, and supporting a cohesive university community.

Media Engagement: Proactive and reactive communication with journalists, editors, and media organizations to highlight UMU's achievements, address public concerns, and shape narratives that reflect the university's vision and values.

Policy Implementation: The execution of outlined principles and procedures within this Communications Policy, ensuring they are effectively integrated into UMU's operational and strategic framework.

Public Relations: Activities aimed at creating and maintaining a positive image of UMU among its internal and external audiences, including event organization, press releases, and outreach programs.

Stakeholders: All entities or individuals connected to or affected by UMU's activities. This includes internal stakeholders (students, faculty, and staff) and external stakeholders (alumni, donors, partners, policymakers, and the broader public).

Strategic Communication: A planned and deliberate process of delivering consistent and targeted messages that support UMU's goals, enhance its reputation, and align with its core mission and vision. This includes campaigns, advocacy efforts, and public statements.

Transparency: The practice of maintaining openness and honesty in all communications, ensuring that stakeholders are well-informed and trust in UMU's decision-making processes is upheld.

Abbreviations/Acronyms

PRO	Public Relations Officer
UMU	Uganda Martyrs University
UMUAA	Uganda Martyrs University Alumni Association
VC	Vice Chancellor

1.0 Introduction

Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) is steadfast in its commitment to fostering an environment defined by transparency, integrity, and excellence across all its operations. Recognizing that effective communication is integral to fulfilling its mission of providing holistic education rooted in intellectual, spiritual, and moral development, UMU embraces the transformative power of clear, purposeful, and inclusive dialogue.

This Communications Policy serves as a cornerstone for guiding internal and external communications, ensuring alignment with UMU's core values and strategic objectives. Anchored in the university's strategic plan, it reflects UMU's proactive adaptation to the evolving landscape of technological advancements and global competition. The policy underscores the importance of clarity, consistency, and strategic intent in all forms of communication, whether academic publications, media engagement, digital platforms, or interpersonal interactions.

The Uganda Martyrs University Communications Policy aims to establish comprehensive communication protocols that elevate UMU's visibility, deepen stakeholder engagement, and advance its mission of nurturing students into responsible leaders and ethical professionals. Through the implementation of this policy, UMU aspires to reinforce its identity, foster collaboration, and achieve its long-term goals with unwavering integrity and excellence.

2.0 Purpose of the policy

To create a dynamic, transparent, and inclusive communication ecosystem that enhances the university's reputation, fosters meaningful connections among stakeholders, and drives institutional growth.

3.0 Rationale of the policy

This policy seeks to enhance the UMU brand and ensure consistency across all communication channels by promoting systematic and proper communication practices. It also seeks to balance the principles of freedom of expression with the responsibility that comes with communication, ensuring that all stakeholders uphold the university's values of integrity, respect, and excellence in all public engagements. In essence, the policy supports communication that not only strengthens the university's reputation but also adheres to ethical standards, creating a culture of openness while safeguarding the institution's mission and vision.

4.0 Objectives of the policy

- a) To ensure that all communication reflects a consistent message that is aligned with UMU's mission, vision, and core values.
- b) To strengthen UMU's public image and brand identity through clear, strategic, and professional communication.
- c) To promote open, timely, and transparent communication between the university, its internal stakeholders (students, campuses, faculties, and staff), and external audiences (alumni, media, partners, and the general public).
- d) To encourage proactive and inclusive communication practices that foster active engagement with the university's stakeholders.
- e) To establish clear guidelines for effective communication in crisis or emergency situations.
- f) To uphold high standards of accuracy, responsibility, and professionalism in all communication efforts, ensuring a balance between freedom of expression and the responsibilities associated with institutional communication.

5.0 Scope of the policy

The policy is binding for all UMU employees, students, and affiliates. To this, non-compliance may lead to disciplinary measures. It grants the Public Relations and Marketing Department the authority to oversee and approve all official communications, ensuring consistency and alignment with the university's mission and vision.

6.0 Policy Statement

UMU is committed to ensuring that all communication practices are conducted within a legal and ethical framework that respects both national legislation and international human rights standards, fostering transparency, inclusivity, and accountability. UMU commits that all communication efforts shall be accurate, timely, clear, proactive, strategic, and professional.

7.0 Principles for implementing this policy

7.1 Principles of Communication

Communication at UMU shall adhere to the following principles;

7.1.1 Respect

All stakeholders shall:

- a) Be respectful to each other when communicating.
- b) Use the right language in all communication channels of UMU which include written, oral and non- verbal communication.
- c) Avoid the use of abusive language and being casual when communicating official matters.
- d) Follow the hierarchy of communication
- e) Avoid defamatory communication among all stakeholders.
- f) Staff and students shall be individually responsible for the proper handling of information during the execution of their official duties and studies.

7.1.2 Confidentiality

- a) All stakeholders shall ensure the confidentiality of all sensitive and private information. This information shall be handled with care to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure.
- b) Formal acknowledgment of receipt of confidential documents is mandatory to ensure proper tracking and management of sensitive information.

7.1.3 Feedback mechanisms

- a) The University commits to fostering an environment of open communication and continuous improvement.
- b) All stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness of communication within the University.
- c) Feedback is encouraged through designated channels like meetings, feedback forms, surveys, emails and suggestion boxes. The office aligned to this task whenever possible will review feedback periodically and propose adjustments to communication practices as necessary.
- d) Stakeholders are required to give timely, specific and detailed feedback as requested.
- e) All feedback and acknowledgment shall be through the designated communication channels.

7.1.4 Effective communication

The University is committed to maintaining effective communication with all stakeholders by following these best practices:

- a) Ensuring communication remains professional and relevant
- b) Provide detailed and well-structured information for better understanding. (be clear and thorough)
- c) Be formal and avoid jargon, slang, or emojis in professional interactions
- d) Communicate with a clear purpose.
- e) Maintaining consistency by ensuring uniformity in tone and messaging across all channels.
- f) Prioritize Clarity and Brevity by sharing precise information without overwhelming stakeholders.

- g) Have appropriate information packaging for the different stakeholders.
- h) Foster Inclusivity by engaging all relevant stakeholders to ensure their perspectives are considered.

7.1.5 Transparency

- a) All communication should be genuine, transparent and truthful to all stakeholders
- b) All communicators should be authentic or acknowledge the original sources of the message and should not rely on informal sources of communication for decision-making.

7.2 Internal Communication Roles and Responsibilities

7.2.1 The Governing Council

- a) The Chairperson of Council and or Secretary to Council shall communicate the official decisions of the Council.
- b) Communication to the University Council should be addressed to the Secretary of the University Council.
- c) The Chairperson of the Senate and or Secretary to the Senate shall communicate the official decisions of the Senate. Communication to the University Senate should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Senate and or Secretary
- d) The Chairperson and or secretary to Management shall communicate the decisions of Management. Communication to Management should be addressed through the Secretary.

7.2.2 University management/Deans, Directors and Heads of Units and Departments

Members of the University Management, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments/ Units through their supervisors shall be responsible for communicating issues within their jurisdiction and it is important to copy in the party/parties concerned. For external communication, leaders must collaborate with the Public Relations Office for support and guidance.

7.2.3 Dean of Students and Union President

- a) The Dean of Students and or the Union President shall be responsible for communicating issues pertaining to students' welfare.
- b) The Guild President shall always liaise with the Dean of Students before communicating matters relating to students to any stakeholder

7.2.4 University Spokesperson

- a) The Vice Chancellor is the designated spokesperson for the University and shall be responsible for internal and external communication with various stakeholders and approve all official notices and memoranda before they are released to the public.
- b) The Vice Chancellor has the authority to delegate specific communication responsibilities to his/her Deputies, Heads of Administrative Departments, Deans and Directors, Heads of Units or subject matter experts.
- c) When delegating communication tasks, the Vice Chancellor shall ensure these engagements are coordinated through the Public Relations and Marketing Office to maintain consistency and accuracy in public messaging.
- d) Where required, the Head of the Legal Unit shall provide advice on all legal issues related to both external and internal communication.
- e) To ensure timely dissemination of accurate and relevant information, the delegated officers should;
 - i. Be fully informed on the developments in the University requiring external communication or response.
 - ii. Heads of Departments are expected to keep the spokespersons abreast on significant developments in the University.

No staff or student shall commit the University to any obligation. This responsibility is solely vested with the Vice Chancellor. Invitation of delegates on behalf of the University by staff and students shall be in consultation with the Vice Chancellor.

7.2.5 Public Relations and Marketing Department

- a) Ensuring that all communication practices within UMU adhere to the established Communications Policy. This includes monitoring compliance across all departments and units to maintain consistency with policy guidelines.
- b) Developing, coordinating, and implementing effective internal communication strategies and plans. This involves creating structured communication channels and methods that facilitate clear, consistent, and timely information flow within the university.
- c) Production, management, and dissemination of content across various platforms. This includes overseeing the creation of internal and external communications, and ensuring that all content aligns with UMU's brand identity and values.
- d) Ensures that all communication efforts reflect and reinforce UMU's brand identity and core values. This includes maintaining consistency in messaging, visual elements, and tone across all communication materials.
- e) Monitoring the effectiveness of internal communication strategies. The Public Relations and Marketing Department gathers feedback from stakeholders to continuously assess and improve communication practices, ensuring that they meet the evolving needs of the university community.

7.2.6 Students

Students are vital communicators within the University, responsible for maintaining the integrity of information shared among their peers, with their faculty and across social platforms. They are encouraged to engage with official University communications, provide feedback and participate actively in dialogues that fosters an academic community.

7.2.7 Staff

Staff members, including faculty and administrative personnel, play a crucial role in shaping and disseminating information within and outside UMU. They are expected to follow the established communication hierarchy and protocols, ensuring that all messages are accurate, respectful, and uphold the University's values.

7.2.8 Faculty members

These are very key in academic communication and they are tasked with not only educating but also engaging in scholarly discourse. They must ensure that their communication, whether in research, teaching or public engagement aligns with the University's standards and promotes its academic mission.

7.2.9 Alumni

All UMU alumni are brought together under the UMU Alumni Association (UMUAA) for the purpose of developing their alma mater. UMUAA plays a key role in upholding and advancing the brand of the University. As ambassadors of the University, alumni contribute to its external image and engage with current and prospective students, providing insights and opportunities that enhance the University's reputation and network.

7.2.10 Parents/Guardians

They are external stakeholders who require clear and timely communication about University policies, student progress and events, ensuring they are well-informed partners in the students' educational journey.

7.2.11 Governmental entities, national and international partnering organizations

These stakeholders require formal, strategic communication to foster collaborations and partnerships, comply with regulations and advance the University's goals. Maintaining professional relationships with these entities is crucial for securing funding, accreditation and other essential support to attain UMU's strategic plan.

7.2.12 General public

The University communicates with the public to share knowledge and educational opportunities and events thereby enhancing its role as an academic leader and community partner. This communication must be accessible, accurate, and reflective of the University's commitment to societal contribution.

7.3 Communication regarding supervisors

To maintain a respectful and transparent work environment, any communication from subordinates regarding their supervisors, or matters that involve supervisors directly or indirectly, should adhere to the following protocol:

- a) **Direct Communication Concerns-** If the matter concerns the immediate supervisor, the communication should be addressed directly to them (supervisees) with a copy (cc) to their immediate supervisor or the relevant office overseeing the department or unit. This ensures transparency and allows for oversight and support where needed.
- b) **Escalating Concerns or Assignments-** In cases where communication pertains to a formal complaint against a supervisor or relates to an assignment given by any superior (not necessarily the direct supervisor), it should be directed appropriately through the organizational hierarchy. This means addressing the concern to the immediate supervisor with a cc to the next level of management.
- c) **Involvement of other Offices-** For matters requiring attention or action from specific offices within the University, these offices should be included in the communication as necessary. This ensures that all relevant parties are informed and can contribute to resolving the matter efficiently.
- d) **Confidential and Sensitive Matters-** For sensitive issues, especially those involving formal complaints against supervisors, confidentiality must be preserved to protect the interests of all parties involved. Such communications should follow the established protocols for reporting and addressing grievances within the University, ensuring that they are handled discreetly and professionally.

7.4 Communication regarding supervisees

In fostering an environment of respect, fairness, and transparency, supervisors or higher authorities communicating about their supervisees must adhere to the following guidelines:

- a) **Respectful and Constructive Feedback:** Communication regarding a supervisee whether it pertains to performance, conduct, or any matter requiring attention,

should be conveyed in a respectful and constructive manner. Feedback should be specific, fact-based and provided in a way that supports the growth and development of the supervisee.

- b) **Direct Communication:** Whenever possible, supervisors should communicate directly with the supervisee about concerns or feedback before escalating the matter or involving others. This direct approach encourages open dialogue, mutual understanding and provides an opportunity for immediate clarification or resolution.
 - c) **Inclusion of relevant parties-in** situations where it is necessary to involve additional parties (e.g., Human Resources, next-level management), such communication should be done transparently, with the knowledge and when appropriate the involvement of the supervisee. This includes cases where formal performance reviews are shared or disciplinary actions are discussed.
 - d) **Confidentiality and Sensitivity:** Supervisors must ensure that discussions about supervisees, especially those that are sensitive or potentially disciplinary in nature are conducted confidentially to protect the privacy and dignity of all involved. Only individuals who need to know or are part of the resolution process should be included in these communications.
 - e) **Documentation and Follow-Up:** Formal communications about a supervisee's performance, conduct, or any actions taken should be properly documented. This documentation should be accessible to the supervisees and included in their personal file, ensuring transparency and accountability. Follow-up meetings or communications should be scheduled as necessary to monitor progress,
- Communication channels

7.5 Approved Communication types and Channels

UMU shall use different types and channels of communication. Each sort of communication can use different channels based on the nature of the message, the audience, and the context in which it takes place.

7.5.1 Types of communication

UMU uses verbal, non-verbal and written communication in different modalities as below;

- a) Verbal Communication involves the use of spoken words, either face-to-face or through telecommunication devices like phones, online engagements.
- b) Non-verbal Communication involves gestures, body language, and facial expressions
- c) Written Communication involves written format like letters, emails, memos, reports, visual aids such as graphs, charts, diagrams, videos.

7.5.2 Channels of communication

7.5.2.1 Internal communication channels

For the UMU internal communication audiences, the communication channels include;

- i. Face-to-Face Communication
- ii. Formal Letters
- iii. Emails
- iv. University Website and Intranet
- v. Minutes of Meetings
- vi. Reports
- vii. Circulars and Memos
- viii. Notice Boards
- ix. Mailing Lists
- x. Newsletters
- xi. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Skype, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Telegram, TikTok etc)
- xii. Other online engagement platforms (Zoom and Microsoft Teams, Google Meet etc
- xiii. UMU e-learning platforms (Moodle, Google Classroom, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, YouTube, E-Library Systems etc
- xiv. Any other channel that may be identified by the respective units in conformity with this policy.

Below is the detailed guidance for effective and responsible e-print and verbal communication;

Electronic mail (Emails)

- a) The University shall use electronic mail as an official information-sharing/communication channel.
- b) The University shall use official email addresses that will bear the 'umu.ac.ug' suffix.
- c) All bonafide staff shall be assigned a University official email address on recommendation by the HR and ICT Offices.
- d) At the end of a member of staff's tenure, the ICT department shall suspend the use of the official email address of the outgoing staff on the recommendation from the Human Resources Department.
- e) All bonafide students shall be assigned a University official email address on recommendation by the Academic Registrar's Office.
- f) Students shall maintain the use of the official email address of the University even after completion of their studies, to ensure continued electronic communication by the University to the alumni.
- g) Official communication of staff and students by email shall only be done using the University's official email addresses.
- h) Mailing lists shall be created for different categories of staff and students to streamline the dissemination of information to staff and students.
- i) Communication to mailing lists by staff and students shall only be for official purposes.
- j) Students and staff are required to publish using their official UMU emails.
- k) Marketing and/or personal information shall not be communicated through the mailing lists, this shall only be done with official permission from the line departments e.g. Human Resource Office, Academic Registrar's office etc.
- l) The ICT Department shall enforce security and access permission to receive or send content to and from respective mailing lists. Provide ongoing support, and address any subsequent concerns.

Staff/students shall;

- a) Not disguise their identity when using the official University email platform.
- b) Use the official University email platform for official business ONLY.
- c) Not use insulting language when using University official email platform.
- d) Regularly check their email address to receive official communication from the University.

Social media

The University shall use appropriate social media platforms as official communication channels to share information with stakeholders

The University's Social Media Accounts shall;

- i. Bear the logo and branding of the University.
- ii. Shall be verified as authentic University accounts.

The Public Relations Office shall;

- i. Manage communications/conversations on the University's social media accounts.
- ii. Be respectful, polite and patient when engaging on behalf of the University on social media.
- iii. Ensure the operation of the appropriate social media platforms.
- iv. Provide secure access privileges to appropriate staff to continuously update the content on the social media platforms.

Guidance on Personal Social Media Use: While the University values the freedom of expression and encourages the use of social media for personal and professional growth, stakeholders are advised to use discretion in their online presence. Posts, comments, or shares that could negatively impact the University's reputation should be avoided. Additionally, social personal accounts should not be used to disseminate official University communications unless expressly authorized however sharing already published official content is permissible.

Website

The University shall use the website(s), web platforms or web applications as official communication channels. The website(s) shall;

- a) Run under the University's official web domain address (umu.ac.ug).
- b) Bear the logo and branding of the University.
- c) Provide public information about news, events, activities, projects, partnerships, collaborations and research activities/findings/publications at the University.
- d) Provide all necessary information to prospective students.
- e) Provide all relevant information to continuing students.
- f) Bear information relevant to alumni of the University.
- g) Provide information and backlinks to key stakeholders like Partners, Collaborators, funders.
- h) All official and public information should be accessed via the UMU Website such as policies acts, institutional Memoranda of Understanding, strategic plans
- i) The university shall operate sub-domains or sub-websites for campuses/Faculties/Departments/Units if;
 - 1. The Faculty/Department/Unit is a bonafide unit under the University's administrative structure.
 - 2. The Faculty/Department/Unit proves to be able to generate sufficient media content to run the sub-website.
 - 3. The Faculty/Department/Unit provides a suitable strategy to continuously update the sub website.
 - 4. The proposed sub-website's address is recognizable, consisting of a known keyword, official name, function or service in line with the Faculty/Department/Unit's mission and vision.
 - 5. The technology used to host the sub-website is compatible with the University's existing web technologies.

SMS and Voice calls

- a) The University shall use official phone numbers to communicate both internally and externally via SMS and voice.
- b) Responsible University Officers shall ensure the phones within their jurisdiction are used appropriately.
- c) Communication using University phones shall only be for official purposes.

- d) Personal information shall not be communicated using University phones; this shall only be done with official permission from the line departments.

7.5.2.2 External Communication

As the spokesperson of the University, the Vice Chancellor shall identify appropriate communication channels between the University and the public. The Vice Chancellor may however delegate the communication function to other jurisdiction offices.

External communication channels shall include:

- a) University Website
- b) Social Media Platforms
- c) Public Advocacy and Outreach
- d) Open Days
- e) Press Releases and Media Engagement
- f) Newsletters
- g) Partnerships and Collaborations
- h) Events, Conferences, and Exhibitions, Academic fairs
- i) Academic Publications
- j) Fact books
- k) Annual reports
- l) Advertising and Publicity
- m) Alumni Networks
- n) Email Campaigns
- o) External Stakeholder Forums
- p) Promotion Materials
- q) UMU Annual Magazine
- r) Brochures and Flyers
- s) Posters
- t) Promotional and Digital Marketing Campaigns
- u) Branded Merchandise-T-shirts, Caps, and Hoodies, Pens, notebooks, and folders
- v) Banners and Posters
- w) And any other communication channel approved by the University management.

Guidance on use of the main channels is below;

- i. Print media: newspaper articles and supplements, University magazine, Brochures, Manuals, fliers and ad-hoc publications and other written communication will remain a vital component of communication in the University.
- ii. Broadcast: documentaries, podcasts, advertorials, interviews, television and radio shall always enhance the university communication and visibility
- iii. New media: web-based communication; controls on these will be professional at the level of content
- iv. All communication should be easy to understand and devoid of slang, obscene, offensive or discriminatory remarks, ethnic slurs, or sexist innuendoes. At the same time, the University shall promote e-learning as an avenue for disseminating educational content.

Principles of external communication

For all external communication, the following standards shall be ensured:

- 1) Media Relations - Only designated spokespersons are authorized to speak on behalf of the University. All media interactions must be reported to the University's Public Relations Office.
- 2) Social media - While staff and faculty are free to express themselves, they should avoid making defamatory statements or sharing confidential University information on personal social media accounts.
- 3) Publications, including research papers that bear the University's name, must be vetted for accuracy and relevance to uphold the University's integrity.
- 4) Collaborations and Partnerships - To enhance cooperation and networking among stakeholders;
 - a) Each partnering institution must provide a link of their institution website to UMU and vice versa. These backlinks enhance visibility, networks, and information sharing.
 - b) The University will establish formal partnership agreements with key partners and collaborators.
 - c) The logos of partnering institutions should be used in conjunction with the University logo in all joint activities.

- d) The International Relations Officer under the Public Relations and Marketing department will coordinate all international relations partners, collaborators, and related activities.

7.6 Language of Communication and Instruction

The official language of communication in the university is English but whenever necessary and to the extent possible the university may communicate through interpretation and translation.

UMU shall promote inclusive communication and is committed to ensuring all communication materials are accessible to Persons with Disabilities. This includes providing alternative formats like Braille, large print, audio descriptions for key documents and ensuring digital content is compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies.

7.7 Events, Protocol and Guest Relations

- a) Information about upcoming events must be communicated to the Public Relations Office at least two weeks prior to the event date.
- b) Event hosts are required to inform the PRO about the necessary services for the event, such as photography, social media coverage, program direction, documentary production, promotional posters, promotional videos, and media engagement.
- c) The Public Relations Office must be informed about all events and functions attended by the Vice Chancellor on behalf of the University.
- d) The event hosting Department is responsible for covering the primary costs related to the event. The Public Relations Office will assist in determining the budget for publicity and protocol, ensuring these expenses are adequately planned for within the overall event budget.
- e) The department/ office organizing an event together with the Public Relations Office shall always select the official Master of Ceremonies (MC) and in their absence a suitable delegate will be appointed.

- f) The Public Relations Office will oversee protocol at all University events to ensure proper etiquette and order are maintained.
- g) While the hosting department handles the preliminary activities, the Public Relation Office must be involved from the outset in all University activities involving stakeholder relations to ensure effective coordination.

7.8 Communication and promotion of University events

- a) Every University officer planning an event within or outside the University shall be required to inform the Public Relations Office officially.
- b) The Public Relations Officer shall ensure that promotion of University events and activities comply with established brand guidelines and procedures.
- c) Every University event shall be published on the University website, social media platforms and newsletter before and after.
- d) The Public Relations Office shall be responsible for all media relations before, during and after an event and shall develop a media relations strategy to include proactive media engagements.
- e) All media inquiries including requests for interviews shall be directed to and handled by the Public Relations Office.
- f) Departments shall seek clearance from the Vice Chancellor or Public Relations office for any media interactions.
- g) The Public Relations Office in collaboration with other Departments shall develop media content on any relevant emerging issues.

7.9 Crisis Communication

- a) The Vice-Chancellor or the delegated officer shall be authorized to give information on crisis situations to the media, public or other stakeholders.
- b) Any identified crisis will be reported to the Public Relations Office for assessment and incidents that require response shall be approved by the Vice Chancellor or their delegate.

7.9.1 Crisis Communication Preparedness

To enhance preparedness for a variety of crisis situations, UMU has identified specific types of crises and developed tailored communication strategies for each. These are categorized as follows:

- a) Natural Disasters: Activation of emergency alerts through digital channels, updates on the University website, and social media channels providing safety instructions and updates.
- b) Public Health Emergencies: Coordination with public health officials to disseminate accurate health advisories, preventive measures, and updates on the University's operational status through official emails and the University website.
- c) Security Threats: Immediate alerts through the University's emergency notification system followed by regular updates through emails and social media on the evolving situation and safety instructions.
- d) Reputational Crises: Transparent and timely communication through press releases, official statements from the Vice Chancellor, and updates on social media and the University website to address the issue and outline the steps being taken. In each case, the Communication Office, in coordination with the Crisis Communication Team, will lead the communication efforts, ensuring messages are accurate, timely, and consistent across all channels. The Vice Chancellor or designated spokesperson will serve as the primary voice during major crises, with the support of the Communication Office to manage inquiries and disseminate information.

7.10 University Corporate Branding, Advertising and Marketing

7.10.1 University Corporate Advertising

As part of our branding strategy, UMU actively engages in corporate advertising to enhance visibility and foster strategic partnerships. All Units advertising University products or services are urged to ensure that the information contained therein is accurate and up to date. Uganda Martyrs University shall refrain from accepting adverts that may be harmful to the positive image and brand of the University.

The University logo shall be included in all official communication regarding Uganda Martyrs University news or events and presentations

All corporate advertisements must:

- a) Align with the ethical standards and values of the university.
- b) Be approved by the PR office to ensure consistency with UMU's branding guidelines.
- c) Clearly and accurately convey the intended message without compromise to the University's integrity.
- d) Be placed in suitable contexts that positively reflect the University's reputation and outreach goals.

7.10.2 University Corporate Branding

The University is committed to upholding its brand and image to enhance UMU's reputation and visibility. The aim is to inform, remind, and convincingly persuade stakeholders to engage with UMU's services under a unified brand identity. The key elements of the University brand include:

- i. The name
- ii. The official logo
- iii. The official colors
- iv. The font
- v. The tagline

Maintaining the University Brand

- a) The University will sustain its brand identity and reputation through the production of outstanding graduates, excellence in teaching, impactful research and innovation, and active community engagement.
- b) All University representatives must ensure the consistent application of brand elements in official communications.
- c) The Public Relations Office is responsible for ensuring adherence to branding standards and will provide brand guidelines to staff, students, and alumni.

- d) Stakeholders, including staff, students, partners, and alumni, must seek approval from the Public Relations Officer or the Vice Chancellor before using the University's brand for any purpose.
- e) The Public Relations and Marketing Officer must verify the accuracy of all promotional content before publication. The University brand elements shall include; the name, official logo, colors, font and tagline.
- f) The University shall maintain its brand name and reputation through outstanding and quality graduates, quality of teaching, research and innovation output and community engagement.
- g) Every University officer communicating on behalf of the University shall maintain brand elements in the communication function.
- h) The Public Relations Office shall ensure compliance with University brand elements and shall issue brand guidelines to staff, students and alumni.
- i) All stakeholders such as staff, students, partners and Alumni shall obtain approval from the Public Relations Officer and or the Vice Chancellor before using University brands for any purpose.
- j) The Public Relations and Marketing Officer shall ensure the University promotional content is accurate before it is published.

The University is committed to maintaining a strong and recognizable brand that reflects UMU's values of excellence in education, research and community engagement. Branding includes the use of the University logo, official colours and other visual and textual elements that represent our identity.

University color codes

The University colors are in the order of

1. Red
2. Yellow
3. Black

These colors were chosen to complement the UMU's logo while maintaining its distinct brand quality.

7.11 Formal Letters

Official letters are written on UMU letterheads. The University shall use formal letters as official communication channels to communicate both internally and externally. The University formal letters should;

Have the UMU official letterhead with Uganda Martyrs University Name, Logo, post office address, contact of the Faculty or Department or Unit or office. The footer should have the University website and the department/ office official email.

- i. Bear the signature and title of the officer
- ii. Be written in the official language
- iii. Have the official font of Arial Narrow font 12 and 14 (14 for headers and 12 for the body)

7.12 University email signature

The University email signature is aimed at creating UMU visibility. Staff and students will have their name title contact (with preference) email, Campus, Department, and Faculty, as of when applicable. Below is how the email signature should appear;

- i. Name/ Title
- ii. Contact/ORCID No.
- iii. Email
- iv. Department/ Faculty
- v. www.umu.ac.ug
- vi. Uganda Martyrs University
- vii. Making a Difference

7.13 Information, Education and Communication (IEC)

For uniform branding and marketing, the IEC materials such as university business cards, University power point template, Obituaries for staff/Students, Obituaries for immediate family, University official envelope, Buildings branding, Partnerships IECs, Posters, banners and signage, Stickers, Parking permits, Brochures for Faculties, campuses, projects and units, Documents/ Notebooks, Notices board branding, Internal memo template, Pull up banners, University flag, Congratulatory Banners and Flyers, Magazines, Contact of the University (post office box, official contact no. plot no),

University Identification Card (ID) among others, as approved by the Public Relations Office, shall have University colors, logo and motto.

7.14 Content Management and Publication

The University shall ensure information such as Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/ agreements, staff profiles, partnerships, research publications, grants, admission and graduation lists, call for post and undergraduate applications, PhD defenses and abstracts is published on the website using approved communication channels.

The University shall ensure all the content is posted on the website before it is published in other communication channels. The University Officers wishing to publish content via University communication channels shall coordinate with the Public Relations Officer and International Relations Officer.

The Vice Chancellor through the Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for approving and publishing the content on all communication platforms.

The Public Relations Office reserves the right to decline publication of content in case it does not comply with brand guidelines and procedures.

A Digital and Content Production Unit shall be created under the Public Relations and Marketing Department. This shall play a vital role in creating content and overseeing video and audio productions to enhance the university's online presence and branding.

7.15 Communication Pertaining to Research

The Directorate of Graduate Studies Research and Enterprise shall spearhead the development of effective institutional mechanisms for disseminating research and innovations. This involves establishing clear pathways for sharing research findings and promoting innovative practices within the university community and beyond.

7.16 Photography

- a) The University shall have annual photo shoots per Faculty/ Department/ Unit to update the University database and promote visibility.
- b) The Public Relations Office shall create a database that shall provide the University's memory lane.

- c) All photos taken at a University event shall be a property of MUST under which they can be used for the University's advertising and promotional events.

7.17 Use of UMU's Intellectual Property

The guidelines below shall be followed to use UMU's Intellectual Property.

- a) Individuals or entities seeking to use UMU's intellectual property should submit a detailed request to the Public Relations Office, outlining the intended use, duration, and scope.
- b) The Public Relations Office will conduct a preliminary review to assess the request's alignment with University policies and the potential impact on the University's brand and reputation.
- c) Following initial approval, the request will be forwarded to the Legal Office for a review of legal implications and IP rights compliance.
- d) The Vice Chancellor will review recommendations from both the Public Relations Office and the Legal Office to make the final decision on the request.
- e) Approved uses of intellectual property will be documented, through a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and the interested party including terms and conditions of use, to ensure clear understanding and compliance.

Consequences of Unauthorized Use for Intellectual Property

Any unauthorized use, reproduction, or misrepresentation of UMU's intellectual property will result in immediate revocation of any granted permissions, potential disciplinary action (up to and including termination or expulsion) and may lead to legal proceedings. The University will take all necessary steps to safeguard its intellectual property rights and uphold its reputation.

7.18 Implementation of the Policy

The Public Relations and Marketing Department shall in consultation with the Campuses, faculties and other relevant Units develop and implement a strategy to give effect to this Policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action under the Human Resources Manual.

7.19 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Public Relations and Marketing Department shall regularly review and assess the effectiveness of communication strategies through stakeholder feedback, media monitoring, and engagement analytics. Adjustments to the communications policy will be made in line with the university's evolving goals and needs.

8.0 Legal framework and other complimentary policies

This policy has been developed in alignment with key laws, norms, and human rights instruments that guide communication and information practices within Umuhoze. The policy reflects the university's commitment to upholding these standards and ensuring that its communication practices are transparent, accountable, and aligned with broader legal and ethical principles.

Article 29(1)(b) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda: This Article provides, inter alia, that every person shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief which shall include academic freedom in institutions of learning:

Article 41(1) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda: This Article provides for every citizen's "right of access to information in the possession of the State or any organ or agency of the State." This right may be lawfully denied under exceptional and clear circumstances, namely:

- a) Where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State; or,
- b) Where the release of the information may interfere with the right to the privacy of any other person.

The Access to Information Act, 2005: This piece of legislation was made pursuant to Article 41(2) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Its main purpose is:

- (a) To give effect to Article 41(1) on the citizen's right of access to information held by organs of the State, other than exempt records and information;
- (b) To protect persons disclosing evidence of contravention of the law, maladministration or corruption in Government bodies;
- (c) To promote transparency and accountability in all organs of the State by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; and

- (d) To empower the public to effectively scrutinize and participate in Government decisions that affect them.

The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedoms (1990): This Declaration explicitly demands for “Intellectual Rights and Freedoms” (Articles 1-9). It defines the “Obligations of the State” in respect of the rights and freedoms of the intellectual community (Articles 13-18). The Declaration also defines the “Social Responsibility” of members of the intellectual community. Specifically, the Declaration under;

(a) Article 2 provides that: “Every African intellectual shall be entitled to the respect of all his or her civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights as stipulated in the International Bill of Rights and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights.

(b) Article 3 explicitly states: “No African intellectual shall in any way be persecuted, harassed or intimidated for reasons only of his or her intellectual work, opinions, gender, nationality and/or ethnicity.

(c) Article 6 asserts: “Every African intellectual has the right to pursue intellectual activity, including teaching, research and dissemination of research results, without let or hindrance subject only to universally recognized principles of scientific inquiry, ethical norms and professional standards.

(d) Article 9 provides: “The intellectual community shall have the right to express its opinions freely in the media and to establish its own media and means of communication. It is in the light of the above laws, norms, practices, and related international and regional human rights instruments that this policy has been developed.

The Uganda Communications Act (2013): The Communications Policy is in line with the Uganda Communications Act, which regulates communication services in the country. The policy adheres to legal standards for electronic, broadcast, and online communication, ensuring compliance with national regulatory requirements.

The Data Protection and Privacy Act (2019): The policy incorporates provisions from the Data Protection and Privacy Act, which ensures that personal data is collected,

processed, and stored responsibly. UMU commits to protecting the privacy of students, staff, and stakeholders in all forms of communication.

The Uganda National Council for Higher Education (UNCHE) Regulations: The policy reflects compliance with the Uganda National Council for Higher Education regulations that govern institutional communications, particularly in relation to marketing, public relations, and information dissemination within academic institutions.

9.0 Accounting Officer

The overall accounting officer shall be the Vice Chancellor.

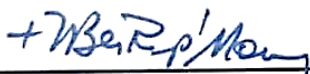
10.0 Responsible University Officer

The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

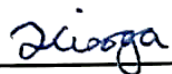
11.0 Review date

This policy was approved by the **101st University Council** meeting that sat on **8th February 2025**.

The University Senate shall, in consultation with the Public Relations and Marketing Department, campuses, faculties, and other respective units, review this policy after 5 years of implementation, and forward the outcome of the review process to the University Council for approval.



Most Rev. Raphael p'Mony Wokorach, MCCJ
Chairperson, UMU Council



Rev. Dr. Josef Buchana Kisoga
Secretary, UMU Council