



UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS
AKOKA, LAGOS
NIGERIA

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION DISSEMINATION
POLICY

Table of Contents

Definition of Terms

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Guidelines Statement

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives of the Policy

3.0 Legal Framework

4.0 University of Lagos Information Dissemination Hierarchy

5.0 Event Communication and Publicity

6.0 University Logo, Print and Digital Media Designs

7.0 Research Communication

8.0 Guidelines for Media and Press Communication

9.0 University of Lagos Contacts for Information Dissemination

10.0 Guidelines Infractions

11.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

12.0 Guidelines Implementation

13.0 Guidelines Review

14.0 Conclusion

15.0 References

Definition of Terms

- ☞ **Affiliates:** Individuals or groups connected to UNILAG, including contractors, volunteers, and partners.
- ☞ **Corporate Communication:** Activities undertaken by the University of Lagos to communicate with internal and external stakeholders as well as with the wider public. This is to promote a sense of corporate identity and ownership, thus presenting a consistent and coherent corporate image.
- ☞ **Confidential Information:** Non-public information about UNILAG, its students, staff, or operations.
- ☞ **External Communication:** Exchange of information and messages between the university and organisations, groups, or individuals outside its formal structure.
- ☞ **General and Routine Information:** Information that would not otherwise be classified as material information, and which is not otherwise required to be kept confidential because of privacy laws.
- ☞ **Internal Communication:** Exchange of information and messages between employees or departments across all levels or units of the university.
- ☞ **Material Information:** Any information relating to the business and affairs of the university which, when publicly released, would significantly affect or would reasonably be expected to have a significant effect on the image of the university.
- ☞ **Media:** Communication channels for disseminating information, e.g. every broadcasting and narrowcasting media such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet. There is also social media (Online platforms for creating, sharing, and exchanging content (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc).
- ☞ **Selective Disclosure:** Disclosure of confidential material information to one or more individuals or organisations and not broadly to the general public.
- ☞ **Spokesperson:** Someone engaged, elected or appointed to speak on behalf of the university.
- ☞ **Staff:** These include all academic and non-teaching staff of the university, employed on permanent and pensionable, contractual or part-time terms.
- ☞ **Stakeholder:** A person, group or organisation with a stake in the university.
- ☞ **Students:** All students enrolled in the university, including those enrolled in off Akoka-campus college and schools e.g. College of Medicine, Idi-Araba, University of Lagos Business School, etc.
- ☞ **University Community:** The University Governing Council, Senate, academic, administrative, technical and support staff, and students.

- ☞ **Official UNILAG Accounts:** Social media accounts created and managed by UNILAG for official communication.
- ☞ **Official University Position:** The University Council and the Management may take positions or have an established guideline toward issues concerning the university as an institution or the University Community as a whole. These positions may affect operations of schools, colleges, divisions or departments and their respective heads.
- ☞ **Personal Opinions:** As citizens of Nigeria or duly registered expatriates, everyone has the right to form and express opinions about public issues. A distinction must be drawn, however, when an individual (employed by the University or a member of a University-supported student group) is in the role of representing the University as an institution. As an employee speaking for the University institution, employees' comments must reflect the University's position on programmes, services and issues. Personal opinions may not be the same as positions taken by the University as a whole, and they should not be used when speaking on behalf of the University.
- ☞ **Public Dissemination of Information:** Providing information to the public may include the release of information regarding a specific gift, donation or donor, placement of advertisements in newspapers, interviews with news reporters, speeches to community groups, public service announcements or announcements made during University sporting events, letters to the editor, guest editorials or columns in newspapers, appearances on public affairs television and radio talk shows, posting information on the University's website, social media or other channels of communication.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CITS Centre for Information Technology and Systems

FOIA Freedom of Information Act

IT Information Technology

SERVICOM Service Charter

UNILAG University of Lagos

POLICY STATEMENT

The Communication Unit has been designated by the Vice Chancellor, on behalf of the University Management, as the primary contact for dissemination of information including social media channels to the public. This office is also responsible for ensuring University-wide compliance with this guideline.

All due diligence must be taken to ensure that information originating from the University is accurate, complete, reflects the official position of the University of Lagos, and is released to the media and the public in a timely manner.

1.0 Introduction

The University of Lagos and its faculty, administrative, technical and support staff actively pursue opportunities to inform the public about all aspects of the University's programmes and services which are outside of the areas protected by state and federal privacy laws, and other areas exempted by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (Appendix 1).

Consequently, the document is designed to also ensure the University's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and other regulations of the kind.

Providing information about the University is vital to our internal and external audiences and the University's ability to carry out its mission. This guideline establishes the official procedure for the dissemination of information for publication, broadcast through the mass media, or other public forums. The guidelines also provide specific framework to aid individuals speaking on behalf of the University as an organisation.

This policy is not intended to hinder open communication between the University and its constituents, the public or the news media. However, the guidelines are intended to ensure accurate, consistent and reliable flow of information about University activities.

This document shall be reviewed periodically in accordance with changes in relevant legislation, institutional priorities, and emerging communication needs. Any revisions shall be formally approved and communicated to the University Community.

This policy applies to all internal and external stakeholders (Staff, Students, Units, subsidiaries, Alumni etc).

2.0 Objectives of the Policy

The University of Lagos in the preparation and implementation of this document seeks to:

- a) Provide efficient and effective communication mechanisms among members of the university community and promote the coherence and consistency of information flow.
- b) Support the University to deliver its vision of communicating effectively with previously identified target audiences.
- c) Promote effective channels of communication to minimise communication breakdown and delays.
- d) Regarding social media, it is to ensure responsible, respectful, and lawful online engagement that protects and promotes the University's reputation and digital presence.
- e) Disseminate research findings by popularising and/or interpreting information that emanates from research and present such in a way that would be meaningful to stakeholders.
- f) Encourage a strong sense of belonging and collective pride in the University's achievements among employees through the development and delivery of an integrated internal communication strategy and a meaningful communication programme.

- g) Support the University to attract the right students and provide an exceptional experience by supporting departments in their communication planning and delivery of customised communication.

3.0 Legal Framework

Several regulations govern the University's communications activities, including the Freedom of Information Act, 2011 (Nigeria), the Nigerian Constitution (1999, as amended), relevant privacy and data protection laws, including the Nigeria Data Protection Act, 2023, Cybercrime Act 2015, NITDA Code of Practice for Interactive Computer Service Platforms/Internet Intermediaries(2022/2024), Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) Act 2022 and applicable intellectual property and media regulations. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act also contains a provision on the right to access public documents with certain exemptions (Appendix 1).

4.0 University of Lagos Information Dissemination Hierarchy

Authority to communicate on behalf of the University shall be exercised only by designated officers acting within their official responsibilities and in accordance with the University's communication approval structure. For all matters, unless otherwise agreed, the following hierarchy applies to information dissemination:

Procedure for information dissemination

- i. Faculty, staff, and University units shall submit all intended public communications, publications, or media releases to the Communication Unit for review, approval, and coordination prior to dissemination..
- ii. In the case of releasing information via news releases or other channels regarding a gift, donation or donor, the Director or Head of University Advancement or designee in the University Advancement Office is responsible for ensuring that correct information is provided. It is the responsibility of the Communication Unit to prepare a news release based on the information provided regarding the gift, donation or donor for dissemination to media outlets.
- iii. Each faculty, college, school, department and/or unit head assumes primary responsibility for any official public statements, announcements or advertisements issued through their areas of responsibility or their personnel. This responsibility may be delegated according to the needs and resources of each faculty, college, school, department and/or unit. However, each faculty, college, school, department and/or unit head must be informed about the release of public statements issued by faculty, college, school, department and/or unit staff. Individual employees who disseminate university information to a mass audience (via such means as advertisements, interviews with news reporters, etc.) must notify the faculty, college, school, department and/or unit head and the Communication Unit prior to such dissemination.
- iv. University employees shall not present personal opinions, views, or interpretations as official positions of the University. Where clarification is required, such enquiries shall be referred to the Communication Unit or authorized spokesperson.

- v. It is appropriate for University employees involved in a newsworthy event to respond to news reporters about facts surrounding an event, such as a professional conference (sponsored by the University), sporting events and student athletes, convocation and matriculation exercises, or scholarship fundraising events, etc. However, the information provided to reporters should be released in coordination with the person in charge of the event or the person designated as the public information officer for the event.
- vi. Information should be limited to the facts pertaining to the particular event or the safety and welfare of University students, faculty and administration. Information that may be sensitive or have implications relating to litigation or personal privacy should not be discussed. In addition, information or speculation that deals with broader issues or policies of the University should be deferred to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development Services) or the Communication Unit.
- vii. All uses of the UNILAG logo and seal, tagline, brand colors and any collateral (print, online or merchandise) promoting UNILAG such as advertisements, brochures, fliers, invitations, annual reports, promotional items, web design, videos, social media, etc., should be in compliance with the University's Brand and Visual Identity and must be approved by the Communication Unit.

5.0 Event Communication and Publicity

The primary objective of any event within the University domain is to enhance the brand identity of the University of Lagos. Therefore, it is imperative to provide adequate notice of events to maximize their impact. To this end, all University units and departments organising events such as lectures, seminars, conferences, webinars etc., must notify the Communication Unit at least seven (7) days before the event to ensure proper publicity and engagement.

6.0 University Logo, Print and Digital Media Designs

To maintain consistency and authenticity in brand representation, all print and electronic materials bearing the University of Lagos logo must feature the authentic logo approved by the university. Print and digital media representing the University of Lagos must adhere to specified branding elements, including official colors (UNILAG Maroon and Gold), and the university's domain name (www.unilag.edu.ng). Consistency in design elements across various media platforms is crucial for reinforcing the university's brand identity.

7.0 Research Communication

In matters relating to the research conducted at the University of Lagos, it is to be referred to the researcher or researchers who have expertise in the subject. Effective communication of research endeavours plays a vital role in enhancing the University's reputation and attracting collaborators and recognition. Therefore, researchers are required to share information about their research projects with the Research Management Office, and the Communication Unit at different stages of progress. This will facilitate strategic communication efforts to promote the University's research achievements.

8.0 Guidelines for Media and Press Communication

8.1 Social Media

- i. All social media channels/accounts must be duly registered with the Communication Unit of the University. Similarly, the names and contact details of managers of these accounts must be updated accordingly and sent, annually, to the Communication Unit.
- ii. Post/content must represent the University accurately in a professional and respectful manner.
- iii. The impact of any post/content on UNILAG's reputation must be considered before posting. Seek clarification and advice from UNILAG Communication Unit, if unsure or in doubt.
- iv. Engage positively with followers and respond professionally to inquiries.
- v. Ensure compliance with all applicable Nigerian laws as well as policies, rules and regulations of the University (including data protection and copyright).
- vi. Official channels/accounts should only be used for official and not personal purposes and communications.

The following are also strictly prohibited:

- i. Official documents not authorized or approved for public release.
- ii. **Offensive Content:** any content/post that is offensive, discriminatory, or harassing. Avoid profane, offensive, or inappropriate language.
- iii. **Discriminatory Discourse:** Engaging in topics that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination based on race, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental status, or any other grounds protected under Nigerian Law.
- iv. **Harassment and Defamation:** Post/content that is, or may be construed as, threatening, defamatory, harassing, bullying, or discriminatory.
- v. **Illegal Activities:** Posting or using content that encourages or facilitates any illegal activity.
- vi. **Confidentiality Breaches:** Posting confidential, restricted, or personal information obtained through official University duties, as well as false, misleading, unverified, or speculative information relating to the University or members of the University.
- vii. **Security Risks:** posting information/picture that may compromise the safety or security of the University community or its infrastructure.
- viii. **Intellectual Property Violations:** Utilizing content that violates the legal ownership interests of any party, including breaches of copyright or intellectual property rights.

For clarity, below are examples of acceptable and unacceptable posts:

- Acceptable posts: official UNILAG news, event promotions, academic achievements, research breakthroughs and positive community stories.

- Unacceptable posts: confidential student records, unverified rumors, using UNILAG's name for personal promotion without permission, and offensive or discriminatory content.

The University of Lagos reserves the right to monitor social media activity related to the institution and its affiliates. Violations may result in disciplinary actions, including removal of account access, formal warning, suspension of social media privileges, or other sanctions in accordance with University regulations. However:

- Faculties/Departments/Units/Institutes/Centres, wholly owned subsidiaries under the coordination of University Management and affiliates of the University are to comply with this policy, accordingly.
- Communication Unit is to provide guidance, monitor compliance, and address violations.
- The Communication Unit shall serve as the primary regulatory authority for monitoring compliance, while the Office of the Vice-Chancellor shall exercise oversight and enforce disciplinary actions where necessary

8.2 Traditional Media

Press communication within the University should adopt a storytelling and engaging format, to ensure consistency and alignment with the university's brand identity. Involvement of the Communication Unit in press communication endeavors will facilitate strategic narrative development that reinforces the UNILAG brand. Members of the University community engaging with media platforms must adhere to guidelines to uphold the University's reputation and brand integrity.

These guidelines forbid the following:

- Use of profane or offensive language or content when engaging in media interviews or making media statements.
- Engaging in a topic that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental status, or other grounds protected under the Nigerian Law.
- Posting or using material that is, or might be construed as threatening, defamatory, harassing, bullying or discriminatory.
- Posting or using material that is, or might be construed as, encouraging of any illegal activity.
- Releasing any confidential or personal information obtained in their capacity as an employee of the university.
- Disclosing information that might compromise the safety or security of members of the University community.
- Using content that violates a legal ownership interest of any person, including breach of copyright or intellectual property rights.

9.0 University of Lagos Contacts for Information Dissemination

Information may be obtained by contacting the Office of the Vice-Chancellor: vcoffice@unilag.edu.ng and Communication Unit: communicationunit@unilag.edu.ng, or the following offices for:

- ☞ Admissions Information: Admissions Office admissions@unilag.edu.ng.
- ☞ Student Financial Support: Financial Aid Office helpdeskbursary@unilag.edu.ng
- ☞ Institutional Information: Office of the Registrar registrar@unilagedu.ng
- ☞ Accreditation Information: Academic Planning Unit: acadplanning@unilag.edu.ng
- ☞ Student Accommodation: Office of Student Affairs dsa@unilag.edu.ng

- ☞ Services Standards: Quality Assurance & Servicom Unit:
qualityassurance@unilag.edu.ng
- ☞ IT Technical Support: citshelpdesk@unilag.edu.ng

10.0 Guidelines Infractions

Infractions of these Guidelines shall be investigated and determined in accordance with University disciplinary procedures. Sanctions may be imposed consistent with the University's Staff Conditions of Service and Student Disciplinary Regulations

11.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The University of Lagos Communication Unit shall:

- i) Develop appropriate strategies for monitoring and evaluation of the UNILAG Communications and Information Dissemination Guidelines.
- ii) Carry out annual evaluation on the implementation of the guidelines.
- iii) Define the short-term, mid-term and long-term interventions based on the outcomes of the evaluation reports.

12.0 Guidelines Implementation

The Vice-Chancellor shall, in consultation with colleges, schools, institutes, directorates and other relevant academic and administrative units, develop an implementation strategy to give effect to this Policy.

13.0 Policy Review

The University Senate shall, in consultation with colleges, schools, institutes, directorates and other relevant academic and administrative units of UNILAG, review this Policy every three to five years of implementation, or after any other duration as it may deem necessary, and forward the outcome of the review process to the University Council for approval.

14.0 Conclusion

The Communication and Information Dissemination Policy of the University of Lagos serve as a vital framework for ensuring the accurate, timely, and strategic dissemination of information both within and outside the university community. It reinforces the University's commitment to upholding its brand identity, enhancing transparency, and ensuring compliance with relevant legal frameworks such as the Freedom of Information Act and media laws governing public communication.

Through this policy, the University underscores the importance of clear communication channels, both for internal audiences such as faculty, staff, and students, and for external audiences including the media, donors, and the broader public. Ensuring that information is communicated accurately and consistently helps prevent misunderstandings, enhances institutional transparency, and promotes the university's core values and achievements. The hierarchy of information dissemination also provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in representing the university, thus minimizing the risk of miscommunication or the release of unofficial information.

By involving the Communication Unit in the development of press communications, event publicity, and research promotion, the University aims to strengthen its brand and reinforce its position as a leader in academic and research excellence. The policy further emphasizes the importance of respecting legal standards and ethical boundaries in all forms of communication, ensuring that all members of the university community adhere to high standards of professionalism and integrity when engaging with the media and public platforms.

By fostering an environment of clear, accurate, and timely information flow, this policy contributes to the university's overall success, helping to build trust, promote institutional achievements, and maintain the integrity of the university's communication practices.

15.0 References

ARU (2010). Communication Strategy for the Enhancement of ARU Activities for the Period 2010/11 – 2012/13. Marketing and Public Relations Office: DSM. Dunn, K. (2000). Sample Communication Guidelines. <https://www.workforce.com/2000/04/14/ExternalCommunicationsGuidelines>. <http://www.marvell.com/company/ext.comm.jsp>

Appendix 1

Freedom of Information (FOI) Act Exemptions

The exemption areas are outlined in Sections 11-19 and 26 of the Act:

1. Section 11: National Security and International Affairs- Public institutions may refuse requests if the information could be injurious to defence or public policy of Nigeria.
2. Section 12: Law Enforcement and Investigation- Information could be withheld if its disclosure could interfere with ongoing investigations, jeopardise the safety of Law enforcement personnel or witnesses.
3. Section 14: Personal Privacy- The Act protects information, such as medical records or private correspondence, where disclosure would be unwarranted invasion of privacy.
4. Section 15: Third Party information and Trade Secret- confidential commercial or financial information and Trade secrets.
5. Section 16: Legal Privileges
6. Section 17: Course or Research Material.
7. Section 26: Already Publicly Available Material- the Act does not apply to materials already in the public domain.