



COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS
AKOKA, LAGOS
NIGERIA

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION SHARING
GUIDELINE

“ANNEXURE” TO UNILAG ICT POLICY

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Definition of Terms

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: Material information not widely disseminated within or outside of the university which, if disclosed, would be unduly detrimental to the university's interests.

Employees: All employees of the university community include academic and non-teaching staff employed on permanent and pensionable, contractual or part-time terms.

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, e.g. WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, 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.

Stakeholder: A person, group or organisation with a stake in the university, such as students, alumni, parents and guardians, governing council, industry partners, local community, vendors and service providers, media, research partners and collaborators, accreditation agencies etc.

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 Council, Senate, academic, administrative, technical and support staff and students.

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 the 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

1.0 Introduction

The University of Lagos Management its faculty, administrative, technical and support staff at various times 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).

This Communication & Information Sharing guideline serves as an *annexure* to the University of Lagos ICT Policy which in part on page 2 states that: the ICT Policy acts as "safeguard for the university's integrity, image and reputation by prescribing guidelines and standards designed to ensure that the contents of the university's website are accurate, up-to-date, consistent and reflect UNILAG's vision and mission".

1.1 Goal

The goal of this guideline is to provide a framework that will serve as a compass for communication and information sharing by the internal and external publics of UNILAG.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to establish the official procedure for information sharing for publication and broadcast through the mass media/social media platforms or use in other public forums; and also provide specific framework to aid individuals speaking on behalf of the University. So, is not intended to hinder open communication between the University and its constituents, the public or the news media; rather it is to ensure accurate, consistent and reliable flow of information about University. Therefore, in line Lagos ICT Policy, these parties (Communication Unit, UNILAG communication/media partners, individuals speaking on behalf of the University and other publics) dealing with the media and advertising industries must abide by *Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists*; *Nigerian Broadcasting Code (6th Edition)*, *Nigerian Code of Advertising* effective from 1st March 2023; and *Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice: Sales Promotion and Other Rights/Restrictions on Practice (6th Edition)* effective from 1st December, 2021. As such, this guideline will be reviewed periodically or in line with changes in relevant legislations and updated without notice.

1.3. Objectives

The University of Lagos by this document we seek to:

ensure internal and external publics of Unilag comply with University of Lagos ICT Policy

provide clear guidelines on the procedure for information sharing in UNILAG

enhance compliance with professionalism by the Communication Unit and Unilag communication/media partners in the discharge of their duties

1.4. Application

This guideline applies to all the campuses and wholly owned subsidiaries with responsibilities coordinated by the University Management. It does not apply to commercial organisations within or outside of the University's control which operate on our campuses, for example the University of Lagos Staff School or the Women Society School, International School Lagos, University of Lagos Press, etc.

3.0 Legal Framework

Several regulations have a bearing on the University's communications work, in particular the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression, which contain provisions concerning all people's right to freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press, among other rights. Section 39 (1) gives citizens the right to "freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference". The Constitution further states in Section 39 (2) that "every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information (*1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* [as Amended]). At the regional level, Article 9 (2) of *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* (ACHPR) also guarantees every person's right to express and disseminate opinions within the law (The African Commission on Human Right and People). The African Commission Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (Principle 38 (1) & Principle 37 (1), prohibits States from interfering with the right of individuals to seek, receive and impart information through any means of communication and digital technologies, through measures such as the removal, blocking or filtering of content, unless such interference is justifiable and compatible with international human rights law and standards (United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>). Again, "Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers," So, the freedom of expression practised by citizens, including journalists is derived from their citizens right to freedom of expression. However, freedom of expression goes with responsibilities, hence, this guideline.

4.0 University of Lagos Information Dissemination

Communication and information sharing between the University of Lagos (UNILAG) and its publics (internal and external) is vital for achieving the vision and mission of the University. Hence, the Communication Unit has been designated by the Vice Chancellor as the official source of information about the University. The Unit is responsible for timely information

sharing to Unilag publics; and also responsible for ensuring University-wide compliance with this guideline. Notwithstanding, there are instances where other staff speak on behalf of the University. Such instances are dictated by the staff member's functional responsibility in the institution. So, for all matters, unless otherwise agreed, the following hierarchy applies to information sharing:

Procedure for information Sharing

i). Faculty, staff, university-supported student organisations and/or individual university employees who share university information to the public through mass produced publications, brochures, news reporters or other mass communication channels must provide this information to the Communication Unit in advance of distribution or as soon after the release of information provided it is not university personal data.

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 all information is correct. It is the responsibility of the Communication Unit to prepare a news release regarding the gift, donation or donor for sharing with 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 units 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 or, if that is not possible, immediately thereafter.

iv). University employees should never give personal opinions as official University positions on particular issues. If asked by a news reporter to give an opinion about particular issues, services or programmes, such employees should explain that giving personal opinions on behalf of the University is not appropriate or not a part of their responsibility. It is, therefore,

advisable to decline comment and offer to direct the news reporter to the Head of Communication Unit.

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 maximise 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) working 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 and in line with item (4.0 (vii) above).

7.0 Research Communication

Effective communication of research projects and outputs plays a vital role in enhancing the University's reputation and attracting collaborators and recognition. Therefore, researchers who subject experts are required to share information about their research projects with the Research and Innovation (R&I) Office, and the Communication Unit at different stages of progress. This will facilitate strategic communication efforts to promote the University's research achievements. Albeit, in matters relating to the research conducted, it is to be referred to the researchers because they are the experts.

8.0 Guidelines for Media and Press Communication

Press communication within the University should adopt a storytelling format, engaging the Communication Unit 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 certain guidelines to uphold the University's reputation and brand integrity.

These guidelines forbid the following:

- i) Use of profane or offensive language or content when engaging in media interviews or making media statements.
- ii) 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.
- iii) Posting or using material that is, or might be construed as threatening, defamatory, harassing, bullying or discriminatory.

- iv) Posting or using material that is, or might be construed as, encouraging of any illegal activity.
- v) Releasing any confidential or personal information obtained in their capacity as an employee of the university.
- vi) Disclosing information that might compromise the safety or security of members of the University community.
- vii) 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 from the following offices or by contacting the Office of the Vice-Chancellor: vcoffice@unilag.edu.ng

- 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 this guidelines will be determined by the appropriate head, dean or any officer in charge of any individual college, school, division and/or department and University-supported student association. Hence, any disciplinary actions will follow existing University guidelines for such a process as enshrined in the University of Lagos code of conduct “Yellow Book”.

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, through the coordination of the Communications Unit and supported by the Quality Assurance and Servicom Unit develop an implementation strategy to give effect to this Guidelines.

13.0 Guidelines Review

The University Senate shall, in consultation with colleges, schools, institutes, directorates and other relevant academic and administrative units of UNILAG, review this Guidelines in line with changes in relevant legislations and updated without notice after every three 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 Guidelines 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 these guidelines, 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 this 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 guidelines 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, these guidelines contribute 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

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The African Commission Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (<https://achpr.au.int/en/node/902>)

United Nations “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>