



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Communication Policy (CP3)

Reference number of this document	
HEMIS classification	
Purpose	Stellenbosch University's (SU) Communication Policy determines the principles and provisions for the governance and management of internal and external institutional communication with its stakeholders.
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Owner of this policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy, Global and Corporate Affairs
Institutional functionary (curator) responsible for these rules	Senior Director: Corporate Communication and Marketing supported by Director: Communication
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The English version of this policy is the source document (operative document), while the Afrikaans and isiXhosa versions have been translated from the English.	

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1. Introduction

As a public Higher Education (HE) institution, Stellenbosch University (SU) is obliged to meet institutional communication responsibilities, coupled with the communication expectations of its diverse internal and external stakeholders. Strategically implemented, aligned and purposeful communication with stakeholders is furthermore vital in an ever-increasing competitive sector.

In the preamble to its Statute, SU underlines its commitment to the values enshrined in the South African Constitution, in particular the principle of basic human rights and freedoms, and “that it pursues academic integrity, academic freedom and freedom of scientific research” along with “responsibility, accountability, ethical behaviour, fairness and transparency”.

Living these values is a precondition for critical, experimental and creative thought, and for the advancement of intellectual inquiry and knowledge. Therefore, it is not the intention of this policy to restrict academic freedom or stifle the expression of opinion. The principle of academic freedom implies the absence of outside interference, censure or obstacles in the pursuit and practice of academic work, including discipline-related teaching, learning, research and publication, in and outside the classroom.

However, as confirmed in the Bill of Rights, exercising these freedoms come with restrictions and responsibilities. Academic freedom should be balanced by public accountability. In a digital communication age staff and students should remain cognisant of their association with SU and the related reasonable expectations, moral obligations and legal accountability in respect of comments made and opinions expressed in any capacity and on any platform. These relationships are governed by the institution’s conditions of service and various codes of conduct.

This Communication Policy (CP) aims to establish a framework of principles and provisions for the governance and management, and the integration and alignment of **institutional communication** developed by SU and its multiple constituent parts (also referred to as entities in this policy). The policy defines communication mandates, roles and responsibilities for institutional communication, and it distinguishes between institutional communication and other forms of communication, for example operational, academic and business communication.

1.1 Institutional communication

For this policy to be interpreted and implemented successfully, a shared understanding of institutional communication within the SU context is required. In essence, institutional communication encompasses official communication on behalf of Stellenbosch University.

Stellenbosch University furthermore defines institutional communication as a management function that is implemented in a strategic, structured, and integrated way. The policy creates a framework with three focus areas: the effective coordination of internal and external communication to support SU’s vision, mission, core strategic themes and strategic objectives; building quality relationships with stakeholders and promoting a favourable reputation.

Other forms of communication, specifically academic, operational, and business communication, are not specifically governed by this policy. **Academic communication** refers to methods of highly structured communication that are used mostly in pedagogical settings: textbooks, dissertations, conference presentations, research articles and lectures. **Business communication** can be defined as communication aimed at attaining business objectives. In a university setting this could include

student recruitment and engagement with industry partners, government, international academic partners, research foundations and donors. **Operational communication** refers to the day-to-day matters related to the smooth functioning of the institution, for example divisional meetings, administrative notices, closing dates for admission applications, renewal of usernames or facility maintenance notifications.

However, the distinction between institutional communication and other forms of communication may not always be easily discernible. Central to this distinction are the following criteria for institutional communication: it facilitates a favourable environment for achieving institutional goals through planned programmes for capitalising on opportunities and engaging key institutional stakeholders. It requires analysing trends, identifying reputational challenges and risks, and predicting consequences, which are to be mitigated through institutional communication initiatives. These actions should serve both the institution and the public interest.

1.2 Integrated institutional communication governance system

Due to the scope and complexity of institutional communication the Communication Policy and its supporting documents¹ jointly establish an integrated governance and management system for institutional communication at SU. This system will facilitate the synchronisation and integration of institutional communication.

1.3 Professional opinion and personal views

Regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech, the expression of professional opinions and personal views, irrespective of the platform or channel being utilised, is not restricted by this policy, but may be subject to other institutional rules, policies, protocols or codes of conduct listed under the supporting and related documents.

Staff members are encouraged to focus professional comments on their discipline-specific expertise when engaging in public discussions about the application and importance of research. Professional comments should be clearly distinguished from opinions based on personal views, as well as personal perspectives that differ from those held by the university as an institution.

Only staff members mandated in terms of the SU Delegation Framework, individual role-profiles or this policy may issue institutional communication or comment on behalf of Stellenbosch University. Therefore, staff members expressing discipline-specific opinions or personal views on topical debates are required to include written or verbal disclosures indicating in what capacity (either individual or representing the institution) they are commenting, writing or participating in public discourse on any platform.

2. Application of the policy

2.1 The Communication Policy is applicable to the University as a whole, and specifically to:

- 2.1.1 all staff members employed by SU, locally and abroad: academic, and professional and administrative and support staff members (permanent, temporary, part-time,

¹ The Communication Policy's supporting documents include protocols, rules, guidelines and manuals that serve to govern the implementation of institutional communication across the institution. Also refer to section 11 and Addendum A.

contract appointments and volunteers); as well as research collaborators and associates in accordance with their appointment agreement.

2.1.1.1 This policy also applies to staff appointed in terms of bilateral agreements with partner organisations, specifically in terms of their SU-related roles, for example staff members in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Military Science.

- 2.1.2 staff members and students who are mandated to communicate on public platforms on behalf of SU or any entity linked to the University. Such entities include, but are not limited to, statutory bodies and management structures, faculties, schools, academic departments, centres, bureaus and institutes, responsibility centres, student societies, residences, clusters and PSO wards, Maties Sport and PASS environments.
- 2.1.3 chairpersons and members of the University's governance structures as described in the Institutional Statute of Stellenbosch University (2019), as well as the chairpersons and members of any structure linked to SU.
- 2.1.4 students elected to positional leadership roles and who are designated to communicate on behalf of representative structures affiliated with the Students' Representative Council (SRC), including but not limited to the SRC itself, Student Parliament, the Tygerberg Students' Council, the Academic Affairs Council, Prim Committee, Senior Prim Committee and Societies Council, as well as their related structures.

3. Definitions

A comprehensive list of terminology and descriptions is included in the Glossary (Addendum A) of this policy.

4. Purpose of the policy

Stellenbosch University's (SU) Communication Policy determines the principles and provisions for the governance and management of internal and external institutional communication with its stakeholders.

5. Aims of the policy

The Communication Policy aims to:

- 5.1 contribute to SU's achievement of its institutional vision, mission, core strategic themes and strategic objectives;
- 5.2 establish and entrench a strategic, integrated, inclusive and measurable institutional communication approach that is aligned with institutional strategies and messages;
- 5.3 operationalise an integrated governance system for institutional communication that outlines communication processes and defines communication mandates, roles and responsibilities;

- 5.4 promote the implementation of effective and integrated institutional communication best practice across the institution;
- 5.5 integrate and align institutional communication, brand positioning and institutional brand identity guidelines;
- 5.6 facilitate best practice and govern the utilisation of digital communication channels, including social networking sites, for interactive and inclusive engagement with stakeholders;
- 5.7 provide a strategic framework for institutional communication during crises;
- 5.8 facilitate integrated institutional communication to optimise SU's issues management approach and processes;
- 5.9 promote a values-based approach to communication, including participation in debate and commentary on internal and public platforms;
- 5.10 enable the alignment of marketing initiatives, marketing communication and institutional communication objectives.

6. Policy principles

The Communication Policy is based on the following principles, which guide the interpretation and implementation of this policy:

- 6.1 The Communication Policy is underpinned by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, specifically the rights to privacy; freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media, academic freedom, freedom of scientific research and artistic creativity; and the freedom to receive or impart information or ideas. These freedoms are accompanied by concomitant responsibilities and limitations [Subsection 16 (2) of the Bill of Rights].
- 6.2 SU values and promotes critical thinking, and respectful, open debate, as well as expert commentary and participation in topical conversations by staff and students in the public domain. SU furthermore supports and encourages responsible communication activities inherent in academia, guided by the relevant SU policies, protocols, codes and guidelines. The policy is not intended to restrict academic freedom or freedom of expression.
- 6.3 The governance and oversight of institutional communication is the primary responsibility of the owner and curator of the Communication Policy and is predominantly overseen by the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division.
- 6.4 Institutional communication is subject to this policy and it is a shared responsibility between a broad range of entities and functions across the institution.
- 6.5 In addition to its objective of reputation building, institutional communication must reflect contextual transparency and honesty, credibility and accuracy.
- 6.6 Institutional communication must be responsive to the needs and expectations of the University's internal and external stakeholders and should promote constructive stakeholder engagement, trust and beneficial relationships.

- 6.7 Institutional communication is aligned with SU's vision, mission and strategy, and its integrated marketing and communication approach.
- 6.8 Institutional communication is guided by SU's institutional values and the draft Integrated Ethical Code.
- 6.9 Institutional communication must be context and purpose appropriate: sensitive to people living with disabilities; cognisant of racial, gender, religious and cultural diversity; strive to be just, impartial and fair, and is further guided by the SU Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Policy.
- 6.10 As communication is linked to language, institutional communication should support SU's commitment to advancing individual, institutional and societal multilingualism as appropriate for its stakeholders as determined by the Language Policy.

7. Policy provisions

These policy provisions, containing the requirements and prescriptions of the Communication Policy, are further supported, and supplemented by various supporting documents (including protocols, guidelines, rules, regulations, manuals and frameworks included in Section 12 of this policy) that facilitate and guide the implementation of the policy.

7.1 Internal Communication

- 7.1.1 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division has an oversight role in internal communication, and as such plays a key role in strategically implementing institutional communication with internal stakeholders. The division is responsible for the quality assurance and best practice of SU's institutional communication.
- 7.1.2 The diverse internal SU stakeholders require a differentiated and targeted approach to communication. Although the responsibility for communicating with these internal stakeholders resides in each responsibility centre or entity's line management structure, institutional communication should effectively be implemented in consultation or collaboration with the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division, especially in instances where an entity-specific topic or message may have an institutional impact. The institutional draft message management framework is aimed at managing this process collaboratively.
- 7.1.3 In support of SU's optimal communication with its internal stakeholders on relevant matters, staff and students have a shared responsibility to ensure that they retrieve, take note of and act on information distributed via official university channels.
- 7.1.4 To give effect to SU's integrated marketing and communication strategy across the institution, various internal communication channels have been created to coordinate and synchronise institutional communication with continuous monitoring. Entities that identify a need for new institutional communication channels must consult the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division prior to implementing alternative or additional digital channels.

7.2 External Communication: Stakeholder Engagement

7.2.1 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division is primarily responsible for external institutional communication, which has its own imperatives, but must also align with SU's integrated marketing and communication strategy, and the supporting documents related to this policy.

7.2.2 To ensure alignment between various SU entities who wish to communicate with internal stakeholders on **institutional matters**, staff members should familiarise themselves with the SU Message Management Framework and Institutional Narrative. This does not presuppose that an individual's opinion is aligned with that of the institution but seeks to safeguard the reputation of the institution. In instances where personal opinions do not correspond with the official stance of the University, staff members should disclose that a personal view is being expressed.

7.2.2.1 In the absence of a formal position statement in this regard, personal statements, irrespective of the context, channel or platform, may not undermine, cause harm or bring the institution into disrepute. Freedom of expression comes with concurrent accountability, and remains subject to institutional rules, policies, protocols or codes of conduct listed under the supporting and related documents.

7.3 External Communication: Media Relations

SU acknowledges and respects media freedom and the critical role of the media in society, both as a stakeholder group and a communication channel.

7.3.1 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division, along with the mandated communication professionals within various internal entities should build and foster constructive relations with the media as a channel for sharing information and for influencing public opinion.

7.3.2 As a public Higher Education institution, SU is mindful of its commitment to transparency and the role of the media as a channel for communicating with external stakeholders. The SU Media Protocol and Message Management Framework should be referenced for additional guidelines and further information regarding official statements and media responses on behalf of Stellenbosch University.

7.3.3 Staff and students who participate in public debate, provide commentary, or write opinion editorials must indicate that they are doing so either in their personal capacity, or as a discipline-specific expert, and make it clear that they are not expressing a view on behalf of the University.

7.3.4 When commenting on any public platform, staff and students should remain cognisant of the SA Constitution, the Cybercrimes Act, SU's institutional values, their employment or professional trust relationship with the university, applicable confidentiality requirements and agreements, other SU policies, rules, guidelines, and codes of conduct, as well as the SU

Media Protocol. The same provisions relevant to internal communication (7.2.2) are applicable to external communication.

7.3.5 Media liaison: roles and responsibilities

7.3.5.1 In terms of SU's integrated marketing and communication strategy, the multiple and varied facets of media liaison are a shared responsibility across the institution, as determined by designated positions, roles and responsibilities, and the applicable SU message management framework, protocols and guidelines.

7.3.5.2 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division is primarily responsible for media liaison on institutional matters and matters that may have an institutional impact, often in collaboration with and supported by communication practitioners in other entities and/or the relevant operational staff.

7.3.5.3 Media spokespersons

7.3.5.3.1 Only the chairpersons of the various SU governance structures (Council, Senate, faculty boards, Students' Representative Council Institutional Forum, Rectorate, and General Management Committee) are the designated spokespersons on matters that fall within the purview of these respective bodies. This provision excludes the chairpersons of any sub-structures as the chairperson of the related umbrella governance structure is the only mandated spokesperson unless the role is specifically delegated.

7.3.5.3.2 The Rector and Vice-Chancellor is the primary spokesperson of SU on institutional, policy and strategic matters, but this role may be delegated to a member of the Rectorate as spokesperson on the functions within their respective responsibility centres. The responsibility may be designated to responsible spokesperson(s) within the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division, or, on an *ad hoc* basis, to a specific staff member(s) with the relevant expertise on a particular topic.

7.3.5.3.3 Only designated staff members, or those who are mandated to do so in particular instances, may issue media statements, or respond to media enquiries on institutional matters or on behalf of the University (also refer to the SU Media Protocol).

7.3.5.3.4 Designated staff members at entities within SU may fulfil the role of spokesperson and issue statements pertaining to entity-specific matters, while adhering to the general principles and provisions of the Communication Policy.

7.3.5.3.5 Students elected to leadership positions within SU's formal and recognised student structures may issue statements and respond to media enquiries on behalf of such bodies, but always subject to this policy.

7.4 Crisis Communication

Crisis communication refers to the strategies, technologies, systems and protocols implemented to support SU's crisis management structures in mitigating the operational and reputational impact of a crisis through timeous communication, and effective engagement with stakeholders. Crisis communication addresses a current event in an immediate and mostly in a reactive manner. Examples of crises in this context include fires, and health and safety incidents.

In the event of a major incident or crisis, the SU Crisis Communication Plan will be activated in support of the crisis management structures in circumstances as determined by the SU Framework for Managing Contingencies (also refer to the Crisis Communication Plan for detailed information).

The following general provisions provide further direction and guidance:

- 7.4.1 All related internal and external communication, including media liaison, are centralised, and executed by the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division, in collaboration with the relevant internal stakeholders, operational entities and the contingency structure, to ensure consistent messaging and the prompt distribution of credible and accurate information in the event of a crisis.
- 7.4.2 In a crisis, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor is the lead spokesperson of SU. Such responsibility may be delegated to a particular University official and/or Chair of the Contingency Committee. The mandated designated spokesperson is supported by the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division and other relevant entities in the implementation of the Crisis Communication Plan.

7.5 Issues Communication

Issues communication is a form of institutional communication that follows a strategic, anticipatory management process that forms part of an integrated and structured communication approach with the intent to identify and formulate an institutional position on developing public or institutional issues for proactive and reactive engagement and communication purposes.

- 7.5.1 While any SU stakeholder may alert the institution to specific or potential issues, the mandate for identifying and registering matters to be addressed through issues communication resides with the Rectorate.
- 7.5.2 When an issue is identified, reported or escalated to the Rectorate, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor delegates the management of the specific project and/or its related issue(s) to the Responsibility Centre (RC) Head/Deputy-Vice Chancellor responsible for institutional communication in collaboration with the RC Head (or DVC) responsible for matters relating to the identified issue, where applicable.
- 7.5.3 The issues communication and engagement manager serves as liaison between the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division and the relevant Responsibility Centre (issue owner) in developing and coordinating an issue-related communication plan encompassing all touchpoints related to the issue across the institution.
- 7.5.4 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division assists the relevant Responsibility Centre(s) with the identification, monitoring, tracking and analysis of potential issues in the

media and/or social media, and provides operational support for the planning and implementation of issues communication in line with an integrated strategic communication approach.

7.6 Communication Channels and Platforms

Stellenbosch University utilises a wide variety of communication channels and platforms towards engaging with its stakeholders. In accordance with SU's integrated marketing and communication approach, the selection of a channel or platform is determined by various considerations.

7.6.1 As necessitated by global digital communication trends and the convenience of rapid distribution, most of Stellenbosch University's institutional communication is distributed via a variety of digital communication channels or platforms, including but not limited to websites, social media platforms, mass mailers, instant messaging, and online publications.

7.6.2 Although some entity-specific digital platforms, including social networking sites, may not strictly meet the criteria for institutional communication as per the definition adopted for this Policy, inevitably the content thereof is in the public domain, and it is thus associated with the institution. Therefore, this Policy and its supporting documents (protocols and guidelines) also guide the management and content of these platforms and channels.

7.6.3 The principles and provisions of this Policy are applicable to official SU digital communication platforms and channels, including social networking sites. All official institutional platforms and channels created on behalf of SU and its related entities are subject to quality controls and consultation with the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division. These channels and platforms must be clearly branded with the appropriate visual identity elements and managed as specified in this policy's relevant supporting documents (protocols, rules, guidelines, and manuals). In addition, the supporting social media protocols provide guidance on best practices towards safeguarding the institutional and individual users.

7.7 Communication Roles and Responsibilities

In terms of the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997, and the SU Statute, the competency and responsibility to manage Stellenbosch University is assigned to the Rector as Chief Executive Officer. The Policy for a SU Delegation Framework determines that the Rector uses a set of delegations to aid him/her in the execution of these responsibilities, including communicating with stakeholders and releasing public statements on behalf of the University. This section defines the various communication roles and responsibilities within the entities and structures across the institution.

7.7.1 Institutional Communication is the primary responsibility of the members of the Rectorate or Chairs of the governance structures, supported by the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division.

7.7.2 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division is responsible for:

7.8.2.1 giving effect to an integrated institutional communication strategy through formulating and implementing related communication plans

7.8.2.2 positioning the institution in accordance with its vision, vision, core strategic themes and strategic objectives

7.8.2.3 providing guidance and support to SU entities for engaging with their respective stakeholders on institutional matters and facilitating relevant institutional communication channels

7.7.2.4 compiling the protocols and guidelines for the implementation of an integrated institutional communication strategy and ensuring compliance with this Policy.

7.7.3 Governance structures

The chairs of SU's governance structures are mandated to communicate with stakeholders as provided for in their respective constitutions and/or rules. The chairs of sub-committees related to these structures are not mandated to make public statements.

7.7.4 Rectorate

Members of the Rectorate are mandated to approve statements and to act as spokespersons for the functions within their respective responsibility centres. These responsibilities may be delegated to senior managers as required for a particular matter, or as a circumstance may require.

7.7.5 Management structures

Management structures on various levels across the institution must support the implementation of institutional communication by facilitating and encouraging the flow of information in alignment with the University's integrated institutional marketing and communication approach.

7.7.6 Entity-specific communication

The primary responsibility for entity-specific communication across the institution is located within the role of the entity head (e.g., the dean of a faculty or the head of a responsibility centre) or their designated staff members.

7.7.7 Staff members

7.7.7.1 Staff members have the responsibility to take cognisance of all institutional communication distributed via internal communication channels in order to enable them to function as informed ambassadors of SU.

7.7.7.2 Staff members must ensure that they are familiar with their individual communication mandates and responsibilities in respect of institutional communication, discipline-specific communication, thought-leadership and public debates.

7.7.7.3 While disassociation with SU is neither possible nor desirable, staff members have the responsibility to disclose in which capacity statements are released or opinions are being expressed, especially in instances where staff members have more than one designation, for example as both a lecturer and a member of a governance structure.

- 7.7.8 Student leaders and student groups
Student leaders elected to student bodies registered in terms of the SU Student Constitution may issue statements or act as spokespersons for the student bodies that they represent, for example: the Students' Representative Council, the Tygerberg Students' Representative Council (TSRC), the Academic Affairs Council, the Prim Committee, the Senior Prim Committee, the Societies Council, faculty student committees, residence, cluster and PSO committees, and student society committees.

7.8 General provisions

- 7.8.1 The Corporate Communication and Marketing Division must provide the required support mechanisms to campus entities to facilitate integrated internal and external institutional communication across the institution. These could include, but are not limited to, professional guidance for engaging with stakeholders on institutional matters, communication protocols and guidelines; the institutional brand management manual, e-publications, mass mailer distribution platform(s) and a message management framework that facilitates input from University entities, as well as services for reputation analysis, media and social media tracking, monitoring and analysis.
- 7.8.2 Staff, students and anyone associated in an official capacity with SU, its entities or structures may not abuse this association or institutional communication channels to either directly or indirectly generate publicity for personal interests or other organisations.

8. Policy governance

8.1 Responsibilities

- 8.1.1. The owner of the Communication Policy is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy, Global and Corporate Affairs, who is responsible for performing the functions conferred upon the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy, Global and Corporate Affairs by the provisions of this Policy, as well as the functions listed below:

- 8.1.1.1 giving guidance regarding the interpretation and implementation of this Policy;
- 8.1.1.2 appointing a curator for this Policy from the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division and overseeing the functioning of the curator;
- 8.1.1.3 releasing and communicating this Policy and monitoring its effective implementation.
- 8.1.1.4 establishing, chairing, and overseeing the functioning of an institutional communication advisory committee.
- 8.1.1.5 initiating and overseeing a review of the Communication Policy with a view to its amendment or replacement.

- 8.1.2 The curator of this Policy is the Senior Director: Corporate Communication and Marketing, supported by the Director: Communication and the Director: Marketing pertaining to matters related to the SU brand. The curator is responsible for:

- 8.1.2.1 compiling the framework and implementation plan for the Communication

Policy and all related protocols and guidelines; and overseeing the roll-out and implementation across the institution;

8.1.2.2 raising and maintaining consistent awareness regarding the Communication Policy and supplementary documents among staff and student leaders;

8.1.2.3 establishing a framework for coordinating and monitoring institutional communication, and facilitating compliance with the Communication Policy; and

8.1.2.4 convening and chairing the task team for reviewing this Policy when a review process is initiated.

8.1.3 As SU follows an integrated institutional marketing and communication approach, the governance of the Policy is a shared responsibility across the institution.

8.1.3.1 All responsibility centre heads, deans, heads of academic departments, chief directors, senior directors, directors, and managers must ensure that the Communication Policy and related protocols are adhered to in their operational entities, and

8.1.3.2 All responsibility centre heads, deans, heads of academic departments, chief directors, senior directors, directors, and managers are required to address non-compliance in accordance with this policy and other relevant SU policies, codes of conduct and protocols.

8.2 Compliance

Although the intention of this policy is not to be limiting, but to create a values-driven framework for institutional communication, proper policy governance is a pre-requisite for an integrated institutional communication approach and risk management.

8.2.1 The owner of this policy is accountable for, and the curator is responsible for the creation of the necessary mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Policy, and to report in this regard to the Rectorate.

8.2.2 The owner of the policy is responsible for monitoring and reporting on compliance to the Policy in collaboration with the institutional communication committee and supported by the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division.

8.2.2.1 Breaches or non-compliance with the Policy by staff members, are to be dealt with within the appropriate line management structures.

8.2.2.2 Breaches or non-compliance by students, student structures or student leaders are to be dealt with in terms of the University's disciplinary policies and procedures, and the relevant codes of conduct.

8.3 Conflict resolution

8.3.1 In instances where students are of the opinion that issues regarding the implementation of the Communication Policy have not been resolved satisfactorily, the following procedures should be followed:

8.3.1.1 Academic context: refer complaints to the Academic Affairs Council via faculty student structures.

- 8.3.1.2 Student communities or student bodies: refer complaints to the relevant residence, cluster or PSO leadership structure, student body or the line management function within the Division for Student Affairs.
- 8.3.2. In instances where staff members are of the opinion that issues regarding the implementation of the Communication Policy have not been resolved satisfactorily, the following procedures should be followed:
 - 8.3.2.1 Faculties: complaints must be lodged within the relevant line structures to the departmental heads, or the dean.
 - 8.3.2.2 Professional administrative and support service divisions: complaints must be submitted to the relevant line management function.
- 8.3.3 In instances where all internal processes have been exhausted, but the outcomes remain unsatisfactory, complaints may be submitted to the [SU Ombud](#) for consideration in consultation with the relevant structures.

9. Policy review

As this Communication Policy is the first on this topic to be implemented at SU, an implementation period 24 to 36 months will be allowed to introduce the policy, monitor its implementation, evaluate its relevance and effectiveness, and review oversight and governance mechanisms and structures.

- 9.1 The Communication Policy must be reviewed during its fifth year of operation. It may be revised earlier, or more than once during its period of operation, should circumstances necessitate a revision or should the owner of the policy consider it necessary.
- 9.2 As with all SU policies, the Communication Policy is approved by the SU Council.
- 9.3 The rules for policy and management documents determine that prior to tabling the Communication Policy (a non-academic policy) for Council approval, the Rectorate, Institutional Forum, and the Executive Committee of Council, must recommend the Policy to Council as part of the statutory approval process.
- 9.4 In accordance with the King III framework, the Social and Business Ethics Committee of Council has a governance responsibility in terms of overseeing institutional stakeholder relations. As this policy directly impacts stakeholder relations the SBEC should fulfil the relevant role in relation to policy review and governance.
- 9.5 During the review or revision phase of this policy, prior to the statutory approval process, there should be consultation with the Rectorate, Institutional Forum and the Executive Committee of Council, as well as other relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to: the Audit and Risk Committee of Council, the Social and Business Ethics Committee of Council, the General Managers' Meeting, faculty boards, professional and administrative support services divisions, student bodies and the broad University community (staff and students).

10. Disclosure

The Communication Policy is a public document and is published on the University's website.

11. Supporting documents

Item No	Name of Document	Status <i>(e.g. identified, in process, approved, etc.)</i>
	SU Key Messaging Framework	25 July 2022 Draft supplied as example of supporting document
	SU Media Engagement Protocol	25 July 2022 Draft supplied as example of supporting document
	SU Social Media Engagement Guidelines and Protocols	25 July 2022 Draft supplied as example of supporting document
	SU Crisis Communication Plan	1 Dec 2021
	SU Integrated Communication and Marketing Strategy	TBC
	SU Issues Management Toolkit	TBC
	SU Brand Identity Manual	Approved
	SU Branding Regulation	1 June 2022
	SU Delegation Framework	TBC

12. Related documents

Item No	Name of Document	Status <i>(e.g. identified, in process, approved, etc.)</i>
	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution), especially the Bill of Rights	
	The Higher Education Act, No 101 of 1997,	
	Copyright Act 98 of 1978	
	Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020	
	King Code of Governance Principles (King III)	
	The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2 of 2000 (PAIA) as set out in the Stellenbosch University Manual in terms of section 14 and 51 of the Act (PAIA)	
	The Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013	
	Statute of Stellenbosch University, 2019	
	Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019-2024 , inclusive of SU values of excellence, compassion, equity, respect and accountability	
	<p>Conditions of Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS0051 - Conditions of service of research and support service staff • CS0052 - Conditions of service for Temporary staff • CS0053 - Conditions of service for lecturing staff 	
	Disability Access Policy	
	<i>Disciplinary Code:</i> rules regarding Disciplinary Action against Staff Members;	
	Disciplinary Code for Students of SU	
	Integrated Ethical Code for SU	Draft circulating

	Language Policy (2021)	
	Policy for the Use and Licensing of SU Trademarks	
	Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment	
	Research Ethics Policy for Stellenbosch University	
	Student Constitution of Stellenbosch University	

13. Addendum A: Glossary of terms

Academic communication	Academic communication refers to methods of highly structured communication that are used mostly in pedagogical settings: textbooks, dissertations, conference presentations, research articles and lectures.
Brand identity manual/guidelines/style guide	A brand identity manual is a manual that clearly defines rules and standards that determine how SU's visual emblems – logo, colour palette, fonts, design elements - must be used.
Brand positioning	The SU brand positioning determines the space it occupies in the minds of the people who interact with the institution. It also determines its influence and place within the higher education sector, thus setting it apart from other institutions.
Business communication	Business communication can be defined as communication aimed at attaining business objectives. In a university setting this could include student recruitment and engagement with industry partners, government, international academic partners, research foundations and donors.
Communication	Communication is the process of sharing or exchanging information in understandable and inclusive language when speaking or writing, and through the use of visual communication such as branding insignia, symbols and graphics, as well as video and photography. Also see academic communication, business communication and operational communication, as well as institutional communication.
Communication platforms	A communication platform is a software solution that facilitates external and internal messaging via various channels, including phone, video conferencing, task management, and team messaging. Newer platforms offer project management, file sharing, and stakeholder communication functionalities. Communication platforms

	are used for internal communication, stakeholder communication, project management, collaboration tools and video conferencing.
Corporate communication*	Corporate Communication is a management function that is implemented in a strategic, structured and integrated way, and that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external corporate communication with the overall purpose of supporting an organisation's strategic objectives; of building quality relationships with stakeholder groups, and of establishing and maintaining a favourable reputation. In the SU context the term 'corporate Communication' has been replaced by the term institutional communication.
Crisis communication	Crisis communication refers to the strategies, technologies, systems and protocols implemented to support SU's crisis management structures to mitigate the operational and reputational impact of a crisis through timeous communication, and effective engagement with stakeholders. Crisis communication addresses a current event in an immediate and mostly in a reactive manner. Examples of crises in this context include fires, and health and safety incidents.
Delegation framework	The competency and responsibility to manage Stellenbosch University is entrusted to the Rector as Chief Executive Officer in terms of the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997, and the SU Statute. The Policy for a SU Delegation Framework determines that the Rector uses a set of delegations to aid him in the execution of his responsibilities, including public statements on behalf of Stellenbosch University. A delegation is an order to exercise an indicated competency, to perform an obligation, or, in general, to deal with competencies and obligations that are related to an indicated function or functions.
Digital communication Digital media Digital platforms	Digital communication is transmitted via digital devices such as computers and cellphones. Digital channels include e-publications, websites, social media, blogs, podcasts, email, and bulk communication platforms, as well as digital application software (apps).
Entity Entities Stellenbosch University entities University entities	The Communication Policy refers to SU and its multiple constituent parts (also referred to as an entity/entities). Such entities include all statutory bodies, management structures, faculties, academic departments, professional and administrative support service divisions, institutes, bureaus, units, centres, schools, institutes, spinout companies, affiliated entities such as the Botanical Garden, SU Museum, Woordfees, SU Choir, Maties Sport, student academic and student community leadership structures, residences, clusters, PSO wards and student societies.

External institutional communication	External institutional communication includes any communication from Stellenbosch University (SU) with stakeholders outside the institution, including but not limited to, prospective students, industry partners, alumni, and donors. Also refer to the definition for stakeholders.
Governance structures	As indicated in the SU Statute, Council, Senate, faculty boards, Students' Representative Council, Institutional Forum, Rector's Management Team, and General Management Committee are governance structures.
Institutional communication	<p>SU uses the following definition for institutional communication:</p> <p>Stellenbosch University defines institutional communication as a management function that is implemented in a strategic, structured, and integrated way. The policy creates a framework with three focus areas: for the effective coordination of internal and external institutional communication to support SU's vision, mission, core strategic themes and strategic objectives; for building quality relationships with stakeholders, and for promoting a favourable reputation.</p> <p>In a knowledge field where, certain terminology is used interchangeably in both the academic discipline and the organisational practice, some background will facilitate clarification and create a collective understanding. These include terminology such as public relations, public affairs, corporate communication, organisational communication, crisis communication, issue communication and communication management. For this policy Stellenbosch University adopts the term institutional communication as an overarching concept inclusive of these terminologies.</p>
Internal communication	Internal communication is structured communication within the institution/university community that relates to achieving strategic institutional goals and priorities. This communication takes place between members of the institution, such as management, staff, students, and governance structures. Internal communication platforms for structured communication include: e-publications; email; bulk communication platforms, websites, town hall meetings and social media.
Integrated marketing and communication	Integrated marketing and communication are aligned with the institution's vision, strategic objectives and values, and this strategic approach and its mechanisms form the connective tissue that ensures the use of cohesive institutional messaging across multiple internal entities, a variety of communication channels and many internal and external stakeholders

Issues communication	Issues communication is a form of institutional communication that follows a strategic, anticipatory management process that forms part of an integrated and structured communication approach with the intent to identify and formulate an institutional position on developing public or institutional issues for proactive and reactive engagement purposes.
Marketing communication	Marketing communication includes the messages and media Stellenbosch University implements to communicate with stakeholders about its academic offerings, for example degree programmes, research expertise and short courses, as well as funding opportunities.
Media monitoring, tracking and analysis services	Media monitoring is a service that actively mines content about Stellenbosch University across various media channels – print, broadcast, online and social media – and serves as a barometer for what is being said about the institution in the public domain. The monitoring, tracking and analysis informs the institutional communication strategy and supports reputation management.
Message management framework	The messaging framework or messaging architecture is a structured written representation of the 'Stellenbosch story.' It provides a foundation for consistent messaging from which multiple entities across the complex institution can benefit when implementing their marketing, communication, advertising, and fund-raising initiatives.
Official internal institutional communication	Official internal institutional communication, as defined in the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (2020), refers to all communication from the Chancellor, Council, Senate, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer, or the Registrar to the entire University. In the context of this policy such communiqués would be regarded as institutional communication, but institutional communication is not limit to only these individuals. Refer to Section 7.7: Communication roles and responsibilities.
Operational communication	Operational communication refers to the day-to-day matters related to the smooth functioning of the institution, for example divisional meetings, administrative notices, closing dates for admission applications, renewal of usernames or facility maintenance notifications.
Student positional leadership	Student positional leadership refers to the student leaders elected to the student bodies constituted in terms of the Student Constitution of Stellenbosch University. It also includes the student leaders of the Maties Sport codes.
Prim Committee Senior Prim Committee	Each Stellenbosch University residence, cluster and Private Organisation ward has a student house

	committee and is led by a primaria (for women) and primarius (for men). The primarii and primariae are grouped together in a Prim Committee and a Senior Prim Committee (for senior university residences). The chairpersons of both these committees are ex-officio members of the Students' Representative Council (SRC).
Promotional materials	Promotional materials include, but are not limited to, designs for branded merchandise, branded stationery, Power Point templates, video call backgrounds and visual design elements for banners and conference folders.
Public platform	A place, means, channel, written documents, or opportunity for public expression of opinion a public discussion forum.
Public domain	Information in the public domain is available for everyone to see or know about.
Reputation	Stellenbosch University's reputation is an intangible asset and source of competitive advantage. Reputation is a matter of perception: the overall reputation is based on the perceptions of its respective stakeholders.
Responsibility Centre (RC)	A Responsibility Centre is a reporting-line structure that reports to a member of the Rectorate.
Social media	Social media is an internet-based form of communication that enables interaction among people to exchange information, have conversations and create web content. Social media include blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more. Social media can be used for personal or business purposes.
Stakeholders	<p>A stakeholder is defined by Freeman² as an individual or a group of individuals who are affected by the decisions of an organisation or whose decisions affect an organisation. SU identifies its stakeholders as the following: all students (present, past and prospective); parents and sponsors of students; staff; SA government; private sector and industry; donors; funding agencies; research foundations and other research partners; network partners; investors and the community (civil society, NGOs (non-governmental organisations), other academic institutions, advisory and professional councils, service providers and the media).</p> <p>In the context of this policy external stakeholders can only be recipients of institutional communication or entity-specific communication, whereas internal stakeholders (staff and students) can be both recipients of institutional communication and entity-specific communication, as well as institutional communicators in</p>

² Freeman RE 1984. *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman: Boston

	certain contexts or entity-specific communicators. Refer to Section 7.7: Communication Roles and Responsibilities.
Stellenbosch University (SU) University entities Entity Entities	The Communication Policy refers to SU and its multiple constituent parts, referred to as an entity/entities. Such entities include all statutory bodies, management structures, faculties, schools, academic departments, professional and administrative support service divisions, institutes, bureaus, units, centres, institutes, spinout companies, affiliated entities such as the Botanical Garden, SU Museum, Woordfees, SU Choir, Maties Sport, student academic and student community leadership structures, residences, clusters, PSO wards and student societies.
SU Contingency Committee	SU manages unexpected and disruptive events/crises by constituting an appropriate contingency committee consisting of members of senior management, representatives from entities affected by the event and communication specialists from the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division.
Supporting documents	Due to the broad scope and complexity of institutional communication across the institution, the Communication Policy and its supporting documents jointly establish an integrated governance and management system for institutional communication at SU. Supporting documents include protocols, rules, regulations, guidelines, and manuals. Refer to Section 11 for a comprehensive list.