



# COMMUNICATION POLICY

*Policy Number* \_\_\_\_\_

## CUIB STUDENT'S SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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<i>Responsible Officer</i>	Director, CITS
<i>Approved by</i>	President, CUIB
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<i>Related Policies</i>	IT Services Acceptable Use Policy
	University Email Acceptable Use Policy
	University's Code of Student Conduct

## VERSION HISTORY

<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Revision Made</b>	<b>Date</b>
v1.0	Communication Department	First Draft	April 28, 2017

THIS POLICY CAN BE **MODIFIED** AS THE NEEDS ARISE **WITHOUT** PRIOR NOTICE

## **INTRODUCTION**

Communication is an important tool for disseminating the university's values and philosophy to its external and internal publics. Internal communication is particularly vital in strengthening our organizational culture and feeling of Commitment and belonging among faculty, staff and students.

To support the university's quest for world-class excellence, there is a need for effective communication among all stakeholders, hence, the rationale for a comprehensive communication policy.

This policy document stipulates how the Catholic University Institute of Buea will handle communication between its internal and external stakeholders. Addressing the concerns of our stakeholders, the university shall provide the necessary communication infrastructure to ensure that information reaches its stakeholders using the most effective means. The university has chosen this path to realize its vision of moving towards world-class academic excellence that emphasizes the centrality of the stakeholders in its communication web. The management commits itself to the implementation of this policy and will subject it to periodic reviews to ensure its relevance in line with the changing circumstances and needs of our stakeholders.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles, guidelines, practices and processes that the university will embrace in fostering excellent internal and external communication. In implementing the policy, the university will realize its vision, mission and core values by reaching out to its stakeholders with messages that help to create a sense of ownership of the policy.

## **COMMUNICATION PRACTICES**

That there is no clear structure on how the communication function works within the university is partly attributable to a lack of a communication policy. Best practices dictate that for purposes of sending uniform messages from and portraying a common identity of the university, the communication function should be centralized and coordinated from a focal point.

## **GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The goal of this policy is to support the university's aspirations of portraying a common identity of the university in achieving its vision and mission.

Firstly, the broad objectives of CUIB Communication Policy are to:

- Provide efficient and effective communication mechanisms among management, staff, students and other stakeholders
- Promote the coherence and consistency of information flow, internally and externally
- Minimize communication breakdown and delays including overseeing customer feedback programme.
- Promote the use of appropriate channels of communication

Secondly, the specific objectives of the Catholic University Institute of Buea Communication Policy are to:

- Interpret information emanating from the university and present it in a useful and sustainable manner to enhance relations with stakeholders.
- Correct lapses in the flow of information between the groups both that make up the constituency of the university and which constitute opposition to and competition with the university
- Facilitate the role of the university in taking up its place in society as a gesture of cooperation in civil, educational and charitable situations

## **JUSTIFICATION**

This policy emphasizes professionalism in communication and serves as a guide to members of the university community with respect to their responsibility in serving the interests of the university. It therefore outlines the planned effort to influence opinion through good character and responsible performance based on mutually satisfactory communication.

There is a need to gain public goodwill and acceptance as well as to sustain and expand the market for university products and services.

## **I. GENERAL COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **I.1 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION PRACTICE**

The university endeavors to provide its stakeholders with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programmes, services, and initiatives. Consequently, to realize the university's communication goal, this policy outlines core principles of good communication practice as a guide to its stakeholders. It is appropriate to adapt these principles to suit the working environment, however.

#### **I.1.1 Effectiveness**

The university shall ensure that all communication is effective and appropriate and shall convey information and respond to requests by stakeholders through appropriate communication channels.

#### **I.1.2 Clarity**

The university undertakes to transmit clear, uniform and easily understood information, using as appropriate the university logo, corporate colours and publications to reinforce, clarify or authenticate communication.

#### **I.1.3 Pro-Activity**

The university shall continue to demonstrate leadership by proactively seeking and engaging external contacts in areas of mutual interest in line with its vision and mission.

#### **I.1.4 Transparency**

The university shall continue to be as transparent and accountable as possible, disclosing reasons for decisions made, while the management shall openly engage in dialogue as appropriate.

#### **I.1.5 Efficiency**

The university shall endeavor to ensure that all information duly reaches the intended recipients.

#### **I.1.6 Cultural Awareness**

As a national institution that is international in character, the university shall continue to respect cultural diversity of all stakeholders in its communication

#### **I.1.7 Responsibility**

The university shall endeavor to ensure that editorial operations and marketing of the university's products, which constitute an integral part of the institution's communication process, reflect a high level of accountability and responsibility.

#### **I.1.8 Integrity**

Internal and external communication, like all other university activities shall continue to be guided by high levels of integrity.

## **I.2 BEST PRACTICES**

Best communication practices call for clarity. All our communication processes in the university must therefore be guided by the same values that characterize the best communication practices worldwide.

### **The University Spokesperson**

On all matters pertaining to the university, the President is the spokesperson. From time to time as and when necessary, the President may authorize other officers to be spokespersons. These officers will be fully informed on developments in the university requiring external communication or response.

## **5.3 Audiences**

The university has two types of audiences or publics: internal and external.

### **5.3.1 Internal audiences**

The internal audiences of the university are faculty, staff and students.

### **5.3.2 External audiences**

The external audiences of the university include the Government, the ministry in charge of university education, collaborating institutions, the media, parents or guardians, alumni, and the general public.

The mass media is one of the most sensitive and key audiences of the university because, if they carry clear information regarding the university, the university can better be understood. To this end, the Communication office will seek to:

- a) Provide accurate and objective information
- b) Maintain an open-door policy culture,
- c) Package as newsworthy any current information coming from the university, and
- d) Monitor the media continuously.

## **5.4 Types and methods of communication**

### **5.4.1 Internal communication**

To maintain a good working environment for the realization of its vision and mission, the university aims at facilitating efficient and effective internal communication to staff and students as well as to all its stakeholders. In this respect, it will utilize, but not limited to utilizing, these three communication modes:

- a) E. mails, text messages and WhatsApp messages.

## **External communication**

### **a. Electronic communication**

E-mail, text message and the web are the primary modes of electronic communication and constitute a key platform for external communication. The university shall encourage the use of email guided by the University ICT Policy as a way of engaging with external stakeholders. At the same time, the university shall encourage the generation of general podcasts and video clips for marketing and enhancing its corporate image.

### **b. Public lectures**

Public lectures are tools of delivery and engagement with external audiences. It is envisaged that the university shall continue to attract prominent personalities and international academics wishing to interact and discourse with the university community. These engagements are critical to the enhancement of the image of the university.

### **c. Meetings**

The university uses meetings such as courtesy calls, meetings with collaborating institutions, staff meetings, and governance and management meetings to communicate with stakeholders. Where possible, an appropriate meeting should be covered through the existing communication channels.

### **d. Television/print/radio**

The university through the communication office shall use television, radio and the print media for reaching out to its audience. Staff or faculty who wish to send information through these channels must go through the communications office.

## **II. CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

The university shall continue to proactively prevent events that are likely to lead to loss of stakeholder confidence and to take care of events stemming from rumours, speculation and insider lack of confidence that give the university negative publicity. In these cases, appropriate crisis communication should enable the university to respond rapidly and effectively to potentially negative situations. Given the importance of crisis communication:

- Only the President or any authorized person shall give information to the media.
- The Communication office shall maintain regular contact with stakeholders and give advice where issues or developments appear to cause problems.
- The Communication office shall monitor local and international news and events and advise the President on issues or events relevant to the university.

### **II.1 Crisis Communication Management Team**

In case of a crisis, the University Management Board shall become the Crisis Communication Management Team (CCMT) and co-opt other members as the situation may demand. The Communication Manager shall be a member of the team. The CCMT shall constantly monitor, interpret and manage issues with potential to escalate into crises and shall gather details about crises and approve strategies for internal and external communication.

### **II.2 Crisis Response**

When a crisis occurs, the President shall develop and advise on appropriate strategies to deal with the situation and communicate appropriate information to relevant stakeholders.

### **III.3 Releasing Information to the Media**

The President will release relevant, appropriate and verifiable information to the media regarding any crisis. The President shall institute mechanisms to continually monitor media coverage and respond to accordingly.

### **III.4 Corporate Advertising**

Utilizing print, electronic and support media for corporate advertising, the university shall use corporate advertising to continually promote a positive image of and ensure observance of the best advertising principles and practices in the university.

### **III. SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION**

Social media are powerful communications tools that have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Because the use of social media may blur the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, the Catholic University Institute of Buea has established the following policies to clarify how best to enhance and protect the University, as well as personal and professional reputations, when participating in social media.

#### **III.1 PROCEDURES**

Both in professional and institutional roles, employees and students are expected to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in the real world. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, patients, alumni, donors, media, and other University constituents apply.

##### **III.1.1 Creation of Official Communication Platforms**

Units or student groups that have a social media page or that will like to start one must have authorization from the office of the President. An application must be sent to the office of the President through CITS, giving reasons why application should be considered. All institutional pages must have an appointed employee/student who is identified as being responsible for content. All social media platforms must have CITS as Administrators for the purpose of monitoring.

##### **III.1.2 Sending Information to Students**

CITS is the central point for the dissemination of information to students and all other publics. CITS shall create WhatsApp groups for all students per their various schools and levels. This will serve in segmenting information that is needed only by particular groups of students. All information from the schools to students must be brought to CITS for dissemination three days earlier. Any emergencies must be approved by the President.

**NB.** This medium of communication with students shall be a ONE WAY communication only.

That is students would not be given the opportunity to send information via the groups. This is intended to suppress any situation in which detrimental information can be sent to the group

##### **III.1.3 Use of CUIB Official Facebook Page**

The CUIB official page will host all official information of the university. This page serves as reference point to all as per the university's stand on issues. Faculty and staff will use only information on this page to disseminate to other platforms when necessary.

**III.1.4 Speaking on behalf of the University:** Faculty and staff are allowed to use only the information hosted on the CUIB official Facebook page in speaking on behalf of the university. However they have the right to inform the communication services of any communication concerns.

## **III.2 SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES**

### **III.2.1 Use Approved Photos and University Logos**

Your University social media presence must use photos that accurately depict your department or unit, and approved logos for your area of the University. CITS provides approved photos and logos for various areas of the University. To receive logos in a downloadable format, contact CITS.

### **III.2.2 Have a Plan**

Departments should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date. The communication and Information Technology Service can assist and advise you with your social media planning.

### **III.2.3 Link back to the University**

Whenever possible, link back to the CUIB website. Ideally, posts should be very brief; redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the CUIB Web environment.

### **III.2.4 Protect the Institutional Voice**

Posts on social media sites should protect the University's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual unit should construe its social media site as representing the University as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post. Names, profile images, and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

### **III.2.5 Protect Institutional Confidential and Proprietary Information**

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the University, its students, employees, patients, or alumni.

### **III.2.6 Do NOT Use University Logos or Trademarks without Permission**

Any use of CUIB logos, trademarks or other images must have prior approval. Do not use official logos, trademarks, or any other University images or iconography on personal social media sites. Do not use CUIB's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.

### **III.2.7 Do not Announce University News**

Do not be the first to announce University or departmental news on a social media site unless pre-approved by the Office of the Provost or President.

### **III.2.8 Respect University Time and Property**

University computers and time on the job are reserved for University-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with Governing Regulation.

### **III.2.9 Think Twice before Posting**

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the University. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you would not say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the Office of the Provost or President.

### **III.2.10 Strive for Accuracy**

Check your facts before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the University in any capacity.

### **III.2.11 Be Respectful**

Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the University and its institutional voice.

### **III.2.12 Be Active**

Social media presences require diligent care and attention. An effective social media site requires regular updates and fresh or engaging content.

### **III.2.13 Consider your Audience and its Potential Reaction to your Content**

Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, patients, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

### **III.2.14 Adhere to all Applicable University Regulations, Policies, and Procedures**

Use Social Media in a manner that complies with University regulations, policies, and procedures.

### **III.2.15 Adhere to Copyright and Fair Use Law**

When posting, be aware of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the University.

## **NON-COMPLIANCE**

Non-compliance with this policy may result in any or all of the following:

- Limitation or revocation of individual or unit rights to use or participate in University-related social media, or
- Removal of posts or social media accounts, or
- Corrective or disciplinary actions and sanctions, as defined in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures, Governing Regulations, Administrative and Governing Regulations of CUIB.

## **APPROVAL**

This document is approved for the smooth running of the Catholic University Institute of Buea.

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President, CUIB

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Signature and Date