



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
A College of Queen's University Belfast

# Communication Policy

## **1. PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION POLICY**

- 1.1 This policy statement articulates the University College's commitment to appropriate and effective communication to all stakeholders both internally and externally. It provides a structural framework for planning and delivery and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved.

## **2. THE SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 The University College is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and excellence and loyal to itself as a community of learning. Communicating our mission and institutional goals should be underpinned by the principles of respect for difference and cultural diversity, transparency, equity and fairness with all stakeholders.

- 2.2 In taking this commitment forward we will:

- i. Have a clear and well-articulated vision and mission that enables all to understand and engage with the strategic direction and the aims and priorities of the University College.
- ii. To provide, and be provided with, the appropriate information to enable us to deliver against roles and the agreed strategic direction of the University College.
- iii. Ensure a robust corporate strategy for staff communications.
- iv. Be involved in the creation of an action plan, its implementation and review.

- 2.3 Main Goals for External Communications

- i To support the priorities and strategies outlined in the University College's Corporate Plan
- ii To share information with key stakeholders
- iii To manage the University College's PR and public profile

- 2.4 Main Goals for Internal Communication

- i To make sure the University College's goals and policies are clearly communicated
- ii To provide staff with the information in order to build commitment and support for the University College's strategies
- iii To disseminate and share good news stories throughout the organisation to encourage staff and promote pride in the University College's achievements
- iv To raise concerns and issues with staff in order to promote the University College's strategic goals.
- v To promote the sharing of information to improve/inform decision making.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DELIVERY**

- 3.1 Communication is a responsibility of each member of University College. We must therefore, be aware of and take full responsibility for, legislative responsibilities, and those outlined in this policy. We acknowledge and respect the legislative requirements placed upon us (for example, the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act, Health and Safety and Equality legislation) and will work at all times to ensure that communications are open, transparent and consistent. The key roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

### **3.2 Responsibility for External Communications**

The Chairman or Vice-Chair of the Governing Body may issue statements on key issues relating to strategic decisions, appointments or corporate governance.

The Principal is responsible for issuing statements relating to major events or responding to media queries relating to the implementation of strategy and the University College's Corporate Business Plan.

### **3.3 Responsibilities of Leadership**

The University College operates a distributed leadership policy. Leaders, refers not just to those with Executive Leadership responsibilities but to leaders of teams, programmes and projects and Heads of Department.

All such leaders are expected to:

- i. Ensure, as individuals and teams, we foster a culture of free discussion and exploration.
- ii. Ensure all stakeholders are kept updated on relevant University College activities to enable them to be as effective as possible.
- iii. Promote best practice in communication appropriate for our University College environment.
- iv. Ensure a communications strategy, policy and action plan is in place.
- v. Manage strategic communication through an identified communication framework and team of communications advocates.
- vi. Ensure that information is made available to all stakeholders in a timely manner and via appropriate channels.
- vii. Ensure that all stakeholders have appropriate skills and relevant information to enable effective communication with all parties.
- viii. Maintain open channels of communication of two-way communication and listen to feedback and comment from all stakeholders.
- ix. Monitor the effectiveness of the communications strategy, policy and infrastructure and ensure the communication action plan evolves to meet the needs of the University College.

### **3.4 Responsibilities of All Staff**

Staff, refers to those employed by, or responsible for delivering services on behalf of the University College.

Staff are expected to:

- i. Ensure individual execution of good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- ii. To be informed and have information in order to be as effective as possible in a role and supportive of the strategic direction of the University College.
- iii. Take responsibility for communicating with stakeholders.
- iv. Use open channels of two-way communications to keep line managers, colleagues and stakeholders informed.
- v. Consider the need to communicate and ensure this happens in all work undertaken.
- vi. Take responsibility for communicating to the Principal's Office about activity, news, successes.
- vii. Continually measure and evaluate communication to review success and achievement of the key messages and aims and objectives.
- viii. Act as ambassadors of the University College.

### **3.5 Responsibilities of Students**

The University College considers its students as partners. A sound basis for this partnership is effective communication; in this instance that means a shared responsibility in establishing and maintaining effective dialogue and information exchange.

Students are expected to:

- i. Participate actively in their learning (i.e. engaging comprehensively with all the University College's key channels of communication.)
- ii. Communicate using their own words or by referencing the work of others.
- iii. Be aware of and actively use communication tools and processes that are designed to enhance and support the student experience.
- iv. Respond to communications from the University College or representatives of the University College in a timely manner.
- v. Act responsibly in the use of internal and external communications as ambassadors of Stranmillis University College.
- vi. Actively engage with formal and informal feedback processes that provide the University College with an insight into how it might improve its service and infrastructure for students.
- vii. Take an active role in opportunities provided for student representation.
- viii. Inform the University College at the earliest opportunity of concerns or issues that are affecting your ability to study.

### **3.6 Responsibilities of Managers**

Managers, refers to those who manage people and/or processes across the University College.

Managers are expected to:

- i. Manage and implement strategic communication through an identified staff communication framework and team of communications advocates.
- ii. Communicate the annual strategic plan to stakeholders.
- iii. Communicate regularly with their teams, ideally face-face, to ensure relevant information is available, communicated and understood.
- iv. Support and encourage teams to communicate about projects, news, updates, expertise.
- v. Help to ensure all colleagues maintain good communication practice in accordance with this policy.
- vi. Maintain two-way channels of communication to ensure feedback is obtained and to keep the University College's senior team informed.
- vii. Consider the needs of all stakeholders to enable effective communication to take place in all pieces of work undertaken.

## **4. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The University College will monitor the Communications Strategy to support the development and delivery of its Corporate Business Plan and profile its achievements. This will be reviewed annually.

## 5. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 5.1 The University College recognises the developing role of social media within the communications context. The University College is currently developing a social media policy for staff and students. Further detail, such as guidelines for acceptable use of social media, will be provided in that document.

---

Dr Anne Heaslett  
Principal

---

Date: September 2015  
Review Date: September 2018  
For distribution to: All Staff