



The American University of Kurdistan Communications Policy

Policy Number: GA014

Effective Date: May 28, 2023

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I. INTRODUCTION

- a. **Authority:** The Board of Trustees (herein referred to as “Board”) at The American University of Kurdistan (herein referred to as “AUK” or “University”) is authorized to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs.
- b. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles, and practices that the University will undertake to encourage effective and transparent internal and external communications.
 - i. Lays out the appropriate rules for any public messaging or communication.
 - ii. Seeks to have multiple gatekeepers who will check to ensure all information is complete, accurate, accessible, current and transparent.
 - iii. Recognizes the importance of consistent, appropriate, and successful internal and external communications in helping the University fulfill its goals and objectives and maintain its credibility as a transparent organization.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies to all University staff, faculty, students, and affiliates.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Responsible Executive:** President
- b. **Responsible Administrator:** Director of Communications
- c. **Responsible Office:** Office of Communications
- d. **Policy Contact:** Director of Communications

III. DEFINITION

- a. ***‘Transparency or Being Transparent’*** - the process of being open, honest, and direct about various arrangements, activities, and initiatives being performed in regard to the operations of AUK.
- b. ***External Communications*** - all of the messages and information that the University disseminates to various audiences, whether directly (through telephone calls, emails, letters, newsletters, articles, marketing materials, social media platforms, online, and press releases) or indirectly, through the media and word of mouth. All communication and information shared with AUK visitors and stakeholders, such as trustees, sponsors, partners, supporters, and important suppliers, are included in external communications.
- c. ***Internal Communications*** - any verbal and written messages and information exchanged within the University, primarily between staff members but also between Trustees and staff. Information provided to franchise employees, volunteers and staff members of companies collaborating in AUK projects is included in internal communications.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy aims to deliver clarity for all audiences, whether they be students, staff, partners, or the general public. The University will regularly update and upload information and guidelines for current and prospective students so that they can make knowledgeable choices about their education.

This policy provides the fundamental principles for institutional effective communication practice as a guide for its stakeholders.

The University promotes transparent and honest communication.

V. POLICY PRINCIPLES

Best-Practices

Clarity is required for the best communication practices. The same values that underpin the best communication strategies worldwide must consequently serve as the foundation for all of AUK's communication operations. These procedures should be adhered to at all levels of University operations and are ingrained in the code of conduct.

Clarity

The University commits to disseminating information that is uniform, clear, and simple to understand, using the university's logo, corporate colors, publications, and authorized online channels as necessary to support, enhance, or authenticate communication.

Cultural-Awareness

The University shall continue to appreciate the cultural diversity of all its partners as it is a regional institution with an international outlook.

Effectiveness

The AUK is required to make sure that all communication is appropriate and effective, and employs the proper channels to deliver information and respond to stakeholder requests.

Efficiency

The University will make an effort to ensure that all information is properly delivered to its target audience.

Integrity

Like all other University operations, internal and external communications shall continue to be governed by high standards of integrity.

Pro-Activity

The University will continue to exercise leadership by actively seeking out and engaging with external entities in areas of shared interest in accordance with its vision and mission.

Responsibility

The University shall make an effort to ensure that editorial operations and marketing of the University's products, which form a crucial component of the institution's communication process, reflect a high degree of accountability and responsibility.

Transparency

The University shall maintain its commitment to transparency and accountability by continuing to provide justification for all content, and by actively participating in open dialogue as necessary.

A. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The AUK strives to facilitate efficient and effective internal communication to employees, students, and all of its stakeholders in order to create an open, collaborative, and positive environment for faculty, staff, and students, and for the accomplishment of the institutional vision and mission. These communications take various forms:

- a. **Print Media:** Written communication such as newsletters, articles, university catalogue, flyers and other ad-hoc publications that are a vital component in the University's communications.

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- b. Broadcast: The intranet, internal communication tools like Microsoft Teams, staff e-newsletters, notice-boards, staff training events, and interviews that are used to promote informal information exchange.
- c. New Media: Web-based communications include professional controls at the content level. This includes; Website, Social Media channels (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube), Online TV, Blogs, etc.

General Guidelines of Internal Communications

- The University shall promote the use of communication channels (Social Media/Website) that enable authentic discussion and feedback.
- The Director of Communications will establish mechanisms to continuously monitor media coverage and respond to such coverage accordingly, providing the media with accurate, pertinent, and verified information.
- The University shall promote a marketing approach intended to build the university's reputation among the public and private sectors while also generating interest in the education and services AUK offers. Such advertising aims to continuously foster a positive image of the University and assure observance of the best marketing strategies via print, broadcast and new media.
- Branding is a potent identity tool for every institution. The University shall always portray its identity to its stakeholders through the use of the appropriate logo, name, fonts, and colors as published in the AUK Logo Branding Manual Guidelines.
- All communications shall be in English; the University will also determine which publications and messaging should be concurrently posted in Kurdish and Arabic.
- All forms of communication should be respectful and free of discriminatory remarks, including those based on race, ethnicity, or gender.
- All interactions with TV stations and journalists must go through the Office of Communication.

Procedures for assessing the effectiveness of the University's communication activities

- Monitoring communication channels and engagement metrics; tracking website traffic, social media engagement, and email open rates.
- Soliciting feedback from stakeholders
- Analyzing media coverage: monitoring media and how the University is portrayed in the media.
- Conducting periodic reviews of communication efforts for improvement and ensuring that communication strategies are aligned with the University's goals and objectives.

B. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Communications should be considered as a component of the larger field of advocacy in which the University aims to:

- Ensure those who are supporters and donors of the University (governmental and non-governmental, public and private sector) are informed via high-quality information on its projects, plans, and programs of activity.

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- Reach out to target audiences (e.g. prospective students, their parents, school administrators, current and potential institutional collaborators) with the objective of developing its teaching and learning and community outreach initiatives.
- Ensure that the University's visual identity, as displayed in all of its print and digital communications, is transparent, consistent, coherent, and conveys the University's core mission and institutional learning goals.

General Guidelines of External Communications

The AUK web site and platforms are crucial for effective external communications. The University website's editorial oversight falls under the purview of the Office of Communications. The content on the website should always be current, user-friendly and managed to comply with the institutional mission.

In accordance with applicable policies and procedures, the University community will utilize AUK email addresses in an ethical and responsible manner. The official AUK email address is a primary means of communication both within AUK and externally.

AUK has official social media accounts on outlets including; Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Flickr.

VI. POLICY PROCEDURES

- The University's **Logo Branding Manual** provides the standards and usage for all internal and external communications' formats and design styles.
- The Director of Communications must authorize any materials that use the University's brand.
- All requests for content to be posted and published on AUK's website, webpages, and all Social Media platforms needs to correspond to the [Procedures of the Office of Communications](#) and be officially petitioned via a [request form](#).
- Those delivering speeches on behalf of AUK should reference the "Talking Points" document, which outlines recommended points according to audience type.

VII. POLICY VIOLATION

Violations of any University policy are deemed a serious breach of AUK's **Employee Code of Conduct #HR003**.

Behaviors or activities that may result in a policy violation include, but are not limited to:

- Sharing confidential information with unauthorized individuals or entities.
- Making false or misleading statements about the University or its affiliates.
- Harassing, discriminating, or engaging in any form of inappropriate behavior towards others, whether in person or online.
- Using University communication channels for personal or commercial purposes.
- Failing to adhere to the University's branding guidelines.
- Failing to report or address communication errors or mistakes in a timely manner.
- Engaging in unauthorized external communication on behalf of the University.
- Failing to follow the University's guidelines for communication during a crisis or emergency situation.

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VIII. POLICY HISTORY

- a. **Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- b. **Adopted:** May 28, 2023

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Service Request Form

Requesting Unit	
Request Title	
Location	
Date & Time	
Narrative / Description	

Services Requested	Check the Box
Design of promotional items	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design of social media posts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>
Videography	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media Coverage (AUK Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Venue design	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mass media coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing/Sponsorship to AUK	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approvals

Requester

Supervisor

**Communications
Office**

President

Date

Date

Date

Date

Signature

Signature

Signature

Signature