



PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

2018

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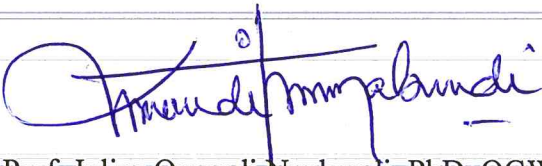
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FOREWORD

Maseno University is a Public University in Kenya established as per the Universities Act, 2012 and operates under the Maseno University Charter, 2013. The University in compliance with the Kenya's national goals aimed at evolving an efficient administrative and academic environment for teaching, research and outreach. Maseno University, is committed to leadership in collaboration with other institutions nationally and internationally to develop inter-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches to innovative acquisition and dissemination of knowledge for the betterment of all.

The University's Public Relations and Communications Policy shall guide the placement of information to the general public and the application of communicational tools including the social media in the best interest of the University students, staff, stakeholders and the general public.



Prof. Julius Omondi Nyabundi, PhD, OGW
VICE-CHANCELLOR

APPROVAL AND COMMENCEMENT

This Policy shall be known as Maseno University Public Relations and Communication Policy, hereafter also termed as Policy No. MSU/ADM/PR/006 and shall take effect upon approval by Maseno University Council.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 23(1) and section 35(1)(a)(iii) of the Universities Act, Section 19(2)(q) of the Charter for Maseno University 2013 and Schedule I (1.2)(q) of the Maseno University Statutes, Maseno University Council certifies that this policy has been made in accordance with all relevant legislations.

Dated the 12th.....day of October.....2018

Signed Abdullah Said Date 12/10/2018

Prof. Abdullah Naji Said
CHAIRMAN, MASENO UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

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This policy was written and produced by Maseno University
Private Bag 40105 Maseno, Kenya
Telephone: +254- 3516201/722203411
Email: vc@maseno.ac.ke
www.maseno.ac.ke

UNIVERSITY VISION AND MISSION

VISION

The University of Excellence in Discovery and Dissemination of Knowledge.

MISSION

To discover, harness, apply, disseminate and preserve knowledge for good of humanity.

CORE VALUES OF THE UNIVERSITY

- **Relevance**
The University is committed to ensuring relevance in its programs and activities
- **Excellence**
Excellence shall be targeted in outputs of the university
- **Equity**
The University shall ensure that there is equity in all the opportunities within its jurisdiction
- **Quality**
All outputs and processes of the University shall ensure that quality is maintained
- **Integrity**

The University shall ensure integrity in all its undertaking

QUALITY STATEMENT

Maseno University is committed to communicating effectively with its customers and interested parties, to continually improve its quality management systems to ensure delivery of quality service in compliance with statutory and other regulatory requirements.

In order to realize this commitment, the University Management shall manage information in such a way that staff, students and stakeholders get easy access to accurate, timely and appropriate information that best presents the image of the University.

1.0 PREAMBLE.

Maseno University recognizes that Public Relations (PR) and Communication are components of strategic associations with partners, clients, students and staff and other institutions. The image presented by an organization is normally discerned from the information that spread from and about the said organization.

The Public Relations and Communication policy shall guide the management, staff and students prudently and cogently using information to promote Maseno University as a brand that is driven by the desire to offer the best academic programmes within a dependable administrative culture. The policy is meant to guide information handling that places Maseno University favorably among the community of Universities nationally and worldwide.

Maseno University also recognises that the Internet provides a unique opportunity to participate in interactive discussions and share information using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. etc. Staff and students are likely to use social media for official purposes or on a private capacity which can present risks to confidential information, reputation and jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used appropriately, staff and students are expected to adhere to this policy.

This online social media policy is intended to guide all staff and students on the use of the social media space; when participating personally in a manner that may affect the University, as well as when acting on behalf of Maseno University. The policy is also cognizant of individuals' rights that are entrenched in the Constitution of Kenya.

2.0 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICT: Information Communication and Technology

IT: Information Technology

PR: Public Relations

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Brand: Term, symbol, design, words that signify or in combination offer a desired image of an organization (Maseno University). Best practices, high standards, ethical approach towards profiling mandate are also often times presented as defining and organization as a brand.

Communication: The sharing of information through a variety of media in order to effectively express the position of an organization (Maseno University).

Corporate Communication: Sometimes used as a synonym to Public Relations: the management of communication towards maintaining and enhancing an organization's reputation among its clients.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The act of an organization deliberately incorporating social wellbeing of society into its programmes. The responsible management of an organization by minding its programs effects on the environment and on people.

Media: Communication outlets and channels: speaking, writing, advertising, videography, cinematography, print, electronic, internet among others.

Public Relations (PR): Control, Management and interest-based profiling of the flow and exchange of information between an individual or organization (Maseno University) and various publics.

Social Media: Interactive online communication channels enabling instant and mass communication.

IT Champions: Any staff member with the mandate to communicate on behalf of the University on any online platform.

Social media channels: Refers to all social media channels including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, University blog(s), email Newsletters, personal blogs by staff.

Social media: Is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other, or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook, Linked-In, internet newsgroups, and chat rooms. Social media also covers blogs and video- and image-sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.

4.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The university has had a Communication and Public Relations practice that has served it over the years. With the development of new frontiers in technology, there are dangers posed by unregulated use of social media, unlimited availability of handset phones, laptops, I-pads, and computers. There is therefore need to formulate policies that will guide communication in both the mainstream and emerging channels. This is the first written policy on Communication and Public Relations which shall guide and also provide a link through which the existing and prospective clientele can benefit from communication from and to the University.

5.0 SCOPE

This policy covers all communications within and outside the University by staff, students, visitors and contracted services at Maseno University.

6.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Public Relations and Communications Policy include:

- (i) Implement the University's strategy on the flow of information to stakeholders and the general public.
- (ii) Promote and publicize the University as a teaching and research institution.
- (iii) Effective handling of complaints and feedback channels.

7.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Maseno University shall be guided by the following principles in implementing this policy:

- (i) All staff and students shall be required to present a positive image of the University.
- (ii) All channels of communication, including University website, social media channels and IT Champions shall be employed in a manner that maintains and enhances good reputation for the University.
- (iii) Correct and officially sanctioned communications shall at all times be adhered to both for internal and external communication.
- (iv) Accountability in the release and use of communication channels.
- (v) Employees and students are to be mindful that all communication through social media must meet the standards of the Data Protection Act, the Employee Code of Conduct.
- (vi) Any communications that employees make through social media must not:
 - (a) Bring the organisation into disrepute
 - (b) Breach confidentiality
 - (c) Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual or group of individuals.
 - (d) Any other action that impacts on the employees ability to do their work.
 - (e) Contravene the University's policies.

8.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

8.1 Responsibility

The Directorate of Public Relations and Marketing was established in 2007 as a Directorate in the Vice-Chancellor's Office to manage positive and appropriate relations with the various stakeholders and general public that are served or that serve the University. These include: students and prospective students; the staff; parents and guardians and sponsors of students; other Public and Private universities; stakeholders and the general public; the media; government agencies; private agencies among others.

Based on the foregoing, the Directorate is mandated to oversee the implementation of this policy.

8.2 Role of Directorate of Public Relations and Marketing shall include but not limited to the following:

8.2.1 Branding:

Branding the University as an institution of higher learning and promoting the University as a brand in teaching, research and outreach.

8.2.2 Promotional Publicity:

Presenting the University's best image through handling of Promotional Publicity.

8.2.3 Media Liaison:

Monitoring, liaison with the media and advising the management on emerging issues.

8.2.4 Communication of the University's Position:

Advising on communication of the University's position and effecting communication of the University's interests and position on issues.

8.2.5 Handling of Public Complaints:

Handling of Public complaints in collaboration with Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) pursuant to Article 59(4) of the Constitution of Kenya through the Commission on Administrative Justice Act 2011 (Cap 102A of the Laws of Kenya).

8.2.6 Marketing:

Marketing the University's academic programmes through:

- (a) Advertising on Electronic and Print media.
- (b) Running Radio advertisements.
- (c) Design and Production of posters, brochures and promotional materials.
- (d) Design and production of branded promotional materials.

8.2.7 Corporate Social Responsibility

Enhancing good relations with its stakeholders by strengthening outreach programmes. Towards this, the University shall from time to time engage in giving-back activities as corporate social responsibility.

8.2.8 University Community Partnerships

Continuously engaging the catchment community around the University in order to improve peace and tranquility around the University's campuses. This shall include cooperation with local administration, leaders and security agencies.

8.2.9 Publications, Internet and Website Management

Promoting corporate communication through a variety of media to enhance an informative, appealing and attractive corporate image. These shall include newsletters, magazines and internet powered platforms.

8.2.10 Social Media:

Utilization of social media platforms in communication and networking.

8.2.11 Events Management:

Promoting the Maseno University in Inter- University Exhibitions, Shows, Career fairs, Education Days among others.

8.2.12 Coordination of Information:

Coordinating information gathering from Divisions, Schools, Departments and Sections so as to inform the various publics on the activities taking place in the University.

8.2.13 General Communication

Ensuring that:

- (i) All communication from the University bears the University letterhead
- (ii) Branded templates are used for all University documentation and presentation
- (iii) All staff and students display email etiquette and best practice when writing emails to prevent privacy breaches and reputational issues of the University
- (iv) Staff and students exercise caution when using social media. When acting in his/her individual capacity rather than the University, staff must state that "opinions are my own" in content introduction.

8.2.14 Complaints/ Feedback

Handling complaints and feedback on University services by various stakeholders in liaison with the Commission for Administrative Justice (CAJ).

9.0 STRATEGIC FOCUS/INTERVENTIONS

The following strategic interventions shall be deployed in order to meet the objectives of this policy:

- (i) Effective internal and external communications with staff and students;
- (ii) External engagement through establishing and maintaining a two-way engagement with key audiences including business, community and alumni;

- (iii) Contributing to increased University visibility in key recruitment areas for students and staff;
- (iv) Continuously being involved in community relations initiatives; and
- (v) Being customer focused at all times.

10.0 POLICY COMPLIANCE

It is the responsibility of all employees and students to comply with this policy.

11.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of this policy shall be done on a continuous basis by Maseno University through the Directorate of Public Relations.

12.0 REVIEW

This policy shall normally be reviewed every three years or as and when need arises for revision.

13.0 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

The policy on Public Relations and Communication shall be read alongside the under mentioned:

- i. Universities Act No. 42 (2012)
- ii. Computer and Cyber-Crimes Laws 2018
- iii. University Standards and Guidelines (2014)
- iv. Commission on Administrative Justice Act 2011 (Cap 102A of the Laws of Kenya).
- v. Employee Code of Conduct
- vi. The Constitution of Kenya (2010)

UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

(a) Physical address:

Main Campus - Kisumu – Busia Road
Kisumu Campus: Kisumu City Centre, Varsity Plaza

(b) Postal Address:

Private Bag, Maseno-40105 , KENYA

(c) Email Address:

enquiries@maseno.ac.ke

(d) Telephone Numbers:

+254 57 351620/2, +254 722 203411

(e) Maseno University Website:

www.maseno.ac.ke

(f) Social Media Platforms:

Twitter: @Maseno_Uni

Facebook: www.facebook.com/maseno University.

(g) Contacts of the Directorate:

Director, Public Relations & Marketing

Tel: 057 351 040 or 057 351620/2 Ext. 3023

E-mail: directorpr@maseno.ac.ke

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