COMMUNICATION POLICY

April 2025

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Effective Date	
Approving Authority	Council
Review After	Three (3) years
Responsible Office(s)	Vice-Chancellor and Registrar
Responsible Officer(s)/Committee(s)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Head of Research and Innovation, Director of Finance and Investment, Executive Deans of Schools, Heads of Academic Departments, Centre Managers, Head of Postgraduate Studies, Research and Innovation Committee.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ED	Executive Dean
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MUBAS	Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences
RSU	Research Support Unit
VC	Vice Chancellor

KEY DEFINITIONS

Bulk communications:	Messages or announcements that are sent simultaneously to a large group of recipients, typically using email, SMS, or digital platforms
Communication protocol:	A formal set of guidelines or rules that govern how information is shared within and outside an organisation.
Social media:	Digital platforms and applications that enable users to create, share, and engage with content and information in real-time

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all MUBAS staff are promptly, clearly, and consistently informed about new, amended, or rescinded internal policies and procedures, thereby promoting awareness, compliance, transparency and accountability across the institution. Additionally, the policy aims to guide the institution's external communication by ensuring that information shared with stakeholders such as government bodies, funders, partners, and the media is accurate, timely, professional, and aligned with MUBAS's strategic objectives.

2.0. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all MUBAS employees across academic and non-academic members of staff.

3.0. PROCEDURE

To ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability in institutional operations, MUBAS follows a structured process for the development, approval, and dissemination of policies and procedures. This section outlines the steps involved from initial drafting through to formal approval and communication, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities at each stage.

3.1. Development and Approval

a) All policies and procedures must be developed or reviewed by the originating department/center/unit.
b) Final approval must be obtained from the relevant MUBAS governance structure (e.g. Management, Council, Senate), depending on the policy or procedure type.
c) The Office of the Registrar will serve as the central point for coordinating communication efforts.

4.0. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication protocols at MUBAS establish clear pathways for effective information flow within the institution. These protocols outline the various official channels used for internal communication and define the responsibilities of staff, management, and centers/ units in sharing and receiving information.

4.1. Communication Channels

The Office of the Registrar will use the following channels to disseminate information about policies and procedures:

a) **Email Circulars:** Sent directly to all relevant staff emails.

b) **MUBAS Intranet:** Uploading documents to a dedicated "Policies and Procedures" section.
c) **Official WhatsApp Groups:** For urgent policies requiring immediate attention.
d) **Departmental Meetings and Staff Briefings:** Especially for policies requiring detailed explanation.
e) **Noticeboards:** Hard copies for areas where digital communication is less accessible.

4.2. Targeted Communication

a) Communication will be tailored to staff groups based on the policy or procedure's relevance to their functions.
b) Executive Deans (EDs), Heads of Departments (HoDs) and Center Managers must ensure the communication reaches every team member under their supervision.

4.3. Acknowledgement and Understanding

a) EDs, HoDs, and Center Managers are responsible for confirming that all their staff have received and understood the policies and procedures.
b) Where appropriate, staff may be required to sign an acknowledgement form.

4.4. Briefings and Training

a) For complex policies or procedures, the responsible department or center, in collaboration with Human Resources and the Office of the Registrar, will organize:
    i. Workshops
    ii. Orientation Sessions
    iii. Webinars (for virtual engagement)

4.5. Policy Documentation and Version Control

b) Each policy/procedure must display:
    i. Version Number
    ii. Effective Date
    iii. Review Date
c) Only the most current versions will be maintained and accessible through the MUBAS intranet.

4.6. Orientation of New Staff

a) The Office of the Registrar must incorporate a briefing on key policies and procedures as part of the new staff induction program.

4.7. Responsibilities

To ensure the effective implementation of this communication policy, specific tasks have been assigned to designated offices and individuals across MUBAS. These responsibilities aim to support the timely development, approval, dissemination, and understanding of institutional policies and procedures at all levels:

Task	Responsible Party
Development/Review of Policies	Office of the Registrar
Final Approval	University Council
Communication	Office of the Registrar
Ensuring Understanding	Office of the Registrar/ HoD/Center Managers
Training (where needed)	Office of the Registrar + HR

5.0. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

MUBAS recognises that effective external communication plays a crucial role in reinforcing its identity, increasing visibility, building trust, and advancing strategic partnerships. External communications must be timely, accurate, accessible, and aligned with the institution's mission and values. This section outlines the formal procedures and responsible structures for engaging with external audiences, which include governmental and non-governmental bodies, funding partners, the media, and the general public.

5.1 Communication Channels

MUBAS shall utilise multiple channels to disseminate official information externally. Each channel shall have defined roles, oversight responsibilities, and usage protocols to ensure consistency and professionalism.

5.1.1. Website

The MUBAS website shall be a key tool for disseminating institutional news, academic updates, event notices, and policy information.

a) The Marketing and Communications Section shall oversee the operations of the website, with technical support from the ICT Department.
b) Departments submitting content shall ensure alignment with MUBAS branding, tone, and editorial standards.
c) All updates shall be approved by the Marketing and Communications department prior to publication.

5.1.2. Social Media

Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn) shall be used to reach wider audiences with real-time updates, engagement campaigns, and educational content.

a) Only designated staff shall post on official MUBAS accounts.
b) Personal accounts of staff shall not misrepresent or compromise the university's image.
c) MUBAS social media guidelines shall be followed at all times.

5.1.3. Email Communication

Emails shall remain a professional means for one-on-one or mass dissemination of official notices, partnership invitations, and academic circulars.

a) All outgoing emails to external stakeholders shall maintain institutional tone and include standardised MUBAS signatures.
b) Bulk communications shall be approved by the Office of the Registrar or relevant department heads.

5.1.4. Press Releases and Media Engagement

MUBAS shall actively engage the press to announce research breakthroughs, policy developments, institutional achievements, and event coverage.

a) The Office of the Registrar shall be the sole entity mandated to issue press releases and respond to media inquiries.
b) Staff contacted by the media shall promptly inform the Office of the Registrar.
c) All official responses shall be developed in collaboration with relevant departments and reviewed by designated MUBAS leadership.

5.2. Guidelines for Speaking to the Media

To protect institutional reputation and ensure accurate representation, the following procedures apply:

a) All media requests shall be directed to the Office of the Registrar immediately.

b) Only authorized spokespersons (e.g., VC and Registrar) shall provide official statements.

c) Written responses shall be vetted by both the Office of the Registrar and VC before dissemination.

d) Press briefings shall be coordinated centrally and may include pre-brief sessions for staff involved.

e) If MUBAS' statements may impact partner organisations, those organisations shall be informed prior to public release.

f) Crisis communication protocols shall be activated when needed, under the direction of Senior Management.

5.3. Branding and Messaging Consistency

a) All external official documents shall adhere to MUBAS brand guidelines, including logo use, font, colour, and tone.

b) Official materials distributed publicly shall align with institutional priorities and reflect the professionalism expected of a higher education institution.

5.4. Responsibilities

This section outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders involved in both internal and external communication. Each individual and unit is expected to uphold institutional standards, safeguard the university's reputation, and ensure consistency and accuracy in all communication efforts. The responsibilities are categorised as follows:

5.4.1. Office of the Registrar:

a) Acts as the primary custodian of external communication procedures.

b) Reviews, approves, and disseminates all major announcements and communication protocols for MUBAS

c) Trains staff on communication best practices and brand management.

5.4.2. Heads of Departments/Centres and Project Leads:

a) Shall coordinate with the Office of the Registrar when engaging external stakeholders.

b) Shall seek guidance before initiating external-facing communication that could impact institutional image.

5.4.3. All MUBAS Staff:

a) Shall be aware of and adhere to communication protocols.

b) Are responsible for protecting confidential information.

c) Shall refer media or high-level external inquiries to the Office of the Registrar.

6.0. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

a) Compliance with this policy shall be monitored by the office of the Registrar and reported annually to Senior Management

b) The Office of the Registrar shall conduct random audits to verify that staff are aware of and have access to all current policies.

c) The Office of the Registrar shall monitor external engagements and conduct periodic audits of communication practices.

d) Feedback from external audiences shall be reviewed to improve messaging and stakeholder relations.

7.0. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

a) This policy shall be reviewed every **three years** or as needed to ensure relevance and efficiency.