



Communication Policy

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Number: ADM.09.02
Policy Category: Administrative
Section: Marketing and Communications Office (Marcom)
Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President (EVP)
Originally Issued Date: August 2011
Last Date Revised: May 2022
Effective Date:

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Based on its mission, Bethlehem University fosters shared values, moral principles, and dedication to serving the common good in providing quality higher education to the people of Palestine and serving them in its role as a center for the advancement, sharing and use of knowledge, the University takes its responsibility to communicate with its stakeholders openly, honestly, accurately, transparently, and in a timely manner very seriously.

In recognition of the media as an important role-player in an increasingly competitive higher education environment generally, and in influencing public attitudes towards and perceptions of BU, in particular; the Communications team will practice professional communications principles, using well written, high-quality communications that clearly articulate and timely disseminate the official messaging in support of BU's goals and interests. The same applies to timely notification of issues pertaining to BU's image and reputation. BU aims to help staff manage and maximize the opportunities of external engagement with the media, while at the same time helping manage the risk to themselves, and to the University. The University staff are encouraged to work with the Communications team to promote their teaching, research and other University achievements.

By contacting and interacting with the media, it is the general policy of BU that:

- a. the overall strategy of the university and its goals be supported;
- b. the optimal relationship with the media be maintained and managed to enhance the University's public image; and
- c. the branding of the University's public image must facilitate its ability to be successful in its core activities.

The following principles are the main anchors in implementing the University's Communication Policy:

- a. respect for freedom of expression and critical thinking;



- b. rejection of any form of advocacy of discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical disability, or other grounds of discrimination prohibited under the Palestinian law;
- c. rejection and prevention for advocacy of hatred or incitement to violence;
- d. encouragement of open, clear, transparent, honest, accurate and timeous communication contact with the media by BU community;
- e. acceptance of the increasing importance of the information flow management and the interaction with the media in an ever-changing, technology-driven and instant communication environment as a challenging aspect of advancing the University;
- f. cultivating a sound interpersonal relationships with members of the media;
- g. facilitating the promotion and positioning of the BU and its achievements in the public domain in a responsible professional manner;
- h. disseminating of current, informative and engaging BU material in a consistent, accurate and impressive manner.

As a general principle, all media enquiries about university matters are required to be referred to the Marcom /Communications Officers.

Media Liaison and Official Spokespersons:

1. The mandated spokespersons of BU are the following:
 - a. The Vice Chancellor (VC) is the primary official spokesperson of the University, but the VC may nominate or appoint another person to serve as spokesperson in a particular instance. Moreover, the Executive Vice President will take the role of daily public communication in regard to the University relations.
 - b. For operational matters (Academics, Finance, Human Resources...etc), it is the relevant Vice President (VP), who may nominate or appoint another person to serve as spokesperson in a particular instance.
 - c. For BU Faculty/Institute matters, the Dean or Director concerned.
 - d. For general or institutional enquiries on student matters, the Dean of students.
2. The academic employees of the University are encouraged to engage in public debate and to provide expert commentary on matters falling within their area of expertise consistent with the role of the University in the society. For the purposes of ensuring effective coverage and the advantage of possible positive publicity, the Communications Officers must provide advice to academic employees regarding the release of controversial information that may reflect on the University. The views of academic employees expressed in this capacity do not necessarily represent the views of the University, and they should not be construed as official comments.
3. The Communications Officers receiving media enquiries must channel these enquiries to the appropriate spokesperson or the concerned BU party.



2. DEFINITIONS

Communications: are any external and/or internal officially released BU news, statement, publication, announcement, articles or messaging for audience interested in the activities of the University.

Communications Team (Officers): BU Marcom Office staff responsible for producing, disseminating and overseeing the University communications.

Channel(s): is the method by which the University news, statement, publication, announcement or message are provided to the public or to a particular audience.

Media: are those organizations and/or agencies that most people use for receiving and/or disseminating information through involving the popular or “mass” media such as newspapers, magazines, bulletins, radio and television.

BU Stakeholders: are individuals and/or organizations and/or agencies considered to have a genuine direct influential relationship with BU activities and progress. They may include faculty, staff, students, alumni, former staff, Members of the University Boards, current students’ parents, prospective students and parents, donors, suppliers, contractors, the community, the media, local government agencies, and others affiliated with the University.

3. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The mission of the Communications Team is to increase awareness of Bethlehem University (BU) internally as well as externally by helping shape and enhance the University’s image, and advance its objectives among all of its stakeholders through integrated strategic communications while ensuring that it is in accordance with the BU’s interests. It also assists faculty and staff in raising funds to enable the University to maintain and further enhance its mission of quality teaching, research and community service.

The purpose of this policy is to assist mainly BU Communications team, faculty and staff in the implementation of Bethlehem University’s Communication Strategy and Branding Policy in order to help achieving a consistent, clear, professional and unified identity in all produced printed and electronic material while addressing all BU stakeholders. This policy is an integral part of the University’s Communication Strategy.

The Communication Policy guides on the standards to be used in all aspects of communication channels, including multimedia used.

- For the websites & social media communication, see the [Websites and Social Media Platforms Policy](#)
- In case of a crisis, see Addendum (I), [Crisis Communication Plan](#)
- In the event of a death, see Addendum (II), [Communication Protocol in the Event of Death](#)



- For proofreading and editing communications, see Addendum (III), [Proofreading and Editing Communications Guidelines](#)

4. APPLICATION / SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Bethlehem University community and others affiliated with the University – including faculty, staff, and members of the University Boards.

This Policy applies to all communications and visual materials, including all forms of media, printed materials, online representations, PowerPoint presentations, signage, vehicles and communications and representations created by and for an entity of the University, and by and for third parties with respect to the University.

5. STATEMENT OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The EVP has overall responsibility for administering this policy.
2. The Responsibilities of the Communications Team:
 - a. The team is responsible for implementing the communication policy and strategy under the direct supervision and guidance of the Director of Marcom.
 - b. It is the core duty of the team to promote a positive image of BU and to raise awareness of the university's activities, programs and achievements.
 - c. The team is committed to disseminating accurate information to the news media, the public and the internal BU stakeholders.
 - d. The team issues communications about major university events in both English and Arabic to media, and publishes notices of upcoming events and university stories on the BU website and social media platforms.
 - e. The team is responsible for reporting to the Vice Chancellor and EVP through the Director of Marcom of the significant issues related to the University published by the media.
 - f. The team should maintain a good relationship with all the correspondents and strengthen it. Having the local correspondents cover the details during different functions of the university, shall make sure that the university is mentioned in the media more often, which is the best way for publicity.
 - g. The team has been entrusted to provide input and assist in University outreach and information provision.
 - h. The team is responsible for the overall implementation of the Communications Policy and the production of materials to support and best suit the University's needs.
 - i. It is the responsibility of the Communications Officers, the Print Shop, and all enrollment management staff to abide by, be familiar with, communicate and ensure that this policy is followed by their respective employees who may produce items that represent Bethlehem University.
 - j. The team must channel media enquiries to the appropriate spokesperson and monitor whether the matter receives the required attention.



- k. The team is responsible for media monitoring across the University and the outside world as well.
- l. The team is responsible for the overall compliance with this policy

In case there is any question as to whether produced materials meet guidelines, please contact the Communications Officers.

3. The Vice Presidents form a second tier of respondents to engage with the media on matters related to their respective portfolios.

6. PROCEDURES

1. Bethlehem University Publications:

a. The Weekly Bulletin:

The Weekly Bulletin is published by **the Marcom office** to ensure centralization and accuracy of information. The following should be considered:

- i. All material intended to be published in the Weekly Bulletin has to be submitted no later than **9:30am on Fridays**.
- ii. It is preferable to receive the material submitted for the Weekly Bulletin in both languages **Arabic and English**. If submitted in one language, immediate translation of the material takes place, Arabic into English and vice versa and saved in a word document.
- iii. All material must not be lengthy, not more than 100 words. Otherwise, will be directed to a link in the original language shown.
- iv. All material has to be sent via email to wb@bethlehem.edu
- v. The Communications Officers shall edit any text as deemed necessary, in order to produce complete and error-free branded information.

All of the above should be finished by COB Friday, and the Weekly Bulletin should be on the web on Monday morning **before 10:00am**.

b. The Bethlehem University News Magazine:

The Bethlehem University News Magazine (BUN) is a news magazine, issued twice yearly, targeted mainly at donors and supporters of the university. BUN recipients are put on the mailing list after visiting the university and/or expressing interest in being a recipient or after becoming a donor to the University. The BUN is an excellent way of promoting the University's activities and achievements, accomplished by our world class faculty and staff.

The BUN has an editorial committee, headed by the Director of Marcom, who is the producer, the Communications Officers, in addition to maximum two selected faculty members with Good English writing skills (preferably one from the English Department) serving as



editors/consultants and willing to contribute by collecting information, pictures, ideas and writing articles for a two-year term with the possibility of renewal for another term. However, responsibility of the BUN is with the Communications Officers.

2. Visitors and Guests:

It is the general policy of Bethlehem University that faculty, staff and administrators inform the Executive Vice President and the Marcom as soon as it is known that official guests/visitors are coming to the University.

- a. "Visitors Authorization Form" (no. ADM.01.F01) available on the University Website under BU forms has to be filled out by the BU host. A copy of this form will be sent directly to the BU Event Manager for following up with the BU host on the needs pertained to this visit (if required).
- b. In case media coverage (photos, media, articles, printed material,...etc.) is required, inform Communications Officers by filling and submitting the special form. This form is available on the University Website / Marcom / Communications entitled Media Coverage Request Form (no. ADM.09.F02). This form will be sent to the Communications Officers and the **Director of Marcom**.
- c. Communicate the visit and needs at the earliest possible (minimum three working days) in normal cases and not at the last minute, except in emergency cases.
- d. In emergency cases - up to 8:30am of the same day of the visit- communicate the visit and needs to the Communications officers following the normal visit procedures. Noting that fulfilling all the visit's needs may not be guaranteed depending on existing work circumstances on that day.

3. Conferences and Events:

- a. All Conferences and/or Events taking place on BU campus have to be communicated to the BU Event Manager by filling and submitting the Event Form available on the University Website / Finance Office/ Event Management Unit.
- b. Event Manager liaises with the Communications Officers for all requirements of media coverage and photography via the Media Coverage Request Form (no. ADM.09.F02) at the earliest possible.
- c. For best media coverage of the Conferences and/or Events, the organizing party (Faculty, Department, Institute...etc.) has to provide the Communications Officers with:
 - i. as much material on events beforehand so it can be used for press releases and media.
 - ii. information on attendance, speakers and the highlights of the event after the event takes place.



7. COMPLIANCE

Since the EVP is entrusted with this policy, and in coordination with the Director of Marcom, is responsible for implementing this policy and report in writing or through email on any breach to this policy by any BU user(s) to the VP of Human Resources, stating the breach details and recommending any disciplinary action as per BU policies in this respect.

8. RELATED INFORMATION

1. Websites & Social Media policy, [Websites and Social Media Platforms Policy](#)
2. Addendum (I), [Crisis Communication Plan](#)
3. Addendum (II), [Communication Protocol in the Event of Death](#)
4. Addendum (III), [Proofreading and Editing Communications Guidelines](#)
5. Forms pertaining to this policy:
 1. Visitors Authorization Form (no. ADM.09.F08) to be checked
 2. Media Coverage Request Form (no. ADM09.F02)