



AHSU

AFRICA HEALTH
SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

Policy on Communication and Reporting Channels

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Policy Owner: Vice-Chancellor Office



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1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

This policy defines the approved communication and reporting channels at AHSU, ensuring consistency, efficiency, professionalism, and compliance with regulatory standards.

1.2 Scope

Applies to all institutional communication by students, faculty, administrative staff, contractors, and external partners.

2. Principles

AHSU communication shall adhere to the following guiding principles:

- **Clarity, accuracy, and timeliness:** consistent with best practices at Stanford University and University College London.
- **Professional conduct and respect:** in line with the UK's Committee of University Chairs (CUC) guidance.
- **Accountability and recordability:** reflecting reporting norms used by Johns Hopkins University and the University of Cape Town.
- **Regulatory compliance,** particularly with HEC and EAC communication guidelines and applicable national data protection laws.

Benchmarks:

Institution	Key communication practice
Stanford University (HIC)	Formal written notices, email templates for compliance reporting
University of Toronto (HIC)	Official email as primary communication; documented meeting minutes
University of Cape Town (LMIC)	Formal reporting plus WhatsApp for internal coordination in resource-limited settings
Makerere University (LMIC)	Faculty-approved communication hierarchies and student reporting channels
University of Stuttgart and North West University (HIC)	Formal reporting through institutional channels, with WhatsApp recognised as a supplementary platform for authorised operational communication under institutional guidelines.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Official Communication	Formal communication representing AHSU positions, policies, or decisions
Approved Platforms	University-sanctioned digital WhatsApp group agreed upon with the participants, as well as in-person communication channels.
Reporting Channel	Formalized pathway to escalate concerns, issues, or institutional reports

Confidential Communication	Communication involving sensitive personal or institutional data
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4. Approved communication platforms

4.1 Institutional email, official university platforms (e.g., Populi announcements) and WhatsApp

Primary official communication channel

- Used for formal announcements, policy notifications, compliance reporting, and external communications.^{[L][SEP]}

Benchmark:

- Recommended in *Harvard University's Records Management Policy* and *Boston University Communication Standards*.
- WhatsApp is recommended by Stuttgart and North West universities

4.2 Telephone / Voice Calls

For urgent and high-priority notifications.^{[L][SEP]}

- Follow-up confirmation must be documented via email, a written report and/or WhatsApp

4.3 Messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Teams)

Supported for day-to-day coordination and departmental updates.

- Not for final documentation unless archived centrally.^{[L][SEP]}

Examples: Used operationally at the University of Nairobi and the University of Cape Town with guidelines on documentation.

4.4 In-person communication

Appropriate for feedback, coaching, and meetings.^{[L][SEP]}

- Outcomes must be documented in minutes or emailed summaries.

4.5 Centralized repositories

Official documents must be stored in the University's LMS or secure shared drives.^{[L][SEP]}

Benchmarks: *Dublin City University Digital Asset Management guidelines*.

5. Reporting channels and protocols

5.1 Reporting Categories

Category	Reporting Pathway
Academic concerns	Department → Faculty → Resident
Administrative issues	Supervisor → HR
Student welfare	Student Affairs
Compliance/ethical violations	Audit & Compliance Office
Health & safety incidents	Campus Safety Office

5.2 Reporting Process

1. Written documentation (email/official form)
2. Acknowledgment within 3 working days
3. Investigation & consultation as appropriate
4. Formal response with written outcomes

5.3 Protected reporting

Confidential channels (secure forms/emails) for whistleblowing.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

Alignment: Follows principles from the *EAC Anti-Corruption Framework* and the *International Labor Organization (ILO) Whistleblower Guidance*.

6. Communication standards & expectations

6.1 Professional tone

Respectful and non-discriminatory, aligned with *UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Communication*.

6.2 Timeliness

Routine responses within 3 working days.

6.3 Confidentiality & Data Protection

Adherence to applicable data protection laws (including draft Rwanda Data Protection Law), consistent with *EU GDPR principles* adapted locally.

6.4 Archival

Records must be retained as per the *HEC Record Retention Framework* and available for audits.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 All members

Use approved channels for institutional communication.<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

- Maintain professionalism.

7.2 Leadership

Model best practice.<sup>[L]
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- Ensure compliance within departments.

7.3 Communication Office

Monitor adherence

- Provide training on communication tools

Closing statement for the policy:

Sanctions will be applied progressively and proportionately in the sequence outlined above, in alignment with the **EAC Education Sector Conduct Guidelines** and the **University's internal disciplinary framework**.

8. Monitoring & Review

Annual monitoring by Communications and Compliance Offices.

- Full review every two years or following changes in HEC/EAC regulations.

9. References

A. Regulatory & Framework References

1. Higher Education Council (HEC) Communications & Reporting Standards, Rwanda (or respective national HEC frameworks).
2. East African Community (EAC) Education Sector Communication and Accountability Guidelines.
3. EAC Anti-Corruption and Integrity Framework.
4. National Data Protection Laws (where applicable).

B. Benchmark Institutional Policies

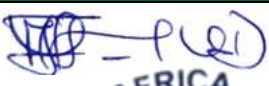
1. Harvard University Records Management & Communication Policy.
2. Stanford University Official Communications Guide.
3. University of Toronto Administrative Communication Standards.
4. University College London Communications Principles.
5. Boston University Communication and Outreach Policy.
6. University of Cape Town Communication Protocols.
7. Makerere University Academic Communication Framework.
8. University of Nairobi Information & Communication Systems Policy.

C. International Best Practice Guidelines

1. UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Communication.
2. International Labor Organization (ILO) Whistleblower Protection Guidance.
3. EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (for principles of data protection compliance).
4. Committee of University Chairs (CUC) UK – Higher Education Communication Guide.

10. Policy approval

This Examination Policy was reviewed and approved by the School Council of Africa Health Sciences University.

Names	Role	Signature	Date
Dr. Edgar Kalimba	Dean of School of Medicine		9 September 2024
Dr. Zerihun Abebe	Vice Chancellor	 	10 September 2024

