



Vice-Chancellor's Decision

No 123/20

2020-10-19

Ref. no C2020/820

Matter: Revision of Karlstad University's Communications Strategy

Officer: Christina Knowles

Background

The communications strategy governs the university's communication and aims to provide support and guidance in matters of communication within the organisation as well as externally. The proposed communications strategy has been processed by the Communications Office and with the use of feedback from the Faculties, the Board of Teacher Education, University Administration and Central Services, and the Students' Union.

Co-determination

act information/

negotiation: No

Decision

The Vice-Chancellor decided to approve the communications strategy for Karlstad University and to give the Head of Communications the right to revise the appendices so that the content remains up to date in the event of changes that affect target audiences, range of communication channels and communicative goals.

Appendix: Karlstad University's Communications Strategy

Johan Sterte decided in this matter and Marie Rosenlind Nordensson prepared the case. Margareta Friman, pro-vice-chancellor, Anne-Christine Larsson Ljung, university director, and Sebastian Hardin, students' union chair, were part of the concluding process without contributing to the final decision.

[Signed original was sent to the registry](#)

Johan Sterte

Marie Rosenlind Nordensson

A copy of the decision was sent to:

The registry

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

The Faculty of Health, Science and Technology

The Board of Teacher Education

Departments of university administration and central services

Karlstad Students' Union

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Decision:	123/20	Ref. no:	C2020/820	Replaces:	Rb 50/16	Ref.no:	C2016/186
Effective from:	2020-10-19	until:	Until further notice	Officer:	Christina Knowles		

Karlstad University's Communications Strategy

Communication at Karlstad University is based on the university's strategic vision for 2030. The objective of the communication efforts is to contribute to the achievement of the university's goals.

In the event of an emergency or crisis, when the crisis management group gathers, the communications strategy will be replaced in full or partly by the applicable crisis communication plan.

Karlstad University's communications strategy applies until further notice.

Background

The communications strategy is the basis for consistent internal and external communications and shall be an instrument to structure, plan and improve Karlstad University's effective use of communication.

The university's communications are governed partly by laws, regulations and directives, and partly by internal regulatory documents, routines and policies.

Karlstad University today

Swedish higher education institutions are held in high regard by the public compared with other sectors, as are researchers in such institutions.¹

Karlstad University was inaugurated in 1999 and has a staff of around 1,300 (2019) and approximately 16,000 students. Karlstad University takes pride in combining active external cooperation with academic excellence.

Aim

The communications strategy governs the organisation's communication and aims to create clarity and provide support for communication within the university as well as externally.

Good communication:

- is a management tool that contributes to achieving university goals and to speeding up the implementation of decisions
- is a tool to attract new students and staff
- strengthens public confidence in the university and its operations
- contributes to strengthening the university's external relations and collaborations with the surrounding community
- promotes employee participation, influence, responsibility, motivation and development
- strengthens the internal dialogue and collaboration across units, departments and faculties, between core activities and support systems

¹ Vetenskap & Allmänhets VA-barometern 2019/20 [Public & Science survey 2019/20]

Message

Karlstad University – we challenge the known and explore the unknown. Our students and employees develop knowledge and skills that enrich the individual and contribute to a sustainable society. Our creative academic environments are characterised by curiosity, courage and persistence. By taking a critical approach, we safeguard the scholarly and artistic foundations of our operations. Karlstad University is characterised by welcoming proximity and trust. We always promote democratic values, equality and diversity. Karlstad University graduates have good academic knowledge and the ability to apply their skills in cooperation with others. Our research makes a difference in the world around us, and our motto is “Dare to be Wise”, *Sapere aude*.

The strengths of Karlstad University are:

- clear social commitment through cooperation, utilisation, critical approach and enhancement of democratic principles
- high-quality degree programmes, ensuring committed and highly competent students
- pronounced priority of high-quality research with long-term strategic investments
- committed and highly competent staff
- favourable student views of the university (environment, teachers, etc.)
- exemplary model of external cooperation and close community interaction
- interdisciplinary cooperation
- a work environment characterised by openness, trust, learning and a sound social climate

Positioning

We consolidate our position through academic excellence with a close connection between research and education. We are an independent and active actor in society.

Karlstad University offers a wide range of programmes and courses. Application numbers are high and popular areas of study are, for instance, teacher education, law, engineering and technology, psychology, social work, nursing, and business and economics. High-quality research is pursued in many areas of relevance to society. At Karlstad University, the close connection between research, education and external cooperation is the cornerstone of our academic excellence. The university offers a creative environment for people to meet and exchange ideas and experiences.

Comparable institutions of higher education in Sweden in terms of similar conditions and circumstances are Örebro University, Mid-Sweden University, Linnaeus University and Jönköping University. Other important benchmarkers are Mälardalen University, University West and Dalarna University.

Language

The university’s communication should be transparent, comprehensible, factual, topical and relevant. Marketing shall communicate enthusiasm, proximity and curiosity and inspire action. The language used “is to be cultivated, simple and comprehensible.”¹ This also applies to communication in English.

¹ Language Act, section 11 (2009: 600). See also Karlstad University’s language policy (C2019/198)

Target audiences

Potential students and employees are prioritised target audiences for the university's external communication. The rest of the following list has no order of priority.

- potential students (young people aged 19–24, international students, older people over the age of 24 and professionals)
- potential employees
- the public
- alumni
- employees
- students
- the research community, nationally and internationally
- decision-makers
- financiers
- media – regional, national and international
- private and public sector, non-profit organisations
- partners

Communicative goals

Our target audiences should know that Karlstad University is an institution with high-quality and relevant programmes and courses, research and study environments, and extensive external cooperation. Our reputation shall remain high among the target audiences. Awareness of Karlstad University, its educational activities and research should increase during the period.

Our target audiences should:

- choose us
- visit us
- speak well of us
- cooperate with us
- employ our students
- seek employment with us
- finance our activities
- be proud to be a student or employee at the university

Measurable targets can be found in the university's operational planning in Stratsys and in action plans for, e.g., student recruitment.

Choice of channel

The choice of communication channel must be made with consideration of target audience behaviour and the image we want to convey of the university. Possible channels are specified in the two appendices.

Appendices

The communications strategy has two appendices:

1. Internal communications
2. External communications

The strategy is also supplemented by the upcoming strategy for student recruitment, employer branding and the operational plan for the Communications Office according to Stratsys.

Related documents

- Strategic Plan for Karlstad University 2030 (C2018/313)
- Management and Staff Policy (C2016/385)
- Health and Safety Policy (C2016/396)
- Communications Policy (C2014/567)
- Language Policy (C2019/198)
- Web Policy (C2018/423)
- Laws and regulations: Higher Education Act, Higher Education Ordinance, the Public Administration Act, the Freedom of the Press Act
- “Den statliga värdegrunden – gemensamma principer för en god förvaltning” (the Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2019)

APPENDIX 1 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

Communication as a successful management tool requires efficient channels, routines and a workplace culture in which information is given, requested and received by management and employees. To achieve the aims of the strategic plan, the university must promote and ensure a communicative environment and create unity and consensus on vision and goals.

Our choice of channels for management communication is designed to create unity in the information flow and predictability in where to find news and where to discuss topical issues in the organisation.

The choice of communications channels must reflect the needs of the organisation as well as the needs of the employees to inform and discuss. The structure below is supplemented by forums for discussions in cross-university groups, for instances, health and safety committee, quality council, programme coordinator meetings, professor meetings, IT procurement council and work teams.

Structure and choice of channel for management communication

Target audience	Channel	Purpose	Frequency	Person responsible
Cross-university level				
All staff	Staff meetings	Oral presentation of general information on university affairs in connection with board meetings	5 times/year or when necessary	Vice-Chancellor supported by Management Communications Officer
All staff	Inslaget	Vice Chancellor's address, via written information or video	When necessary	Vice-Chancellor supported by Management Communications Officer
All staff	Inslaget	Written information subsequent to board meetings	In connection to board meetings	Management Communications Officer
All staff	Inslaget	Written information on university affairs	Daily	Communications Office
Management team	Management team meetings	Dialogue, discussion and information regarding university affairs	Every two weeks	Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice-Chancellor
All Heads	Digital channel (Chefskanalen)	Written, strategic information to Heads, who in turn pass on parts of the information to the staff	Every week	Management Communications Officer

All Heads	Heads' meetings	Oral presentation of strategic information based on the strategic plan	At least 2 times/term	Vice-Chancellor supported by Management Communications Officer
Faculties and University Administration and Central Services				
Heads of Departments, Faculties and University Administration and Central Services	Management meetings	Dialogue, discussion and information regarding faculty and university affairs	Every two weeks (minimum)	Dean/University Director, possibly supported by Communications Officer
University Administration and Central Services staff	Staff meetings	Oral presentation of general information	2 times/term	University Director supported by Management Communications Officer
Faculty staff	Faculty Intranet	Information before and after Faculty Board meetings	In connection with Faculty Board meetings	Communications Officer on Dean's approval
Faculty staff	Staff meetings	Oral presentation of information on faculty affairs, as well as some degree of university affairs and room for discussion	1 time/year in connection with start of term (minimum)	Dean supported by Communications Officer
Department staff	Staff meetings (e.g. department meetings and subject meetings)	Oral presentation of general information, dialogue and arena for discussion	1 time/month or at Head's discretion	Head/Head of Subject supported by Communications Officer when necessary
Department staff	E-mail	Written and brief information on events relevant to the subject, work routines or other relevant information, in addition to the general information on university affairs	Every two weeks or when necessary	Head supported by Communications Officer when necessary. May be delegated to Head of Subject, Director of Studies, Head of Unit, coordinator or equivalent.

APPENDIX 2 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Target audiences

1. Potential students (young people aged 19–24, international students, older people over the age of 24 and professionals)
2. Students
3. Alumni
4. Financiers, decision-makers, partners
5. The public
6. Potential employees
7. The research community

Choice of channel is determined by

- Target audience
- Content/message
- News value
- Time

Channel (Table 1)	Target audience	Comment
Facebook	1, 2, 3, 5	
Twitter	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
Instagram	1, 2, 5, 7	
YouTube	1, 2, 5	
Kau.se	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
KauPlay	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
Media (press releases, press conferences, articles, etc.)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Including MyNewsdesk
Information screens	1, 2	
Printed matter	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
LinkedIn	3, 6, 7	
My Kau	1, 2	Information to applicants and existing students
Marketing, adverts	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
Snapchat	1, 2	

Channel (Table2)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick/real time • Accessible/easy to spread something • Two-way communication • Quick feedback • Measureable • Mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High monitoring need • Short-lived
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very quick/real time • High concentration of valuable contacts • Ordered by topic • Mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of followers (in relation to other channels) • Limited number of characters • High monitoring need • Short-lived

Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can use graphics • Accessible/easy to spread something • Measureable • Mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High monitoring need • Short-lived
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for content/production spread via other channels • Easily shared format • Mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires more production effort • Indirect channel • High monitoring need
kau.se	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good main channel • Good platform • High degree of credibility • No restriction on number of characters • Accessible/public • Fairly long-lived • Easily updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big platform
KauPlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for content/production spread via other channels • Easily shared format • Mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires more production effort
Media (press releases, press conferences, articles, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great impact/range • High degree of credibility • Good main channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain delay • No guarantee of impact • We don't control the end product
Information screens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly quick • Suitable for graphic material • Good support channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space • Limited number • Time consuming to measure

Printed matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-lived • Can be adapted to a specific target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow • Relatively expensive • Expensive to update
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted to target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow target audience, specific to certain groups
My Kau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oriented towards a specific target audience • Information seeking target audience • Measurable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the process of development
Marketing, adverts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand reinforcing • Specific message (Apply now, Attend our seminar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively expensive • Partly difficult to measure
Snapchat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick/real time • Brand reinforcing • Two-way communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals to specific target audience