

External Communication Strategy 2018-20



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The Board of Management (or any person/group with delegated authority from the Board) reserves the right to amend this document at any time should the need arise following consultation with employee representatives.

External Communications Strategy 2018-20

1. Introduction

Glasgow Kelvin College has established a communications strategy which seeks to provide a secure external communications framework from which staff and students can operate with confidence.

The Board of Management is committed to providing a high-quality, innovative and inclusive learning experience for its students with introductory to degree-level programmes which will address the skills needs of its stakeholders, businesses and communities.

The College has produced a comprehensive Context Statement which provides a detailed overview of its operational and strategic environment. This document is available as an appendix to the College Strategic Plan 2017-20 and can be accessed via the College website at www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk. This paper has included the Executive Summary from that Statement as Appendix 1 to inform the External Communications Strategy.

The full College Ethos & Values Statement and Strategic Plan are also available on the College website.

2. Objectives of the External Communications Strategy

The key objectives of the strategy are to;

- ensure appropriately targeted, timely and effective communications which enhance the reputation of the College and place our learners firmly at the centre ;
- support an environment where appropriate information is available to and easily accessible by all stakeholders, creating an open, constructive and transparent approach to communications;
- assist the College to maintain a culture of trust and respect within and for its stakeholders where contributions are valued;
- create a sense of partnership and 'belonging' within its stakeholder audiences, including staff, by undertaking consultation exercises where appropriate to reinforce 'ownership';
- promote a positive profile for Glasgow Kelvin College ensuring a supportive role at stakeholder and community events and initiatives which identify opportunities for further partnership working;
- maintain and develop its stakeholder relationships by supporting and influencing key strategies at national, regional, city and community level; □ underpin collaborative working at a regional level (Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board) while maintaining a distinct identity and message in line with the College Mission ;
- ensure a college-wide, consistent and positive approach to all external communications;
- manage appropriately the College reputation by providing a framework and guidelines for communications;

- support key strategic objectives by promoting student and staff activity as it relates to progression, widening access, employability & enterprise, innovation, best practice, excellence, success and employer engagement;
- provide regular activity updates to key stakeholders; and
- as far as possible, avoid duplication of effort and information overload by ensuring a co-ordinated approach to communication.

The External Communications Strategy will further support Strategic Planning aims by progressing its five Strategic Objectives, stressing that we are working:

- To develop our students, communities and curriculum;
- To develop our own skills;
- In partnership;
- Sustainably and transparently; and
- To support Regional and National strategic aims.

The College is committed to ensuring effective and accessible communication structures are in place which best serve the needs of the 'customer' and those individuals and groups involved.

The strategy aims to ensure that the College operates in an environment where relevant and appropriate information is shared with external stakeholders utilising a comprehensive range of platforms.

In addition it will work to ensure a skilled, well-informed and engaged staff to deliver learning, teaching, College services and information to students and the wider community working with confidence in an open and transparent way.

Communication is a two-way process, therefore communication pathways will be put in place where stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the information flows within and from the College in a positive and constructive way, both formally and informally.

Such an approach will ensure that there is consistency in the 'message' which the College communicates, enhancing the general perception of the College and its operations. This will uphold a positive, supportive image and contribute to robust reputational management.

That same consistency will serve to underpin the accessible and inclusive nature of the College, enhancing the high quality service which it provides and ensuring equity of treatment for all College stakeholders, including staff and students.

The strategy will foster a culture where staff work confidently and collaboratively, each taking responsibility for their communication activities, recognising how these fit within the broader communications environment and their potential impact both internally and externally.

Key personnel will have oversight of external communications and staff will be supported to maintain and develop productive stakeholder relationships. Stakeholder communications will also form part of the College Business

Development Strategy which will put in place a toolkit to support staff to maximise the benefits of the relationships they have formed and are likely to develop with stakeholders.

3. Key Messages:

The College has Vision and Mission Statements which underpin the Ethos and Values with which it aligns. These are as follows:

Vision Statement:

Transforming lives through education

Mission Statement:

Glasgow Kelvin College will enhance learners' aspirations, careers and lives through accessible, inclusive, high-quality lifelong learning.

There is a range of key and core messages which the College will communicate to its external audience. These embed the ethos and values of the College and are rooted in the three central tenets of Excellence, Progression, Enterprise. The message emphasis varies depending on the audience;

- Glasgow Kelvin College is 'Glasgow's College' as it enrolls almost 80% of its students from Glasgow postcodes and works with more community organisations than any other college in the region;
- We deliver high-quality vocational skills and personal development learning from introductory through to degree level in a wide range of skills areas which address identified need both locally and nationally;
- Access and Inclusion are central to the work of the College as we operate in some of Scotland's most deprived and diverse communities and recognise that our inclusive approach to learning can support communities and individuals to develop and progress;
- We work in partnership with employer, community and regional stakeholders to ensure our curriculum meets the needs of the Glasgow and Scottish economies and society, helping to address the attainment gap and its resulting inequalities;
- The College curriculum offer addresses identified need within the wider labour market, fits within the Glasgow Regional offer and embeds the employability and personal skills required by current and future employers;
- Our students are at the heart of all we do and their progression into further learning, sustainable employment or opportunities within their own workplace is a key driver for our strategic objectives;
- We celebrate the success and are proud of our students, the all-round support we provide and the expertise and commitment of our staff who contribute to their learning journey.

4. Audience

The Marketing of the College curriculum and opportunities to attract potential students is dealt with in the Marketing Strategy. The External Communications strategy seeks to inform and influence existing and potential stakeholders who will

have an interest in the work of the College. The main audiences for the External Communications Strategy are as follows:

- a) The Public;
- b) Parents;
- c) Schools;
- d) Employers;
- e) Scottish and UK Governments;
- f) Scottish Funding Council;
- g) Skills Development Scotland;
- h) Industry Bodies;
- i) Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board;
- j) Glasgow City Council, other Local Authorities and their senior officers;
- k) Community Planning Partners;
- l) Local and Scottish/UK national Elected Members;
- m) Other Glasgow Regional Colleges;
- n) Other Scottish Colleges;
- o) Community Groups;
- p) Project Partners;
- q) Commercial Partners and customers;
- r) Third sector organisations;
- s) Public and Quasi-public organisations;
- t) Accrediting Bodies and Chartermark Organisations;
- u) Other Funders;
- v) International Partners;
- w) The Media;
- x) Higher Education Institutions;
- y) The SCIO; and
- z) Alumni

5. External Communication Channels

Marketing and promotion of College provision and services is dealt with:

- in the Business Development Strategy for commercial learners and their employers, and
- in the Marketing Strategy for all other learners.

The following tools and techniques will be used to communicate the College 'message' externally.

- Digital Communication
- Media, including print, TV and radio
- Web-based communication
- Social Media
- Publications and Reports, including College Ethos and Strategic Plan
- Community Engagement
 - Representation at strategic level fora
 - Representation at community events
 - Consultation
 - Seminars, networking events, conferences

- Elected Member briefings
- Stakeholder Engagement
 - Formal
 - Informal
 - Consultation
 - In-house hospitality and events
 - Stakeholder Newsletter or Blog
 - Surveys
 - Routine email updates from Principal
- Front Line – Telephony, Reception and Learner Services
- Sector Engagement, contribution to development, sharing of best practice,
- Staff holding face-to-face meetings, supported by a robust Customer Relationship Management System.

Social media now plays a key role in external communication. Often it is being used by traditional media as the basis for news items and is a platform on which the College's major stakeholders promote their achievements and services. In addition, it is a significant influencer for potential, current and former students. This brings with it attendant concerns over how social media platforms are used, especially in terms of ethics, privacy and appropriateness of communication.

There will be a Social Media Procedure to provide a framework and security for staff, allowing them to engage with confidence in these media.

The target audience for external communications will be segmented and differing forms of media/communication will be utilised to suit that audience, maximise engagement and control any unnecessary duplication.

This segmentation and channels appropriate for each audience is attached as Appendix 2 to this document.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

In conjunction with the Business Development Team and under the auspices of the HE Innovate project, College stakeholders will be categorised into levels of engagement. The College's relationship with many key stakeholders requires full engagement and consultation, providing necessary feedback to inform College services and identify opportunities. However, for others, providing regular information and updates is sufficient.

As part of the HE Innovate programme, levels of engagement for groups of stakeholders will be identified to determine the College approach, ranging as follows: Inform; Consult; Involve; Collaborate; Empower.

7. Risk Assessment

External Communications play a significant role in the External Policy Context considered by the Risk Register. The purpose of this strategy is to mitigate against loss of reputation. The Risk level attaching to External Communications fluctuates in response to changes in the operational environment and grading is reviewed on a routine basis.

The Communications & Planning Manager is a member of the College Emergency Response Team under the arrangements of the Business Continuity Plan which outlines the necessity for sustained media and key stakeholder contact in crisis handling.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

As outlined above, the Risk Level for External Communications is reviewed on a regular basis.

Media monitoring of releases and news items takes place through alerts and monitoring by sectoral partners on a daily basis.

Media buy-in is monitored and reported to the Board of Management on a six-monthly basis.

As part of the Self Evaluation exercise, Communications & Planning is evaluated and reviewed.

Informal consultation with stakeholders is undertaken throughout the course of the academic year in order to benchmark College provision and stakeholder needs.

It is intended that a formal stakeholder survey will be undertaken to evaluate College performance as a partner and determine developmental requirements within the curriculum.

9. Press and Media Protocols:

The following protocols will be communicated to all staff to support them in the instance of contact with the press and media. This has been reproduced as an infographic which forms Appendix 3 to the strategy.

1. Responsibility for contact with the press and other media (outwith the promotion and marketing of the College and its services) will lie primarily with the Senior Management Team and Board of Management through the Principal and the Communications & Planning Manager.
2. However, the College has no interest in restricting or impeding constituent groups (such as learners) or individuals from communicating with the media to highlight events or accolades as this often forms part of students' project-based learning. Nonetheless, it is important that the Communications & Planning Manager and/or Director of Business Development is apprised in advance of such contact as there may be further support which they can provide.
3. It is possible that staff or students approach, or are approached by, the media to offer an opinion or statement on matters of interest. In these instances it should be stressed that, unless approved by the Senior Management Team, any comment or opinion given is not that of the College or its Board of Management but is a personal statement. Moreover, it is recommended that individuals, unless elected Trades Union representatives, speak to the media only on behalf of others with expressed permission of their line manager at SMT level.

4. Please bear in mind that in all cases, under the Data Protection Act, no individual student or staff member can be referred to by name nor personal information supplied to outside bodies, unless with the expressed written permission of the individual involved.
5. Staff or students should refer any unsolicited media enquiries to the Communications & Planning Manager on 0141 630 5168 or transfer calls to extn. 5168, direct them to email llang@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk in the first instance.

10. Policies and Strategies

The following College policies and strategies underpin the External Communications Policy:

- Marketing Strategy
- Business Development Strategy
- ICT and Acceptable Use Policy
- Social Media Policy
- General Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Strategic Plan 2017-20
- College Code of Governance
- Equalities & Diversity Mainstreaming Report
- Health & Safety Policy
- College Risk Register

Policies are available through the College website and intranet at www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

The External Communications Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains 'fit for purpose'.