

# UCISA Communications Strategy

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## Introduction

The Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) exists to promote excellence in the application of information systems and services to support teaching, learning, research and administration in education. It informs and supports policy-making processes both within institutions and nationally on the cost effective application of information systems and services.

Good communication is important for achieving these aims and objectives. The members of UCISA are the institutions, rather than those working in the institutions. It is important to ensure that the appropriate method of communication is used to reach all stakeholders, both internal and external. The primary communications target is ICT-related staff in universities and colleges. It is also important to target the senior management teams in universities and colleges. The secondary target for communication consists of those bodies that UCISA needs to influence, such as UUK, the Leadership Foundation, the HE Academy, and the funding councils. UCISA also has a partnership relationship with many other associations, such as SCONUL, ALT, Eduserve, JISC, and SCHOMS, and it is therefore necessary to include them as a third target. A full discussion of UCISA stakeholders can be found in the annex to the Communication Plan.

## Principles

The Communications Strategy has been formulated on the following principles:

1. Communication processes must be clear and known to all members;
2. Communication must be purposeful and timely, particularly in relation to consultation and decision making;
3. Communication must be open, honest and frank;
4. Information will be made available on an open basis;
5. Closed mailing lists or password protected web pages will only be used when there is a good reason for restricting or limiting access, and the reason will be recorded;
6. Communication will be multidimensional: up and down between the Executive Committee and members as well as horizontal communications at all levels;
7. Effective communication often depends on information systems which must therefore be easy to use, accessible, robust and reliable;
8. Decision making and organisational structures will support effective communication by ensuring clear accountability for outcomes.
9. All members of the UCISA Executive Committee, including chairs of groups, are responsible for communication.

## Aims

The Communications Strategy will support the aims and objectives of UCISA, promote the activities that it organises through a network of sub-groups, and assist the efficient running of the Association. The key strategic aims will be to:

1. Promote UCISA and its activities in a coherent way,
2. Improve communication between UCISA and those with whom it has contact,
3. Make it easy for people to find out about UCISA services and events,
4. Make UCISA an association that people want to communicate with,
5. Consult regularly with members,
6. Establish links with governmental bodies and other organisations,
7. Make effective use of ICT

## **Objectives**

The following objectives identify the means of achieving each aim:

1. Various different channels of communication are used, such as organising conferences, seminars and workshops; promoting and supporting collaboration between institutions; publishing papers and articles; maintaining a website of useful information; conducting surveys and liaising with appropriate governmental bodies and other organisations.
2. Different channels are best used to communicate with different stakeholders, but overall these will be used together to promote UCISA to all identified stakeholders in a consistent manner. Issues raised by surveys such as the Feedback Survey and Top Concerns Survey will be used to improve communication methods with each stakeholder group.
3. New communication channels will be used to communicate with a wider audience.
4. UCISA will provide something that people are interested in eg special interest groups and human networks for use by the membership
5. Regular feedback will be facilitated
6. Regular discussions will be held with related associations and governmental bodies
7. Communication will utilise ICT in an exemplary manner.