Unimore Communication Guidelines

FOREWORD AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

This document constitutes the strategic guidelines that Unimore intends to adopt in the next six years in terms of communication.

Effective communication both internally and externally is the indispensable tool to further strengthen the University's identity, its recognisability and the positive and propulsive perception that the various parties have of it.

Therefore, it is appropriate to have forms of organic connection and coordination of communication within the university as well as for other areas such as teaching, placement/entry orientation, research, third mission, internationalisation, which, moreover, require precise communication strategies.

Our university is characterised by a deep-rooted tradition (of which it is important to be aware also in terms of communication strategies) but also by a constant openness to new perspectives, rich in multidisciplinary skills and committed to best fulfil its institutional tasks: by focusing on quality, it cannot therefore disregard the consistent principles and tools it uses for good communication plans and campaigns.

To be successful, communication must be carefully planned, in the light of a clear and defined strategy, with a single direction that is nourished and sustained by Unimore's various components, realities and articulations.

It is undoubtedly fundamental to consolidate an accurate knowledge of the specificities of each disciplinary and departmental area, and to facilitate all possible interconnections, just as it is essential to maintain a fluid and fruitful dialogue with all the realities that represent possible institutional partners (at territorial, national, European and international level) and on key issues. A solid awareness of the academic institution in all territorial contexts and at all levels can only facilitate the aims of the third mission and public engagement as well as a good communication and dissemination capacity on research and internationalisation activities.

The guidelines will be accompanied, in a closely related manner, by an **operational guide** to provide support in tackling common problems and specific issues; a **new section of the University website entirely dedicated to communication**, where the fundamental information on the strategic and operational plan can be found, as well as formats dedicated to requests, information and dissemination materials, that will be matched by similar spaces on the various Department websites; **periodic dialogue and training meetings** that will have as constant references, together with the Delegate for Communication and the University's Management Staff (communication area), the **communication** contacts of each Department coordinated through a permanent table.

In view of the three fundamental elements for effective communication **(what I communicate**: to be clear about the object of the communication; **to whom I communicate**: to precisely identify the recipient of the communication; **how I communicate**: to establish the means by which the action of communicating is carried out), Unimore's strategy aims at adopting - in all its articulations, starting from its internal organisational structure - a simple and direct communication, capable of conveying the institutional values proper to our community: transparency, inclusion and enhancement of differences, cooperation.

PART 2 - IDENTITY, LOGO, AND BRAND

Effective communication presupposes a clear and well-defined identity, i.e. a clearly recognisable perspective.

In this respect, it is intended to consolidate Unimore's brand and logo architecture.

If the brand book constitutes the instrument that organically and bindingly regulates the use of numerous communication tools (letterhead, forms, posters, websites, social channels, etc.), in order to allow for a more agile realisation of communication products, reference can be made to the application guide, where formats and facsimiles can be found that can be easily used.

On the other hand, the production of specific products - which may also envisage some forms of specialisation/personalisation with respect to common institutional objectives - will be ensured by the specialised technicians of the communication area, who will thus be able to ensure compliance with shared rules while highlighting the specificities of the communication messages, as well as guaranteeing support in the initial definition of the various tools that will need to be adopted.

The technical figures of the management staff (communication area) are to be a constant point of reference with regard to departmental, degree programme, PhD programme, laboratory and research centre websites, social channels, video production and documentary material.

PART 2 - LANGUAGE/LANGUAGES

Language in the name of proximity and usability

The language used in Unimore must be, first of all, comprehensible and accessible, and - a decisive aspect - defined on the basis of the different parties (according to a principle of careful diversification).

Overly technical terms should be avoided or, if their use is necessary, a key to accessibility and immediate understanding should be provided.

Even administrative acts in the strict sense, which produce direct and immediate legal effects for the addressees, must be produced with the reader in mind. These acts must therefore be both legally correct and, at the same time, comprehensible and thus usable, from a communicative point of view.

In this respect, some indications suggested by the Department of the Civil Service, which apply to both administrative acts and information/communication documents, may represent a solid basis to inspire the forms of internal and external communication:

1. always make the content of the text clear (the writer must indicate the subject of the communication precisely and simply);

2. accurately identify the target audience (to design an effective text you need to know who it is intended for and who will read it);
3. insert information in the text following a coherent logic, taking care to highlight the most important passages (e.g. deadlines, warnings, etc.);
4. verify the completeness and correctness of the information (both in terms of the regulations and the accessibility of information);
5. use footnotes, annexes and tables to lighten the text, which must contain the essential information for its immediate comprehension (other information, sometimes necessary, often of a technical and detailed nature such as regulatory references, may be included in footnotes, annexes or tables);
6. choose words from everyday language, limit the use of acronyms or specialised technical terms, avoid unnecessary periphrases.

It is also recommended to use a tone of language that is never aggressive and that always favours dialogue and a cooperative resolution of any problems or complex issues, whoever the interlocutor is - *without exception.*

Furthermore, taking into account that a large part of the communications are viewed by (mainly external) users via mobile devices, it is suggested to formulate short paragraphs that allow the reader to easily grasp the information he/she is looking for.

Communications, including internal ones, should always favour the identification of the right interlocutor within the various departments and directorates.

Experimental initiatives aimed at improving communication methods within the Athenaeum organisation are desirable and will be concretely supported, including through the use of innovative digital environments in institutional contexts.

Language that respects differences

Communication, both oral and written, is one of the main areas through which stereotypes and prejudices are produced and conveyed (such as gender stereotypes or prejudices referring to personal and social conditions, such as ethnic or national origin, disability, health conditions, age, sexual orientation and identity, personal or political opinions, etc.).

In fact, language can reflect the asymmetries that exist within a given social context. However, if used with awareness, it can act as a tool to counter and overcome stereotypical and prejudicial content.

Starting from these assumptions, in continuity with European (e.g. Directive EU/54/2006) and national indications (Directive of 23 May 2007 "Measures to implement equality and equal opportunities between men and women in public administrations" and "Guidelines for the use of gender in administrative language"), the University must be constantly committed to using a language that always respects differences, preventing any discriminatory use.

Communication guidelines, in this respect, should be consistent with other initiatives to promote equal access to research and its use (e.g. the "Guidelines on gender balance in scientific events").

The University intends to pay attention to all the images and multimedia material it disseminates, so that they are always consistent with a free, open, inclusive and non-discriminatory society.

To this end, it is recommended that all those who are professionally identified with the University - lecturers, researchers, contract lecturers, technical and administrative staff - use language and forms of expression consistent with these guidelines, including on all social channels, as well as on traditional information channels.

In order to foster the importance and awareness of this approach, and for it to be actively shared, periodic training events are planned, promoted by the University.

Part 3 - COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Internal communication tools

Effective internal communication contributes to strengthening the sense of belonging, fostering the smooth running of activities.

Internal communication tools are: the university website, the university magazine *FocusUnimore*, e-mail and mailing lists, social channels.

As far as the university website is concerned - after a careful evaluation of its current configuration aimed at identifying agile access and usability practices - it must represent the centre of gravity for all institutional communications and be in constant connection with the other sites identifiable with the university (starting with those of the various departments).

Communication in this respect must be an expression of an organic vision.

There should be opportunities for discussion and dialogue between those working on these tools, with the active participation of the departmental communication contact persons.

As far as the monthly *FocusUnimore University Magazine* is concerned, its task is to develop multi-level communication that can meet the 'need for dialogue':
- within Unimore, reporting on research and third mission activities, but also on innovations and teaching experimentation, so that the desire to share and pool the results of the work and projects of the professors, the professional skills expressed by the technical and administrative staff, the creativity that often comes from the student world;
- with the different social spheres, with institutional and economic realities, with associative worlds but also with citizens who look to the university as a reference for the dimension of knowledge and the development of new tools and models that contribute to improving the lives of individuals and communities;
- with other national and international entities engaged in research and training.

With regard to *the sites of the directorates or other university departments* (e.g. museums), it will be necessary to work, also in this case, with a view to a close connection, pursuing principles of uniformity, accessibility, ease of access for stakeholders and managers.

With regard to *e-mail* and *distribution lists*, and their use, optimisation strategies must be defined for effective and relevant communication, capable of discerning communications aimed at broad audiences from more targeted and sectorial communications.

As for the University's *social channels*, these are used to inform, communicate, listen. The intention is to broaden participation, transparency and strengthen feelings of belonging and trust.

Presiding over *social channels* entails significant organisational impacts for the administration. In fact, the dynamic dimension of these contexts makes them much more complex to manage than traditional ones, as the management environment is not just a

simple document-type output but a real structured process. A process that needs to be defined in key elements and basic organisational behaviours.

In particular, through its social channels, the university informs and listens to its users; recounts the main events; communicates the teaching offer and the services provided; disseminates the main results of the university's scientific research; and channels any requests for help from users to the relevant offices.

It will be particularly important to progressively define a university social media policy that is coordinated with the activities on social channels that various departments, degree programmes and research centres already develop.

The updating and monitoring of Unimore's social profiles and the management of relations with the users of the various networks are entrusted to one or more representatives of the Management Staff - Communication Office, who draw up communication and editorial plans, select and publish content within the official social profiles of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and monitor the relevant pages.

The creation of other accounts/pages, even relating to specific topics concerning the University, must be agreed in advance with the Delegate and the Management Staff (communication area).

Any content for which dissemination through Unimore's social channels is proposed should be forwarded to the aforementioned management staff (communication area), who will assess the methods and timing of publication.

External communication tools

As far as websites are concerned, a special and essential set of rules will have to be defined, inspired by the closest cooperation between those who manage and supervise the sites at management staff (communication area) and those who work on departmental sites, research centres and laboratories.

The key points on which the regulation will be developed are, in brief, the following:
- forms and methods of publication of institutional content
- usability of sites
- compliance with national and international laws and regulations
- adequacy of HW and SW media for data protection
- good practices aimed at the timing of updates, starting with the organisation of information by the University.

As far as conferences and press releases, organisation of events, and communication campaigns on social media are concerned, close coordination with management staff (communication area) is essential, which will have to carry out constant liaison work, as well as support in the direction of the best implementation of initiatives undertaken by departments, degree programmes, teaching staff, laboratories and research centres.

The same applies to the use of social networks where they are used to reach an audience outside Unimore

EVALUATION AND MONITORING MODALITIES

In the full awareness that the implementation and enforcement of these strategic guidelines are closely linked to the operational guidelines, as well as to the other tools referred to in the introduction, it is deemed necessary to envisage as of now methods and forms of evaluation and monitoring - indicatively annual - on the various parts and aspects that make up this document.

This is not intended to generate additional burdens on departmental structures, but also to mark the indispensability of a periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the aforementioned guidelines by means of internal meetings, targeted discussions on certain points and specific aspects, as well as public discussions within the university.