DMU Internal Communications Plan
January 2012

Introduction
De Montfort University (DMU) has recently introduced an internal communications (IC) function to provide consistent, regular and robust communications to our main stakeholders – staff and students.

Effective communication with staff and students will enhance their level of satisfaction and engagement, which is essential to the delivery of the university’s mission and vision.

In order for communication to be effective, the IC team will assume responsibility for all channels that we use to talk to our staff and students (eg Cascade, the Digest, all-user emails etc).

Objectives of communications plan
- Create clear and effective IC channels for staff and students
- Increase the profile and reputation of DMU
- To influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of students and staff
- Effectively communicate DMU’s mission, visions, values and strategic plan to all staff

Approach to communications
- Be open about important messages and changes that need communicating to our main stakeholders
- Offer staff and students the chance to feedback through a variety of methods and the opportunity to get involved in the development of internal initiatives
- Be proactive in our approach and tell people information before we are asked for it

Key messages
- DMU’s mission, visions and values
- DMU is the best place to study and work for
- We welcome and listen to stakeholder feedback
Audience / stakeholder mapping

### Stakeholders (Segmented)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff (professional and academic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trade union reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Undergraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Postgraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Part-time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Executive Board

- Professor Dominic Shellard – Vice-Chancellor
- Professor David Wilson – Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Dean of Business and Law
- Dr Gerard Moran – Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean of Art and Design
- Professor Mandy Ashton – Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean of Health and Life Sciences
- Professor Andrew Collop – Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean of Technology
- Mr M Needham – Interim Director of Finance
- Mr Ben Browne – Acting Chief Operating Officer
- Sarah Setchell – Acting Director of People and Organisational Development
- Keith Perch – Head of Corporate Communications

### Governing Body

- Lord Waheed Alli
- Ian Blatchford
- Jamie Andrews
- Christine Hancock
- Kevin Hand
- Mike Kapur
- Barbara Matthews MBE
- Andy Rees
- Marcia Saunders
- The Rt Rev Timothy John Stevens
- Robert Harris
- Tony Stockdale
- DSU president

### Partners

We acknowledge that these may not be internal but some messages may need to be disseminated to these partners.

- DMU Students’ Union: Orange
- Partner colleges: BBC
- Local residents: British Library
- Hewlett Packard: Square Mile
- Leicester football club: Catering staff
- Leicester cricket club: Local media
- Confetti
Communications methods
See separate tables

Management of the communications plan
The plan will be managed and implemented by the IC team, with support from the wider communications team. All outcomes will be reported to Jo Griffin, Corporate Communications Manager and Keith Perch, Head of Corporate Communications, who will report progress and completion to the Executive Board (EB).

Evaluation
The plan will be evaluated through:

- The uptake of two-way communications via designated feedback channels
- Results of the staff survey, due to take place in Autumn 2013
- Feedback from students via De Montfort Students’ Union (DSU) and student surveys
- Response to calls for action – increased take up of information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications methods and timeline</th>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>Cost/action</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Internet page (on DMU website)</strong></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Cost: unknown</td>
<td>Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This area needs to be developed to form the primary channel to engage and communicate with staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: meet with ITMS to discuss development and management of the sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposed areas include;</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Image of the day – daily news with images which visually communicate messages</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meet the VC/ EB board – this is where the ‘Ask us’ questions and responses would sit</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hot topic section – an area which is easily accessible to read recent updates</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Publications – easy access to the staff and student publications (link to DSU site)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mission and Visions – with examples of them in use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- POD – section for all HR related issues and information (sign in section for pay slips)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your staff experience – information about discounts, well being, social initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DMYou e-magazine</strong></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Cost: design template</td>
<td>Re-launch at the end of April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A monthly informative but informal and interactive e-newsletter. The process could begin with a staff competition to name the magazine (to involve and engage them) and content would come from staff via emails and interviews.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: speak to designers about designing a template</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections of the newsletter would include POD, celebrating excellence (staff achievements), training notices, news in brief, pictures and videos, 20 questions section and quirky sound bites.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collate information and stories (Hard copies will be displayed on notice boards for those with no access to email)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demon media (newspaper, radio and TV)</strong></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Cost: page advert (if necessary)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working closely with DSU, disseminate important messages and information through existing demon media channels. Secure regular column or advert in the newspaper and interviews on TV and radio.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: devise timetable of content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cascade</strong></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Cost: initially the design template</td>
<td>End of Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC to develop and ‘own’ this to make it an easier-to-read format, and ensure consistency with delivery. Re-launch guidance notes and redesign the current format ensuring feedback form still accompanies it. The importance of communicating these messages needs to be reiterated to managers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: design a template, rewrite the guidance notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designated email address ‘Ask us’</strong></td>
<td>Staff and Students</td>
<td>Cost: none</td>
<td>Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This email address would give the opportunity for staff and students to email EB and ask any questions. The emails would be managed and responded to (with approval) by IC within five working days and all questions and responses will be posted on the staff internet page and My DMU.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: ITMS to set up address – IC to monitor and manage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff and student focus groups</strong></td>
<td>Staff and Students</td>
<td>Cost: none</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link into existing channels such as student council or staff forums, equality and diversity groups, faculty and students reps.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: attend existing groups and consult on all communications issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notice boards (NB) and plasma screens (PS)</strong></td>
<td>Staff and Students</td>
<td>Cost: none</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify where notice boards and plasma screens are. Ensure these are kept up-to-date and regularly changed, so staff and students will recognise messages and notices are current and relevant. The IC team will work on improving the use and appearance of all current notice boards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: NB: identify where notice boards for students and staff are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PS are currently managed by each faculty, however a central hub should sit with the IC team who can</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action: PS: how the current system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Corporate communication messages and monitor content so there is consistency in messages.** | Staff and Students | **Cost:** none  
**Action:** arrange dates for the year and agenda | **Ongoing** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **‘Coffee with the VC’ or staff road shows.**  
Regular, informal briefings led by the VC which gives stakeholders the chance to discuss, face-to-face (as requested in the 2011 staff survey) issues and concerns they may have. A programme of these could run over a set period of a week and last an hour, giving staff the opportunity to attend in their lunch hours. Separate briefings for staff and students, The Chief Operating Officers lunches are an excellent model to follow for these. | Staff and Students | **Cost:** none  
**Action:** speak to designers and faculties, consult in focus groups | **March** |
| **Promotional material (Posters, flyers and banners)**  
Introduce a corporate template for all posters, flyers and banners to enable consistency with all promotional material – sub branding for faculties | Staff and students | **Cost:** none  
**Action:** managed by an IC inbox  
Feedback also monitored | **Jan** |
| **Emails (to only be used for three types of messages – see following chart)**  
- All-user email (or all-staff/student email)  
- Email to selected staff distribution lists  
- International student email (via Andy Gale)  
This function needs to be held by IC team. All system emails must be signed off by the relevant person (at board level) but must come from communications. | Staff and Students | **Cost:** none  
**Action:** find out cost of programme  
Speak to ITMS | **March** |
| **Desk alerts**  
Implement a programme whereby desk alerts or pop ups appear on all staff computer screens. This is an instant communication tool which can be sent and read within minutes | Staff | **Cost:** unknown  
**Action:** meet with ITMS to discuss development and management of this site  
These pages will need to be equality impact assessed: audio and subtitles available | **Unknown** |
| **My DMU and Blackboard**  
Although this area is not as underused as the staff portal – it is something that could be developed further in-line with the staff internet pages. | Students | **Cost:** unknown  
**Action:** meet with ITMS to discuss development and management of this site  
These pages will need to be equality impact assessed: audio and subtitles available | **Unknown** |

### The following channels are already in existence/development but IC will work closely with for produce effective communications

**Corporate communication policy** (Marketing Operations)  
**Annual staff awards and Vice Chancellor Distinguish Teaching Awards** (People and Organisational Development and SAAS)  
**Social media** (Communications)  
**Staff and/or student inductions** (People and Organisational Development)  
**All internal projects and initiatives** (Various)
### Internal communications for staff and students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are we communicating?</th>
<th>How will we communicate?</th>
<th>How will we use the channels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Change communication** (proactive) | B: Emails and/or desk top alerts  
B: Staff Internet page/My DMU  
B: VC briefings  
B: Designated email address ‘ask us’ (answers to questions)  
ST: Cascade  
ST: In house e-magazine | In change communication a formal, all-systems email to be sent, which includes signposting to the staff internet page for more information.  
Following this, changes will be communicated in VC briefings, Cascade, in-house newsletter and demon media.  
Feedback will be through the ‘ask us’ address and VC briefings. |
| **Business issues and priorities** | B: Emails and/or desk top alerts  
B: Staff Internet page/My DMU  
B: Designated email address ‘ask us’ (answers to questions)  
B: VC briefings  
B: Inductions  
B: Notice boards/plasma screens  
B: Focus groups | Business issues and priorities would be communicated via an all systems email, and signposting to the staff internet page for more information.  
Further communicated via VC briefings, inductions, notice boards, plasma screens, Cascade, in-house newsletter and demon media.  
Feedback sought through ‘ask us’ email and focus groups. |
| **Crisis communication** (reactive) | B: Emails and/or desk top alerts  
B: Staff Internet page/My DMU  
B: Designated email address ‘ask us’ (answers to questions) | Crisis communication will be communicated through emails and/or desk top alerts, with signposting to the staff internet page. If time appropriate, message to be reiterated in VC briefings.  
Feedback supplied through designated email address ‘ask us’ (answers to questions) |
| **EB messages (downward)** | B: Staff Internet page/My DMU  
B: VC briefings  
ST: Cascade  
ST: In house e-magazine | The main way of communicating EB messages will be through Cascade (for staff), followed by staff internet page, VC briefings and demon media (for students). |
| **News information** | B: Staff Internet page/My DMU  
B: Social media  
B: Notice boards/plasma screens | All news and announcements to appear on the staff internet page (under a designated area). Followed by our social media pages, notice boards, plasma screens and in-house e-magazine. |
| **Achievements** | B: Staff Internet page/My DMU  
B: Notice boards/plasma screens  
B: Social media  
ST: In house e-magazine  
ST: Annual staff awards | Achievements and success stories would be publicised on the staff internet page, notice boards, social media, in-house e-magazine, demon media and plasma screens.  
These would be further highlighted through the proposed annual staff awards. |

**Key:**  
B – Students and Staff  
ST – Staff  
STU – Students
| Events | B: Staff Internet page / My DMU  
B: Notice boards/plasma screens  
B: Promotional material  
B: Social media  
ST: In house e-magazine  
STU: demon media | University wide events would be communicated through a variety of channels including: the staff internet page, notice boards, promotional material, social media, demon media, plasma screens, in-house e-magazine and the proposed mobile phone application. |
| DMU’s mission, visions and values | All channels | DMU’s mission and visions should be on all communications. Make them ‘bite size’ for some channels. |
| Wellbeing | B: Staff Internet page/ My DMU  
B: Notice board/plasma screens (sound bites)  
B: Promotional material  
B: Social media  
B: Focus groups  
ST: In house e-magazine | Wellbeing messages such as staff and student survey outcomes and events (health and wellbeing day/week) will be publicised through the staff internet page, notice boards, promotional material, social media, in house e-magazine and sound bites on the plasma screens. Feedback and engagement through focus groups and surveys. |
| Feedback channels (upward) | B: Designated email address ‘ask us’  
B: Focus groups  
B: VC briefings  
B: Social media  
Publicised by:  
B: Staff Internet page/ My DMU  
B: Notice boards/plasma screens  
ST: In house e-magazine | Feedback channels for staff and students will be through the designated email address ‘ask us’, focus groups, VC briefings and social media. These feedback channels will be publicised via intranet, notice boards, in house e-magazine and the plasma screens. |
| Engagement | B: Focus groups  
B: Designated email address ‘ask us’  
B: VC briefings  
B: Social media  
ST: Annual staff awards | The main channels of staff engagement are focus groups, email address ‘ask us’, vice chancellor briefings, social media and the proposed annual staff awards. |
Recommendation

The IC channels need to be managed and developed by the IC team in order for consistent and effective communications to succeed.

We need to introduce a culture in which we identify the correct channel with which to communicate any given message. In some instances there may be a need to use a variety of channels, but we need to move away from our current system where almost all communication is done via email.

For example, the DMU Digest will be replaced by an effective staff internet page, staff e-newsletter and a consistent university-wide calendar of events.

Ultimately we aim to reduce the number of emails which are sent out, and increase the amount of traffic to the staff internet page. Therefore, the development and management of this area is vital to the success of this strategy and will become the principal action.

All systems emails are currently distributed by the ITMS team, but recent feedback has shown that because there are too many and they are often irrelevant to the audiences, staff and students are simply ignoring them or, more worryingly, deleting or ‘blocking’ them.

The distribution of emails needs to be managed by the IC team allowing it to advise on the use of other, more appropriate channels wherever possible.

Our aim is to improve the quality of channels other than emails to make it much easier for the university to distribute messages to relevant audiences in a timely and effective manner.

Sarah Lee, Senior Internal Communications Officer