

Media Policy

Responsibility for policy: Director of Communications

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: November 2021

Next review date: November 2026

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff of the University of Waikato.

Scope

2. This policy applies to engagement with the media through all forms of communications that are, or are likely to be, reported or published in the public arena, including print, broadcast and digital media.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to set out principles and procedures with respect to staff engagement with the media.

Related documents

4. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:

- [Critical Event and Business Continuity Policy](#)
- [Education and Training Act 2020](#) ([section 267](#) - academic freedom)
- [Freedom of Expression Statement](#)
- [Official Information Act 1982](#)
- [Personal Information and Privacy Policy](#)
- [Privacy Act 1993](#)
- [Protected Disclosures Policy](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)

Principles

5. The University of Waikato is a major public institution and media attention has the potential to enhance, and to detract from, its reputation; it is important, therefore, to manage the University's engagement with the media positively, constructively and professionally.
6. The following principles apply with respect to institutional and individual engagement with the media:
 - a. The University is a public institution that is accountable for its actions.
 - b. The University is truthful with the media.
 - c. The University takes a proactive approach in its dealings with the media and seeks to engage with it in an effective, authentic and constructive manner in order to build the University's reputation and to contribute to public debate.
 - d. The University recognises and values the concept of academic freedom, as that concept is defined in [section 267](#) of the [Education and Training Act 2020](#).
 - e. Responsibility for the management of the University's relationship with the media rests with the Director of Communications.

- f. Where they apply, confidentiality and privacy must be respected.

University engagement with the media

7. The University affirms the right of individual staff to engage freely with the media as academic experts, and encourages them to showcase their research and offer expert scholarly commentary on topics within their areas of expertise by
 - a. making public statements
 - b. making statements to the media
 - c. responding to media queries.
8. Staff who engage with the media as academic experts must
 - a. make it clear that their opinions and comments are their own and not on behalf of the University
 - b. consult with the Senior Legal Counsel and/or Director of Communications if they are unsure about the legality of the intended communication
 - c. where a title is sought, use their academic title (e.g. Professor, Dr) rather than position title (e.g. Pro Vice-Chancellor, Head of School).
9. Academic staff are encouraged to provide comment or respond to media relating to their area(s) of expertise; where they are not a relevant expert, they are encouraged to direct media queries to an alternative staff member or area of the University with appropriate expertise.
10. All media queries relating to the University other than those covered by clause 9 of this policy should be referred to [Communications](#) before any notified media deadline.
11. Academic staff are encouraged to contact [Communications](#) if they need any support undertaking media interviews.
12. Only the Chancellor may communicate with the media on behalf of the University Council.
13. Only the Vice-Chancellor and staff authorised by the Director of Communications may communicate with the media on behalf of the University.
14. Staff who become aware of a matter that has the potential to become public and have a significant impact on the University's reputation must alert the Director of Communications as soon as practicable.
15. Any request by a media photographer or film crew to use the University campus for photography or filming purpose must be requested via [Kuhukuhu](#) (Security & Parking: Application to Film on Campus) or referred to [Communications](#) who will ensure the completion of an appropriate permission request before photography or filming is undertaken.
16. Photography or filming by or for the media is not permitted in the halls of residence unless prior permission has been obtained from the Associate Director Accommodation and the Director of Communications.
17. Only the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Communications may speak to or release information to the media about an emergency situation on campus; the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Communications may delegate this authority as appropriate.
18. In their dealings with the media, staff must act in the best interests of the University at all times in accordance with the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).

19. Confidential information must not be disclosed to the media in any circumstances; media requests for information that may be confidential, or otherwise quote the [Official Information Act 1982](#) or the [Privacy Act 1993](#), must be referred to the Director of Communications who will deal with them in consultation with the Senior Legal Counsel as appropriate.
20. Any staff member requested by the media to confirm whether a person is, or has been, enrolled as a student at the University or a resident in the halls of residence, must refer the request to [Communications](#), who will deal with it as appropriate.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

21. Staff who are aware of any actual or potential breaches of this policy may report them to the Director of Communications, who will deal with them as appropriate.
22. The Director of Communications is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy, and reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
23. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).

Note

The term 'School' in this policy includes Faculties and the term 'Head of School' includes Deans.