

## Communications and Media Policy

<b>Last Modified</b>	April 2019
<b>Review Date</b>	August 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Executive Director, Student Services and Communications
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Communications and External Relations Manager – Student Services and Communications

### Introduction

This document outlines the University’s communications policies in a range of specific areas; generally, internally, to communication stakeholders, and with the media. It outlines the approach taken with communications to a variety of audiences, though a variety of channels and advises staff on the University’s communications approach, requirements and protocols.

### Table of Contents

<b>Defintions</b>	2
<b>Policy Statement</b>	2
<b>Communications and Events</b>	3
Products of Communications and Events	3
Priorities	3
Principles	3
Measures	4
<b>General</b>	4
University Letterhead	4
Brand Templates	4
Email	5
Social Media	5
<b>Internal Communications</b>	5
Method of Communications	5
<b>Communicating with Stakeholders</b>	6
<b>Communicating with the Media</b>	7
Speaking Publically as an “Expert”	7
Official University Comment	7
Media Inquiries	8
Staff members	8

Heads of Departments/Schools	9
News Releases	9
Distribution of News	9
<b>Issues Management</b>	10
<b>Related Documents and Information</b>	10

## Definitions

**Communications** – any officially released University news item, statement, publication or internal messaging for staff and students and other audiences interested in the activities of the University. “Communications” may also be used as a short form term for the University’s Communications and Events team.

**Channel/s** – the method by which a University statement or message is provided to a particular audience. A full list of University audiences and the channels they are reached by is available on request from Communications.

**Internal communications** – any communication, in any form, primarily intended for audiences on the University campus. This is usually staff and students, campus vendors and contractors or suppliers. The messages are usually communicated via the University’s IT system, social media, approved online channels or posted physically at locations on campus.

**Media** – those organisations that most people turn to for news – the mainstream television, radio and print media with regular bulletins or publication cycles, and established networks and business premises.

**Communication Stakeholders** – individuals and organisations considered to have a genuine interest in University activities and progress. They may include staff, students, former staff, alumni, suppliers, contractors, the community, University neighbours, the media, elected officials, local and central government agencies, and business interests.

## Policy Statement

The University of Canterbury is an open and engaged institution with a stated role, like all Universities, to act as the “critic and conscience of society”; providing research-led, world-class learning and teaching. It is publicly listed on the New Zealand stock exchange (NZX), and an institution subject to the [Official Information Act 1982 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#). The University takes its responsibility to communicate openly, honestly and in a timely manner very seriously.

## Communications and Events

The University's Communications and Events ("Communications") team works as a centre of excellence across a range of communication disciplines. The breadth of its responsibilities means that while it provides quality advice and strategic assistance, Communications cannot always be solely responsible for the delivery of communications activities and products. It requires the assistance of staff across the University to help identify opportunities in a timely manner, in order to leverage them successfully. The same applies to timely notification of issues that may affect the University's reputation.

These notifications can be made to the Executive Director, Student Services and Communications, or the Manager, Communications and External Relations. See the Issues Management section below for further guidance.

### Products of Communications and Events

- Strategic and operational communications advice.
- Reputation management initiatives and activities, including issues and crisis management.
- Content creation.
- High-level events planning and delivery.
- Community relations initiatives.
- Communications, stakeholder and government relations advice and support to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the wider University.
- Both external and internal communications with staff and students.
- Publications.
- Media liaison, story placement, media training and analysis.
- Special projects – including campus transformation and UC Futures.

### Priorities

- Campus transformation (both the campus property and graduate profile).
- Promoting the student experience.
- External engagement – establishing and maintaining genuine two-way engagement with key audiences including business, community and alumni.
- Telling the "UC story" – who we are and what we stand for.
- Integrating several key themes into communications activities.

### Principles

- Championing the University and what it stands for.
- Contributing to increased University visibility in key recruitment markets.

- Maintaining consistency with the University's strategic plan.
- Crafting fit-for-purpose content – relevant and well communicated; coordinated, joined up, inclusive, accurate, succinct and timely.
- Remaining customer service/client focused, establishing relationships across a wide range of audiences.
- Perpetuating best practice within existing IT infrastructure and budget.
- Continually improving – where necessary challenging the status quo.
- Cost-effective efficient use of resources.
- Focusing effort to maximise impact across multiple channels.
- Providing measureable results.
- Where possible, using the expertise available at the University in communications activities.

## Measures

- Communication Stakeholder perception auditing.
- Media analysis.
- Survey feedback on communication tools and events.
- Third party endorsement in media or speeches.
- Readership figures.
- Attendance figures.
- Qualitative feedback.
- Staff engagement surveys.

## General

### University Letterhead

Staff should exercise caution when using the University's letterhead. If writing in the capacity of an individual rather than on behalf of the University, a University letterhead must not be used. If in doubt, check with Communications.

### Branded Templates

Approved University branded templates must be used for all University documentation and presentations. Generic templates for general business purposes are available on the [UC Staff Intranet \(University Marketing intranet\) \(staff only\)](#).

## Email

All staff must display appropriate email etiquette and best practice when writing emails. This is important to prevent privacy breaches or reputational issues for the University. The following are useful resources.

All staff must follow the email guidelines outlined in the [IT Policy Framework \(PDF, 212KB\)](#) and follow the [Email Management Guidelines \(PDF, University Information and Records Management website\)](#), practices provided by Information and Records Management.

When emailing students, staff must follow the [Emails to Enrolled Students Policy and Guidelines \(PDF, 300KB\)](#).

## Social Media

The University's [Social Media Policy \(PDF, 309KB\)](#) covers the use of UC social media accounts, how an account is set-up, administered, what is able to be said and what the expectations are when expressing opinions.

## Internal Communications

The University aims to enable effective internal communication by providing a range of channels and engagement opportunities. These allow the University community to disseminate and discuss important information and topics of interest. Communications provides strategic communications advice to support University-wide initiatives and manages operational communications on behalf of the University, its senior management and the University Council. Staff should approach Communications for advice on the best communications approach to meet specific needs.

## Methods of Communication

### *Intercom*

Intercom comprises a weekly newsletter and an online blog community for University staff, and is the preferred internal staff communication channel. Staff should follow the [Intercom Blog Contributor Guidelines \(University Intercom website\)](#) when they wish to contribute to Intercom.

### *All-Staff Email*

The University has an all-staff email list which is restricted to urgent and important announcements usually at Vice-Chancellor/SMT level.

Emails distributed to the "all-staff" email list must be relevant to more than 70% of the staff population and meet any of the following criteria:

- directly aligns with a current University Council or SMT strategic initiative;
- supports teaching, learning and research;

- informs staff of major disruptions;
- promotes health, safety and wellbeing of staff;
- safeguards the reputation of the University; and/or
- assists the University to comply with legislative requirements.

All-staff emails must be approved prior to distribution by the relevant SMT member and the Manager, Communications and Events or an assigned Communications delegate.

All-staff emails may also be approved and issued by the Director, Learning Resources or Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Services as a matter of urgency. An example of this could be when a new computer virus with a very high level of risk threatens the University network. In this instance, the issue must be discussed with the Manager, Communications and Events or the assigned Communications delegate and verbal consent received before the email is sent.

### **Forums**

University staff are also invited to attend forums with the Vice-Chancellor and members of SMT. A two-way discussion is encouraged. Current topics are specifically chosen to be discussed, and the floor opened for questions on any topic.

### **Communication with Students**

Communications channels used to reach the student population include e-newsletters, digital signage, social media, print and face-to-face. Those wanting to email students must adhere to the [Emails to Enrolled Students Policy and Guidelines \(PDF, 300KB\)](#). Those wanting to survey students must adhere to the [Student Community Online Survey Policy \(PDF, 300KB\)](#).

Departments/Schools have the responsibility to distribute important messages using methods that will most effectively target the relevant audience. The use of verbal communication and face-to-face interactions are encouraged, as are other channels aside from email. A detailed list of effective communications channels is published to the [Communications and Engagement intranet page \(University Student Services and Communications intranet\) \(staff only\)](#) and the Communications team is available to advise as needed.

### **Communicating with Stakeholders**

Stakeholder communications are any communication, in any form, intended for audiences (on the University campus or not) that have a genuine interest in the University. This may be because they are staff or students, alumni, donors, live near the University, or are elected officials or agencies that have a particular reason to be interested in the University and its activities.

The University's approach is to work with communication stakeholders as often as possible for mutual benefit. This includes regular meetings with key partners, and communications to a broad range of communication stakeholders. The University meets with neighbouring residents regularly to update them on matters of mutual interest, and sends a monthly stakeholder update newsletter to the groups mentioned above.

## **Communicating with the Media**

The University aims to help staff manage and maximise the opportunities of external engagement with the media, while also helping manage the risk to themselves, and to the University.

Staff are encouraged to work with Communications to promote their teaching and research, and University-related achievements. University of Canterbury Students' Association (UCSA) affiliated clubs should refer to the UCSA as their first port of call, however Communications are able to provide additional assistance should communications or media advice be desired.

A news release and media contact service is available, as are media clips, broadcast recording and transcript services. In-house media and communications training are available to University staff and UCSA-affiliated clubs on request.

The Senior External Relations Advisor monitors, analyses, and reports on media coverage of the University.

## **Speaking Publicly as an "Expert"**

Academic staff are encouraged to speak to the media in their area of expertise, consistent with the role of a University as critic and conscience of society (see the [Critic & Conscience of Society and Academic Freedom Principles and Policy \(PDF, 213KB\)](#) for more information on exercising academic freedom of expression). The views of academic staff expressed in this capacity do not necessarily represent the views of the University. They should not be construed as official comment.

Academic staff must contact the Senior External Relations Advisor following media interviews to ensure a greater collection of media clips and to monitor media response to these interviews.

## **Official University Comment**

Official University comment is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, the appropriate SMT member, or their authorised representative. The Manager, Communications and External Relations and Senior External Relations Advisor are authorised to provide comment on the University's behalf when appropriate.



Where a media enquiry concerns a particular college, department or school, it should be referred to the relevant HOD/S who may speak if they have delegated authority, or refer it to the relevant SMT member for comment.

If any members of staff are approached on a matter that may be sensitive or on an issue that could be considered to be contentious and they are unable to contact the HOD/S, they should immediately contact the Executive Director, Student Services and Communications or Manager, Communications and External Relations, or the Senior External Relations Advisor who can either advise them or refer the matter to the appropriate authority.

Staff not authorised to talk to the media should not purport to represent the University in media, publications, or correspondence (including email). Letters and articles in newspapers should only make reference to the writer's position within the University when the content of the letter/article is within the writer's area of expertise or responsibility. See "Expert Opinion" above for further information.

## **Media Enquiries**

When the media request information from the University, the Manager, Communications and External Relations, or the Senior External Relations Advisor will manage the response. Any academic staff who are contacted directly by the media for comment should inform the Manager, Communications and Engagement, or the Senior External Relations Advisor.

Urgent assistance from other parts of the University is often needed in order to respond to media enquiries. Teams and academic staff are asked to respond with urgency to requests for such assistance. This will help reflect well on the University, the College and the Department/School concerned. Please see the "Issues Management" section below for further information.

## **Staff Members**

- If approached by the media for comment on a departmental matter, please refer the enquiry immediately to your HOD/S and to the Senior External Relations Advisor.

Note the reporter's name, organisation, contact details, what they wish to talk about, and what (if any) deadline they may have.

- Be especially aware of 'cold calls'. Do not offer information, but take the reporter's details as above and pass them on to the Senior External Relations Advisor, or the Manager, Communications and External Relations if the Senior External Relations Advisor is unavailable.
- If approached by the media for comment on University-wide matters, please refer the enquiry to the Executive Director, Student Services and Communications or Manager, Communications and External Relations, or Senior External Relations Advisor.



- News releases should be referred to Communications for review, a decision on when and how to release, and for consideration for posting on the University website and social media channels (usually Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn).

### **Heads of Departments/Schools**

- Ensure your staff are aware of this policy.
- If the enquiry relates to a matter of sensitivity, contact the Executive Director, Student Services and Communications, the Manager, Communications and External Relations, or the Senior External Relations Advisor for advice.
- Please contact the Manager, Communications and External Relations or the Senior External Relations Advisor at any time for advice on media relations and other communication issues.

### **News Releases**

All University news releases must be referred to Communications for review prior to release, and for consideration for posting on the “University News” section of the University website. Communications are able to assist in the drafting and distribution of news releases if they fit the policy criteria and are in the University’s overall best interests.

The involvement of academics from other institutions does not void the opportunity for a proactive press release, but these need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Proactive media releases will be assessed for release against the following criteria:

- Does the release tell a good University story?
- Can it be told simply, in a way a 12-year-old would understand?
- Is it timely, useful and relevant to the media? – does it have ‘newsworthiness’
- Will it help benefit the New Zealand public?
- Will the media release potentially assist in helping the University’s goal of increased student recruitment?

An opportunity will not always result in a press statement, but media can be advised that the opportunity exists.

### **Distribution of News Releases**

News releases may be distributed to several media or to a tailored list, determined on a case-by-case basis. Some media opportunities may be offered to solitary media organisations, also on a case-by-case basis, but without damaging the University’s overall positive relationship with media due to perceived favouritism.

From time to time, holding statements for specific issues may be prepared for release if comment is likely to be sought from the University. These responses may be released proactively or reactively – to solitary media organisations or several.

## Issues Management

From time-to-time, issues can arise that require a response to be coordinated from across the University. An example may be a serious issue potentially impacting on staff or student health and wellbeing.

In these cases, a group will be established to manage and respond to the issue, including the communications for it. This often involves the appointment of a University spokesperson for that issue. Communications will lead the communications component, which will include informing University staff and students about the situation, what is being done to resolve it, and when it is resolved.

A key success factor in such instances is quick notification to Communications that a serious issue exists, with as many details as possible. This allows the appropriate communications actions to proceed.

Timely notification is **vital**.

This notification should be made through line managers to the Executive Director, Student Services and Communications, or the Manager, Communications and External Relations. If this is not possible, it is imperative to contact a member of staff from Communications.

## Related Documents and Information

### Legislation

- [Official Information Act 1982 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#)

### UC Policy Library

- [Critic & Conscience of Society and Academic Freedom Principles and Policy \(PDF, 213KB\)](#)
- [Emails to Enrolled Students Policy and Guidelines \(PDF, 300 KB\)](#)
- [IT Policy Framework \(PDF, 212KB\)](#)
- [Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy \(PDF, 227KB\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy \(PDF, 613KB\)](#)
- [Social Media Policy \(PDF, 309KB\)](#)
- [Student Community Online Survey Policy \(PDF, 300KB\)](#)

**UC Website and Intranet**

- [Communications audiences and channels directory \(PDF, University intranet\) \(staff only\)](#)
- [Communications and Engagement intranet page \(University Student Services and Communications intranet pages\) \(staff only\)](#)
- [Email Management Guidelines \(PDF, University Information and Records Management website\)](#)
- [Intercom Blog Contributor Guidelines \(University Intercom website\)](#)
- [Word and Powerpoint Templates \(University Marketing intranet pages\) \(staff only\)](#)

<b>Document History and Version Control Table</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Approval Authority</b>	<b>Action Date</b>
1.00	Conversion of document onto new template.	Policy Unit	Sep 2013
1.01	Updated hyperlinks; contact and approval authorities. Changed document title from <i>Communications Policy Incorporating the Internal and Media Communication Policies</i> to <i>Communications and Media Policy</i> .	Director, Student Services and Communications	Oct 2013
1.02	Document review date pushed out.	Policy Unit	Mar 2014
1.03	Hyperlinks updated.	Policy Unit	Jun 2014
2.00	Major review by Contact Officer.	Director, Student Services and Communications	Feb 2015
2.01	Minor formatting change to Approval Authority details.	Policy Unit	Jun 2015
2.02	Updating terminology: from 'Communications and Stakeholder Relations' to 'Communications and Engagement'; and 'Media Consultant' to 'Senior External Relations Advisor' in line with structural changes. Intercom details updated.	Policy Unit	Sep 2015
3.00	Scheduled review by CO, changed formatting and definition of stakeholder.	Policy Unit	Feb 2017
3.01	Change of definition from "stakeholder" to "communication stakeholder"	Policy Unit	Feb 2017
4.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, minor changes, position titles updated, new headings added, existing content rearranged and hyperlinks updated.	Policy Unit	March 2019
4.01	Updated links to <i>Survey Policy and Application Procedures for Online Student Surveys</i> renamed <i>Student Community Online Survey Policy</i> .	Policy Unit	April 2019

**This policy remains in force until it is updated**