

Media, Social Media and Public Commentary Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

- (1) The University supports its staff to work with the media and through social media to make a meaningful and high-quality contribution to public debate on issues at a local, national and international level.
- (2) The University actively encourages and supports the ideal of the 'engaged academic' who, via media, social media and public commentary, is participating in the sharing of information, opinion and ideas that showcase the University's research and scholarly expertise.
- (3) The purpose of this policy is to outline the University's expectations of both Academic and Professional staff with respect to media and public comment, including social media, where there is an identifiable connection with the University.
- (4) These expectations are not intended to restrict the right of any individual to freely express their opinions, or as a member or representative of any professional, community or representative body. Nor is it intended that anything in this policy should detract from the University's commitment to intellectual freedom as outlined in the relevant Academic and Professional Staff Agreements as amended or replaced from time to time.
- (5) This policy applies to all University staff and should be read in conjunction with the [Social Media Guidelines for Staff](#), [Code of Conduct](#), [IT Acceptable Use of Resources Policy](#), [Bullying Prevention Policy](#), [Privacy Policy](#), [Web Policy](#), [Copyright Policy](#), and [Intellectual Property Policy](#).
- (6) This policy does not apply to the personal use of media or social media where there is no identifiable connection with the University.

Section 2 - Definitions

- (7) For the purposes of this policy:
 - a. Expert comment - means comment within the staff member's area of expertise.
 - b. Media - means all forms of print, radio, television, film, online, digital and social media.
 - c. Social media - means any facility for online publication and commentary through and on the internet, including, but not limited to, blogs, wikis, pod casts, forums, video and photo posts, RSS, social bookmarking, and any social networks or networking sites including, but not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+ and Flickr.
 - d. Official social media site - means any social media account that uses the University's logo, and/or name and represents the University on an official level.
 - e. Public commentary - means comments made under the name of the University that may reach the community, including, but not limited to, media interviews, public speaking engagements, public inquiries or submissions, forums and blogs, letters to newspapers, comments on websites and social networks.
 - f. Executive - means a staff member holding the position of Vice-Chancellor and President, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vice-President, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Dean or Executive Director at the University.

- g. Senior Management Group - means staff members holding the position of Director (or equivalent) of the University.

Section 3 - Policy statement

(8) The University recognises, values, and protects academic and intellectual freedom. However, all staff have a professional responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional manner when engaging with all forms of media and public comment, and to uphold the good reputation of the University.

Corporate Comment

(9) The Chancellor, or their nominee, speaks for the Board of Trustees of the University.

(10) The Vice-Chancellor and President is principal spokesperson for the University on matters of policy, management and corporate issues.

(11) Other members of the University Executive may also speak publicly for the University, depending on the issue, or may delegate their role to a member of the Senior Management Group, or the Media Unit within the Office of Marketing and Communication.

(12) Deans and Research Institute and Research Centre Directors speak on behalf of their Schools, Research Institutes or Research Centres.

Expert Comment

(13) The University encourages and actively supports staff to participate in public debate and be available to the media for comment within their broad field of expertise.

(14) Staff members are encouraged to initiate or respond to media inquiries within their area of academic or professional expertise.

(15) Staff are also encouraged to make submissions to government or public inquiries within their areas of academic or professional expertise. Staff may identify themselves using their University title, appointment and qualifications, and may use University letterhead and/or the University's address.

(16) Staff are expected to act in good faith when providing media, social media and public comment and not misrepresent their expertise, nor bring the University into disrepute, as outlined in the [Code of Conduct](#).

(17) In engaging with the media, expert commentators can expect the support of the University. This does not imply that the University endorses their particular view, but it does mean that the right to speak as a University staff member in their area of expertise will be upheld.

(18) Staff must show respect for others, acknowledging their responsibilities and accountability as outlined in the [Code of Conduct](#).

Section 4 - Procedures

Liaising with the Media

(19) The Media Unit is available to assist with media liaison, and the writing, approval and distribution of University media releases. It can also assist with coordinating media interviews and filming opportunities on campus.

(20) Staff who respond to inquiries directly from media are required to inform the Media Unit of the media engagement, so it can assist with maximising publicity and follow-up media opportunities.

Approval of Official Social Media Sites

(21) The Office of Marketing and Communication must approve official social media sites and these sites must adhere to the University's branding guidelines.

(22) Staff must attend training facilitated by the Office of Marketing and Communication before they will be authorised to manage official University social media sites. The training will cover topics such as content planning, moderation, escalation procedures and reporting requirements.

(23) Staff wishing to create an official University social media site are required to complete the Social Media Channel Request prior to setting it up and must notify the Digital and Social Media Manager once the site has been set up. Administrator access to the site must also be shared with the Digital and Social Media Manager in case of emergency intervention.

Response to Adverse Postings on External Websites

(24) The Digital and Social Media Manager will examine any posting on any external, non-University, social media or other website of which they become aware that threatens or incites harm to its staff, students or facilities, or any posting or website that threatens the University's reputation. The University will take action where it believes a posting or a website breaches its policies. Further information is available in the [Social Media Guidelines for Staff](#).

Support and Training

(25) Where a staff member's public comment has caused or has the potential to cause controversy or potential offence, the staff member should alert the relevant Executive member or member of the Senior Management Group, and, if required, seek the advice and assistance of the Media Unit.

(26) The Media Unit can provide training, advice and support for staff who are or will be dealing with the media.

(27) Staff who wish to develop their media skills should contact the Media Unit for advice and assistance.

(28) Staff who would like advice or support in using social media in a professional or personal context can contact the Digital and Social Media Manager.

Policy Compliance

(29) Breaches of this policy will be addressed through the disciplinary procedures prescribed by the [Academic Staff Agreement](#) or [Professional Staff Agreement](#) as amended or replaced from time to time.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(30) Please refer to the detailed procedures for social media available in the [Social Media Guidelines for Staff](#).

Status and Details

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