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Overview

This policy provides direction for the co-ordination of contact between UNE and the media.

It covers a staff member's responsibilities in relation to direct contact with the media, as well as outlining obligations in regards to the management and dissemination of information, which could reasonably reach the media.

"Media" includes all print, radio, television and electronic media.

Policy

Principles

- 1.1 The core principle of this policy is respect and care for the reputation and image of the University. It requires staff members to conduct themselves as set out in the University's *Code of Conduct 17.01*, and in a way that takes into consideration the impact which their communication or activities may have on UNE's standing in the communities in which we operate: regionally, nationally and internationally.
 - 1.2 The concept and practice of intellectual freedom is recognised by the University as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and scholarship. While intellectual freedom is a right, it carries with it the duty of staff members to use the freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for, and dissemination of, knowledge and truth.
 - 1.3 Where relevant, advice should be sought from Marketing and Public Affairs before responding to any media enquiries for University comment.
 - 1.4 When ordinarily initiating or responding to a media enquiry, Marketing and Public Affairs may be contacted for advice and expert assistance.
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Comments to the Media

1.5 Media comment will generally fall into three categories:

- (i) University comment
- (ii) Academic comment
- (iii) Private individual

University comment

- 1.6 “University comment” refers to staff making comment as an official University representative on the general state of the University, including its strategies, policies, offerings, and other institutional matters.
- 1.7 University comment on strategic issues such as, but not limited to, announcements or speculation about new areas of study, government policy, changing UNE policy, enrolments, acknowledgement of external funding etc. must be first approved by the Vice-Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor’s nominated delegates.
- 1.8 Other University comment, such as information on course offerings or programs, may be authorised by the relevant UNE representative who has the delegated authority, e.g. Pro Vice-Chancellor and Deans on Faculty matters.
- 1.9 Any University comment must not endorse either directly or indirectly any political campaign or candidate.
- 1.10 Any University comment must not directly endorse any commercial arrangements/sponsorships as set out in the relevant University policy.
- 1.11 Any media inquiry or request for strategic University comment relating to UNE’s organisational, policy or institutional activities is to be directed to Marketing and Public Affairs who will consult with the appropriate executive or senior management, and provide advice, as required, to the spokesperson authorised to respond to the inquiry.

Academic comment

- 1.12 “Academic comment” refers to comment within the staff member’s area of expertise and responsibility, including participation in public debates, expressing opinions about issues and ideas related to their discipline area or higher education issues more generally, and initiating and responding to any media issues which may arise within their area of expertise. In this situation, staff can identify themselves as staff members of the University.
- 1.13 Staff are free to initiate or respond to any media matter within their area of academic expertise or responsibility, however they must inform Marketing and Public Affairs beforehand of their objectives and seek advice to maximise any publicity opportunities. Marketing and Public Affairs should be copied in on all communications with the media
- 1.14 Any Academic comment must not endorse either directly or indirectly any political campaign or candidate, although comment on political or government policy within an individual’s area of expertise is acceptable.
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Private Individual

- 1.15** “Private individual” comment refers to the right of any staff member to freely express their opinions in their private capacity as an individual member of society.
- 1.16** It is not the intention of this policy to restrict such rights of any staff member. Unless they are officially representing the University, individuals who wish to make public comment must not in any way indicate that they are speaking on behalf of the University (see **17.01 Code of Conduct**).
- 1.17** When making individual comment, staff must not identify themselves as a staff member of UNE.

Dealing with the media

- 1.18** The outcome of any media communication (with the exception of advertising) is a process that is controlled by the media and not by UNE or any of its staff members. Therefore, any UNE staff member dealing directly or indirectly with the media needs to be aware of the way the University may be perceived and represented.
- 1.19** All comments made to the media should be considered as “on the record”, regardless of any commitment given by a member of the media that a comment is “off the record”.
- 1.20** Media enquiries should be responded to as soon as practicably possible, being respectful of media deadlines and responsive to requests from the media, without compromising UNE’s image or reputation.
- 1.21** All dealings with any member of the media should be conducted with courtesy.

Responsibilities of the Marketing and Public Affairs Directorate

- 1.22** Marketing and Public Affairs coordinates matters relating to University communication with the media, in order that UNE is represented consistently and cohesively to members of the media.
- 1.23** Where there is not a clear contact person on a particular matter, a delegated “spokesperson” will be determined by Marketing and Public Affairs, in conjunction with appropriate executive or senior management.
- 1.24** Staff should advise Marketing and Public Affairs of likely or possible University announcements, on a confidential basis if necessary. This allows for sufficient planning for UNE to either maximise the potential for positive coverage of important or strategic developments or minimise any potential negative impact.
- 1.25** In addition, staff need to give Marketing and Public Affairs advance notice of any issues, which they may become aware of, which have the potential to negatively impact UNE’s image and reputation.

Breaches of this Policy

- 1.26** Breaches of this policy which damage UNE’s reputation will be dealt with under the University’s Misconduct/Serious Misconduct provisions.
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Procedures

1.27 Procedural guidelines, and/or management plans, consistent with this policy may be issued by the Director, Marketing and Public Affairs, in line with the UNE framework for policies and other instruments.

References

Code of Conduct - Section **17.01** of the Human Resource Management Handbook

See <http://www.une.edu.au/hrs/handbook/>

Further Information

Public Relations & Communications Manager, Marketing and Public Affairs
Director, Marketing and Public Affairs

Approved by:

Signature

Date
