

BACKGROUND

This media protocol is intended to provide guidelines for media announcements and/or responses to media requests, on matters relating to University policy. The Executive Team originally endorsed the University's Media Protocol in 2005, and endorsed this revised version at its meeting on 25 March 2013, which reflects updated policies and clarifies responsible officers. It was also noted at the VCAC meeting on 3 April 2013.

UNSW MEDIA PROTOCOL

Introduction

The Media Office works with staff to position UNSW as a thought leader in thematic areas of research strength including business, emerging technologies and innovation, science and medicine, sustainability and social justice.

We encourage Deans and prominent researchers to lead and contribute to media coverage and debates associated with these research strengths.

Spokespeople

- Only the Chancellor is authorised to speak on behalf of the University Council.
- The authority to speak on behalf of the University lies with the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor but will normally be exercised by the Vice-Chancellor, as the CEO of the organisation.
- The Vice-Chancellor delegates to other members of the Executive the authority to speak to matters within their particular portfolios.
- Deans are authorised to speak on behalf of their faculties. It is expected Deans would refrain from making public comment on contentious issues affecting the University as a whole unless specifically authorised.
- All media requests relating to policy issues/senior management responsibilities are to be directed in the first instance to the University's Media Office. The head of the Media Office handles media liaison for all publicly sensitive issues and where appropriate acts as the official spokesperson for the University.
- The University encourages and supports informed comment and thought leadership from academic and professional staff in their field of expertise, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. The Media Office is able to assist in the development and placement of thought leadership pieces in different media.

- All staff should conduct themselves in a professional manner when engaging with all forms of media. This includes social media and blogs. Staff should be cognisant of the University's [Social Media Communication Guidelines](#).
- The Media Office approves all official media releases (those with UNSW logo and branding) before they are distributed. This includes all co-branded releases prepared by external agencies, PR companies and/or industry and funding partners.

POLICY

The UNSW Staff Code of Conduct is the relevant policy guiding staff dealings with media. Below is the relevant section of the [Code](#).

Academic freedom

The University recognises and protects the concept and practice of academic freedom as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and scholarship within the University. While academic freedom is a right, it carries with it the duty of academics to use the freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for and dissemination of knowledge and truth. Academic freedom is not a defence to poor behaviour or disrespectful treatment of others.

Public comment

Staff and affiliates must not make any public comment on behalf of the University or represent themselves as being spokespersons for the University, unless authorised to do so. All public comments of this nature should be coordinated by the University's Media Office.

Within the ambit of academic freedom lies the traditional role of academics in making informed comment on societal mores and practice and in challenging held beliefs, policies and structures. Where such comments are offered by academics as members of the University, it is expected that those commentaries will be within their broad area of expertise.

These expectations are not intended to restrict the right of any individual to freely express their opinions in their private capacity, or as a member or representative of any professional, community or representative body.

Jennie Lang
Vice-President, Advancement