

POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

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| POLICY NUMBER: | POU060529000 |
| POLICY NAME: | Media |
| DATE APPROVED: | 16 June 2006 |
| POLICY TYPE AND CATEGORY: | General (University Governance) |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: | Director, Marketing and Communications |

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy provides direction for Victoria University (VU) staff for engaging with the 'media'. The policy also applies to public speaking engagements; comments in the media; letters to press/books/journals, where it might be expected that the publication/circulation of comments will spread to the community at large and be attributed to the University.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Marketing and Communications Department (MCD) provides strategic direction, advice and service on all aspects of marketing to the University community. It has the responsibility to shape and enhance the University's brand identity and its reputation as 'A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT'. As part of this, MCD strives to get wide and favourable media coverage for Victoria University and to manage any issues related to the University.

In order to do this it is essential that MCD is kept fully informed about any events, activities or issues that could attract positive or negative media attention, to ensure that we can put strategies in place to maximise positive coverage and to ensure that any views disseminated are the views of the University and that at all times VU communicates a clear and consistent message in relation to any issues arising. In order to achieve the best possible media coverage, the MCD, through the Media Manager and Senior Media Officer, will make strategic decisions on the newsworthiness of stories to ensure that the best uses are made of MCD/VU resources.

MCD has identified a need for a policy to support these initiatives.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

University is Victoria University.

Media includes all media eg television, print, radio and electronic media including the world wide web, blogs, etc.

Staff includes employees, officers and contractors of Victoria University.

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Brand. A brand includes all the attributes, associations, values, personality and benefits associated with a product/service/organisation. The brand also defines the type of relationship a person has with an organisation/product/service. The VU Brand is explained in the Brand Guide located on the intranet at: <http://intranet.vu.edu.au/mcd/brand.asp>, or a hard copy can be obtained from MCD.

VU Values are: knowledge, skills, and inquiry; equality; diversity; co-operation; integrity; and excellence.

4.0 KEY WORDS

Media; Media Liaison; Brand; Privacy; Academic Comments; Partnerships; Communication Emergency; Spokesperson; Values.

5.0 POLICY

The policy defines the procedures VU staff are required to follow and the responsibilities they have when interacting with the media. These procedures ensure that all contact with the media is conducted professionally; that VU receives the best possible, accurate and positive media coverage and that the University's reputation and brand are protected. The policy acknowledges the need for planning, exchange of information and communication between individual staff and departments.

Breaches of this policy may be deemed breaches of the University's Staff Code of Conduct and may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Media Liaison

All media liaison must be handled through the Marketing and Communications Department. Staff wishing to make contact with the media must clear it first through the Media Manager or Senior Media Officer.

The preparation and distribution of all media releases must be done through and in collaboration with MCD. The Media Manager and Senior Media Officer will make judgements regarding the news worthiness and news angles of these stories.

This will ensure that:

- the release aligns with our brand, values and mission;
- the content is presented in an appropriate manner;
- the media release is disseminated to the most up-to-date and relevant media contacts;
- the dissemination of the release is timely;
- the media release does not inadvertently attract negative coverage; and,
- VU messages are co-ordinated and there are no contradictions.

Staff members contacted directly by the media must advise the Media Manager or the Senior Media Officer of that contact before speaking with the media, so that an appropriate response can be agreed and communicated. Where the urgency or dynamic nature of the media is such that this advice is not possible, staff members must comment in line with this policy and advise the Media Manager or Senior Media Officer as soon as possible.

MCD will invite academics to be listed on the Expert Guide.

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6.2 Acting as an Official Spokesperson

Members of staff are not permitted to represent themselves as spokespersons for the University unless authorised to do so. Official statements in the name of the University must be authorised by the Media Manager or Senior Media Officer, or the Vice-Chancellor. A staff member authorised to speak on behalf of VU to the media may identify himself or herself by using the University name and/or their official title.

6.3 Academic Comments

VU recognises and respects the concept of academic freedom as essential to our teaching, learning and research. While academic freedom is a right, it carries with it the duty of staff to use the freedom in a responsible manner, consistent with our values. This policy acknowledges that academics and universities play a key role in reporting on scientific and sociological research and in providing a platform for public conversation and debate about critical and often controversial issues.

University staff are encouraged to take pride in their professional achievements, to develop positive reputations, and to contribute to academic discussion through the media in their professional field.

Although it would be preferable to talk to the Media Manager or Senior Media Officer before talking to the media – if this is not possible:

- keep the Media Manager or Senior Media Officer informed of all these discussions; and
- ensure that you make it clear to the media that it is your own academic viewpoint.

Staff may participate in academic discussion through the media in relation to matters in their area of professional expertise provided they make it clear that they do not speak on behalf of the University.

This policy recognises that universities by their nature have a longstanding role in furthering debate and discussion on what are often radical ideas; staff members are encouraged to participate in constructive debate.

6.4 Media for Partnerships/Affiliations

The University is increasingly involved in partnership/affiliation arrangements and special consideration needs to be given to the management of marketing and media matters.

It is preferable that clearly defined media and marketing objectives are set at the beginning of partnership arrangements. This includes inserting clauses in any contracts, stating that the leading entity in a partnership will be clearly recognised and that all media releases will be joint releases with the appropriate quotes from each organisation. This process will ensure that VU gains maximum and appropriate media exposure for its partnership projects. As these releases often have to go through lengthy approval processes in several organisations it is imperative that the maximum amount of lead time is given to MCD for the preparation of these media releases.

6.5 Privacy Concerns/Breaches

To ensure compliance with all relevant privacy laws and the University's Information Privacy Policy, staff may not comment to the media on whether a person is a current or former student of the University or disclose any personal information concerning such a person, without that person's express permission.

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6.6 Emergencies/Critical Incidents

In the event of an emergency or critical incident when Victoria University's Emergency Management Plan is activated, no statement is to be made to the media by any staff member unless it has been authorised by the Chairperson of the Emergency Management Team or Incident Management Team, or the Vice Chancellor.

6.7 Bringing the University into Disrepute

Staff must not engage with the media in any activity or comment that may bring the University's goodwill, reputation or public image into disrepute.

7.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES

Victoria University Staff Code of Conduct
Emergency Management Plan
Victorian Information *Privacy Act 2000*
Victoria University Information Privacy Policy
Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988*
Victoria University Brand Guidelines

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the preparation of this policy, reference has been made to: Macquarie University Media Policy; Latrobe University Media Policy; University of New England Media Policy; University of Western Sydney Media Policy; University of Tasmania Media Policy; and Edith Cowan University Public Comment by Staff Policy.

9.0 CONSULTATION

The following consultation has occurred:

- in December 2005 the policy was distributed with an invitation for feedback to representatives from the Academic and General staff areas of the University;
- policy submitted to VCAC (Services) on 5 December 2005;
- policy circulated to the VU community in December 2005, for a minimum period of 14 days.

Consultation Phase – January/February 2006:

- a range of comments from the University Community (General and Academic staff) and VCAC (Services) have been incorporated into the Media Policy, including:
- The responses from VCAC (Services) in relation to deleting two references for academics to seek clearance prior to entering into academic debate and replace with keep the Media Manager informed of all such activity.
- Comments from the Senior Lawyer in relation to 3.0 "Definitions" and 6.5 "Privacy Concerns/Breaches", and 6.7 "Bringing the University into Disrepute".
- Comments from GPPS in relation to format, 11.3 "Training Plan; 11.5 "Effectiveness Of This Policy".
- Comments from the University Community in relation to 6.1 "Media Liaison; 6.3 "Academic Comments"; and 11.3 "Training Plan"

10.0 REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed no later than three years from commencement.

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11.0 ACCOUNTABILITIES

11.1 RESPONSIBILITY

The Director Marketing and Communications, (MCD) has senior management responsibility for this policy. The Media Manager has responsibility for the development, implementation and maintenance of this policy. As well as the Director MCD and the Media Manager, support staff who have a role to play in implementing, administering and reviewing the policy should continually seek ways to simplify the policy and related procedures. Wherever possible they should work to eliminate encumbrances that hinder or make policy development convoluted, and clarify aspects of the policy and procedures that are hard to understand.

11.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

MCD will manage the Policy by:

- putting in place an on-going awareness strategy designed to make the framework of the Media Policy known, understood and accessible to the University's communities;
- being responsive to the need for on-going quality improvement; and
- fostering an understanding of the role of policy in the good management of the University and its reputation and image.

11.3 TRAINING PLAN

This involves a multi-tiered, integrated approach.

Ideally, the policy and the policy framework should be incorporated in University Induction Programs and introduced to staff as part of their orientation to the University.

In addition to this, MCD will work in partnership with Teaching and Learning Support to design programs that can be customised to fit the needs of organisational units wishing to orient their staff with the University's Policy.

A training plan will be developed by MCD, alerting staff to the existence, contents and operations of the policy, as well as providing appropriate advice and support to staff interacting with the media.

Training needs will be scoped with Executive Deans, Deputy Deans, Faculty Heads and Heads of Schools to determine specific needs and impacts on how they operate.

Faculty officers will be briefed on the policy to help give them a better understanding of the Media Policy so that that can further disseminate this information throughout their Faculty.

11.4 COMPLIANCE

After 12 months the policy will be evaluated to determine whether or not VU staff are abiding by it.

Following this evaluation, a report on the effectiveness of the Media Policy will be provided to Richard Carter, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education Services, and recommendations made to institute appropriate amendments to make the policy more effective if necessary. It will also identify any further training needs and make appropriate recommendations.

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11.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

These performance indicators will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy:

- requests for workshops and presentations on the University's Media Policy;
- feedback from stakeholders on the policy with responses coming from a representative cross section of the University community;
- compliance with the Media Policy;
- the number of queries raised in regard to the Media Policy.

12.0 POLICY ADVISOR

Media Manager; 9919 4322

13.0 FORMS

14.0 APPENDICES

[Appendix 1](#): Steps For Media Contact

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APPENDIX 1

STEPS FOR MEDIA CONTACT

14.1.1 When a journalist contacts you:

- identify the journalist;
- ask what they specifically want to focus on;
- ask when the deadline is;
- tell them you will call them back and call the Media Manager or Senior Media Officer;
- sometimes you may have to respond straight away in your area of expertise. If you are comfortable with responding right away, then call the media team after the contact to make sure they are all informed.

Before speaking with the journalist you will need to decide/be clear about:

- who you are talking to;
- what message you want to communicate; and
- what you want people to think and do.

Try and keep the message single-minded:

- pick one big theme/overall message and stick to it; and
- support it with no more than three key points.

14.1.2 The interview:

- remember – don't rely on anything being "off the record";
- prepare your key message and rehearse;
- get the most important point across first and repeat it in different ways; and
- keep your sentences short and simple and keep to your key message/three key points.

14.1.3 Staying on track:

- wherever possible answer the questions in the context of your key message
- keep the journalist in a tight orbit around your key message
- this avoids:
 - allowing yourself to be led off on a tangent;
 - saying something risky;
 - finding yourself in unfamiliar territory; and
 - being represented out of context.

14.1.4 Watch outs:

Some journalists may use tactics:

- putting words in your mouth – don't agree with them if it is not your view;
- getting you to speed up – keep a pace that suits you;
- luring you off your main point – bring the topic back to the issue/key message; and
- lulling you into a false sense of security – the interview is never over until you are no longer talking to the journalist.

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14.1.5 Tips:

Phrases that may help to control the interview are:

- Just as important is ...
- The main point is ...
- We may be overlooking the fact that ...
- Another important point is ...
- Let's put that into perspective ...
- I think that what (key audience) want to know is ...

Avoid "no comment" – instead use:

- It's not appropriate for me to talk about that because ...
- I'm the wrong person, but what I can say is ...

14.1.6 Do not:

- agree to an interview that you feel uncomfortable about;
- attack the journalist;
- volunteer any information that could be perceived in the wrong light;
- use 'jargon'; and
- lie.