

MEDIA AND PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEDURE

SCOPE

- All media communications
- All staff, casuals, honoraries, adjuncts or affiliates who are connected with Monash University Australia (including at international locations) and Monash University Malaysia herein collectively referred to as **'staff'** for the purpose of this procedure.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

1. Who is an authorised spokesperson?

- 1.1 Media matters relating to communicating on behalf of Monash University are the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor or authorised representative(s).
- 1.2 The following individuals are authorised by the Vice-Chancellor as spokesperson(s) for the University on University policies, management and operational matters within their specific portfolio or Faculty responsibility areas:
 - Provost;
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Senior Vice Presidents in their area of management responsibility;
 - Chief Operating Officer;
 - Chief Marketing Officer;
 - President and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Malaysia; and
 - Any other individual authorised by the Vice-Chancellor or Chief Marketing Officer.
- 1.3 Where a matter has been defined as a crisis under the University's Crisis Management Policy and Procedure, media communication and public comment for the crisis is authorised by the Chair of the Crisis Management and Recovery Senior Management Team.

2. Comment on official University matters

- 2.1 The Vice-Chancellor or an authorised spokesperson is the principal spokesperson for the University on matters within the scope of their authority and may deal with the media in their official capacity.
- 2.2 University media releases will only be issued (and authorised) via Strategic Marketing and Communication (SMC), unless another individual is authorised to do so by the Vice-Chancellor in a particular circumstance.

3. Making personal public comment

- 3.1 All staff have the right to express their personal views publicly (including on social media channels, verbally and in editorials) on any matter of public interest provided that, when doing so, they do not associate themselves with the University and do not pass official comment about the University's position on a particular matter. It is the responsibility of staff making a comment, to take all reasonable steps to ensure their comment is not associated with the University or their position with the University.
- 3.2 Where staff become aware that there may be a potential association that could be made between their comments and the University, they must make clear that such views are their personal views, and are not connected to and do not represent the University. They must also inform the Chief Marketing Officer immediately via media@monash.edu on becoming aware that such an association has been made.
- 3.3 Staff, when expressing their personal view publicly must:
 - do so from a private address when doing so in writing (whether postal or email or social media);
 - not identify themselves as a University staff member;
 - not pass official comment about the University's position on a particular matter; and

- be mindful that they show respect for the opinion of others.

3.4 The University does not assume responsibility for defending any defamation claim made against an individual associated with an expression of opinion arising from personal public comment.

4. Expert comment and intellectual freedom

4.1 The University recognises and affirms the important role of academic staff engaging in public debate about matters within their area(s) of academic disciplinary expertise and is committed to acting in a manner consistent with the protection and promotion of intellectual freedom.

4.2 The University recognises that professional staff may be qualified to provide public comment in their area(s) of expertise as a representative of Monash (for example, speaking or delivering papers at conferences). Professional staff wishing to provide public comment (for example, by delivering a paper at a conference) must first formally seek their supervisor's approval to do so. If the paper or conference topic is in an area likely to draw public or media attention, the supervisor must seek the advice of the Chief Marketing Officer via media@monash.edu prior to granting such approval.

4.3 The University supports the intellectual freedom of its academic staff and encourages academics to engage in public debate about matters within their area(s) of academic disciplinary expertise as a representative of the University.

4.4 Academics who hold affiliate, adjunct and/ or honorary status, may also engage in public debate about matters within their area(s) of academic disciplinary expertise and they may use their Monash University affiliation or association in their expert comment. Academics who hold affiliate, adjunct and/ or honorary status who engage in personal public comment must adhere to the requirements under section 3 of this procedure, Making Personal Public Comment.

4.5 Academic and senior professional staff making expert comment as a representative of the University:

- should only comment in their area(s) of academic disciplinary expertise or professional expertise;
- should not purport to represent the views of the University (unless approved by the Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer);
- should act with honesty, integrity, in good faith, and ensure comments are fair and do not misrepresent their expertise or the University.

4.6 Academic staff engaging with the media must, where practicable, give prior notice to the SMC Division of such engagement via media@monash.edu (including when and where it will occur) or advise SMC as soon as possible after the contact to ensure management and oversight of the University's media activities.

4.7 Staff must take all reasonable steps to guard against making any comment or communication that may be defamatory or is otherwise contrary to law or values and behaviours of Monash University.

4.8 The University will consider the provision of legal support to staff who are the subject of an allegation or legal claim for defamation or other action contrary to law connected to public comments they have made, on a case-by-case basis. In that consideration, the University will take into account all relevant factors including their compliance with these procedures.

5. Breach of procedure

5.1 Breaches of these procedures will be managed in accordance with the applicable Enterprise Agreement, contract terms or relevant student policy or procedure, and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the University against the individual concerned.

6. Further information

6.1 Training is available to spokespersons for the University and for staff who are regularly requested to provide expert commentary through SMC.

6.2 For further guidance on expert commentary or training, please contact the SMC Division at media@monash.edu

DEFINITIONS

Media Communications	Means all forms of print, radio, television, film, online, digital and social media and can be represented in either a written, spoken or visual platform.
Personal public opinion	Means personal views expressed on any matter of public interest.
Public comment	Public comment includes anything that you say in public or which ends up in public. This can include something you've said or written to one person. If your comment has an audience, or a recipient, it's a public comment.
Expert comment	Means any view expressed on a matter of academic disciplinary expertise for academics or area of identified professional expertise for professional staff.

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	Media and Public Comment Policy
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Media Procedure• Brand Identity Procedure• Crisis Management Procedure• Conflict of Interest Procedure• Data Protection and Privacy Procedure
Legislation mandating compliance	N/A
Category	Operational
Approval	Chief Operating Officer
Endorsement	Chief Marketing Officer
Procedure owner	Group Manager, Media, Social & Reputation
Date effective	17 December 2018
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Version	1.0
Content enquiries	Media, Social & Reputation unit via media@monash.edu