



MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS
POLICY CORP 10.1

Relevant UTAS Ordinance Rule and/or GLP No.	Ordinance 2 – The Chancellor and Deputy Chancellors, Ordinance 3 – Vice-Chancellor
Relevant State/Federal Govt. Legislation	
Commencement Date	1 January 2008
Review Date	1 January 2009

POLICY STATEMENT

1 Intent

To ensure the quality, consistency and professionalism of all UTAS communications with the media.

2 Scope

All persons who:

- are authorised to act as spokespersons for UTAS on specific matters;
- can provide expert or informed comment on specific subjects or issues;
or
- are responsible for issuing media releases for specific UTAS events or activities.

Other established protocols are in place for media communications for joint UTAS partnership arrangements, such as with the State Government (examples include: Partners in Health and the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI) and Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR)) or in Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs). Advice on media communications relating to these joint ventures should be sought from the UTAS Media Office or the Directors of these organisations.

3 Objective(s)

To ensure that all UTAS communications with all forms of media – local, national and international – are presented in a coordinated, disciplined and consistent way to enhance the UTAS profile and reputation as a provider of quality teaching, learning and research.

4 Definitions

Authorised spokesperson Official representatives authorised to comment for and on behalf of the University in specific areas of responsibility established through UTAS Ordinance or Delegation of Authority, including: the Chancellor; Deputy Chancellors; Vice-Chancellor; Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost; Executive Director, Finance and Administration; Executive Director, Planning and Development; Chair of Academic Senate; the Deans of Faculties and Heads of Schools, Institutes, Centres and Administrative Sections.

Expert comment Informed or specialised comment provided by a UTAS staff member within their specific area of professional expertise on either: a matter of professional knowledge; a matter pertaining to higher education; or an issue of public interest.

Media Any print, radio, television or online outlet which provides news or information to the general public.

Media release A document distributed to the media detailing a news event, press conference or other public announcement which relates directly to the work of the University and which appears on a University of Tasmania template.

UTAS University of Tasmania

5 Policy Maker

Vice-Chancellor

6 Policy Provisions

6.1 Role of UTAS Media Office

It is the role of the Media Office to support the diverse UTAS community in demonstrating a unified and professional position in celebrating the achievements of staff, students and graduates and encouraging informed intellectual debate.

The Media Office performs its role by:

- acting as designated first point of contact and referral in dealing with enquiries from the media;

- providing advice to UTAS staff and other authorised representatives on the preparation of media material in a range of formats;
- identifying UTAS issues of potential interest to the media;
- liaising with UTAS partners (State Government or other organisations) on specific media issues; and
- drafting, editing, approving and distributing UTAS media issues.

In performing its role, the Media Office relies on the professional skills and expertise of UTAS staff and representatives in assuring the accuracy and relevance of information contained in media communications. The Media Office will not alter factual content of any media communication but will provide its professional assistance to help improve presentation, readability or news worthiness.

6.2 Categories of Media Communication

There are three categories of UTAS communication with the media:

1. As a spokesperson for UTAS authorised or delegated to comment for and on behalf of the University on certain issues.
2. As a staff member of UTAS providing expert or informed comment on a subject or issue within their area of expertise.
3. Any public event or announcement organised by University staff for which a media release on a University of Tasmania template is to be issued.

Category 1 – Authorised spokesperson

- This category is to ensure that accurate and consistent information is provided to the media on matters relating to the governance and management of the University as an institution. Specific communication responsibilities for particular matters are detailed in the UTAS Delegations Register at:
http://www.utas.edu.au/policy/delegations_tables.html
- Examples of such matters include: UTAS policies and planning, contributions to the well-being of the wider community higher education policies as they relate to UTAS; budget or capital works issues; security and emergency issues; news about enrolments; academic and teaching developments or innovations; research issues; or the securing of major grants or sponsorships.
- All media inquiries to UTAS staff on these matters should be directed to the University Media Office in Hobart or Launceston or, in their unavailability, to the Director of Public Relations and University Extension . The inquiries will then be referred to the most appropriate senior officer authorised to comment.

Category 2 – Expert Comment

- This category covers inquiries from the media seeking comment on an area which falls within an individual UTAS staff members' area of professional expertise.
- Approaches can come from the Media Office or the media directly,
- Individuals who are approached directly by the media for comment should inform the Media Office which will assist with preparation for presentations, media monitoring and possible follow-up of stories.

Category 3 – Media Releases

- Media releases are a primary mechanism by which UTAS provides factual information on its activities, events or plans to the local, national and international media.
- The Media Office has responsibility for drafting, editing and distributing media releases on behalf of UTAS.
- UTAS staff may also draft releases for the consideration by the Media Office. While the author of the draft release is responsible for the accuracy of the content, the Media Office may edit this material to improve its news value, readability or comprehension to the lay reader. All edited releases will be returned to the author for final approval before distribution.
- **All** media releases are to be sent to the Media Office **before** they are issued to ensure consistency in style, tone and content.
- Media releases can be distributed by UTAS staff or representatives to personal media contacts, but **only after** the release has been approved by the Media Office.

6.3 Providing Comments as an Individual

If approached, UTAS staff or representatives may use their own discretion in choosing to provide comments to the media in their own right as individuals or outside their areas of professional expertise.

In such cases, those making comments should make it clear that this is the basis on which the comments are made and the views expressed do not necessarily represent those of UTAS or any of its Faculties, Schools, Centres, Institutes or Administrative Sections.

As a courtesy to the organisation, the UTAS staff member or representative should inform the Media Office when they make such comments.

7 Supporting/Related Documents

- UTAS/Tasmanian Government Partners in Health:
<http://www.healthsci.utas.edu.au/pih/pdf/medpro.pdf>

UTAS Delegations Register at:
http://www.utas.edu.au/policy/delegations_tables.html

8 Key Words

- Media
- Spokesperson
- Expert comment
- Media release

9 Supporting Procedures/ Guidelines

Media and Events website: <http://www.utas.edu.au/events/index.html>

RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation	Media Manager, Media Office
Compliance	Media Manager, Media Office
Monitoring and Evaluation	Vice-Chancellor
Development and/or Review	Vice-Chancellor
Interpretation and Advice	Media Manager, Media Office Media Officers, Media Office (Hobart and Launceston)

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW THIS POLICY?

- Vice Chancellor and Senior Management Team
- Heads of School and Administrative Sections
- All academic staff
- All marketing and communications staff

EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

- No unauthorised media releases or media comment
- Feedback from media directly and via media monitoring on quality, consistency and efficiency of media output by UTAS

POLICY HISTORY

Policy No.	CORP 10.1
Approved / Rescinded	Approved
Date	1 April 2008
Vice-Chancellor	Professor Daryl Le Grew
Signature	