Media Policy

Section 1 - Background

(1) ACU supports its staff and students in working with the media to make a high-quality and meaningful contribution to public debate on issues at a local, national and international level.

(2) The University encourages and supports academics in using media and public commentary to share information, ideas and opinions that showcase the University's research and intellectual expertise.

(3) The ACU Media Team, located within Marketing and External Relations (MER), is responsible for helping the University build a positive public profile, supporting staff and students in their engagement with media, proactive and reactive media engagement, and responding to critical incidents.

Section 2 - Purpose

(4) The purpose of this Policy is to outline the responsibilities and obligations of staff and students with respect to media and public comment, where there is an identifiable connection with the University.

(5) This Policy is not intended to restrict the right of any individual to freely express their opinions, or as a member or representative of any professional, community or representative body. Nor does it detract from ACU's commitment to intellectual freedom. ACU aspires to be a university characterised by free inquiry and academic integrity. Staff may make public comment and enter into public discourse from the basis of expertise and in line with the Code of Conduct for Staff.

Section 3 - Scope/Application

(6) This Policy applies to all ACU staff and students.

(7) This Policy does not apply to the personal use of media or social media where there is no identifiable connection with the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Media	all forms of print, radio, television, film, online, digital and social media.
Expert comment	comment within the student or staff member's area of expertise.
Public commentary	comments made under the name of the University that may reach the community, including, but not limited to, media interviews, public inquiries or submissions, public speaking engagements, forums and blogs, letters to newspapers, and comments on websites and social networks. A written communication prepared for the media, that announces something newsworthy.

Section 5 - Corporate Comment

(8) The Vice-Chancellor and President is the principal spokesperson for the University and can speak on any matters they feel are in the University's interests.

(9) Members of the Senior Executive may also speak publicly on behalf of the University on matters within their portfolio with the agreement of the Vice-Chancellor and President, or depending on the issue, may delegate to a Member of the Executive, or the Media Team.

(10) Executive Deans and Directors of Research Institute/Centres may speak on behalf of their Faculty, School, Institute or Centre. They may also speak on behalf of the University on issues that relate to the disciplines or industries within their remit.

Section 6 - Expert Comment

(11) ACU supports freedom of expression and encourages staff to participate in public debate and initiate or respond to the media for comment within their field of expertise.

(12) Statements should be accurate and professional. Staff should be respectful of others, acknowledging their responsibilities outlined in the Code of Conduct for Staff and Statute 13 - Freedom of Speech, Intellectual Freedom and Academic Freedom.

(13) Staff and students should maintain the highest professional and ethical standards when they associate themselves with ACU in public statements.

(14) When commenting within their field of expertise, staff may identify themselves using their University title, appointment and qualifications.

(15) Staff commenting publicly on an issue outside their field of expertise should:

a. do so from a private address (postal or email);

b. not use their ACU affiliation and/or title; and

c. clearly indicate that they are expressing their personal opinion and not that of the University.

However, where a staff member's affiliation with the University is relevant to the issue, they may disclose their association with ACU. The Media Team is available to provide advice.

(16) The University will take disciplinary action if the Policy is breached.

Section 7 - Liaising with the Media

(17) The Media Team is available to assist with media liaison, and the writing, approval and distribution of media releases. The team can also assist with coordinating media interviews and filming opportunities on campus.

(18) Staff and students are advised to seek advice and support from the Media Team before commenting to the media, so they can assist with maximising publicity and follow-up media opportunities.

(19) Staff wishing to issue a media release should obtain approval from their relevant Member of the Executive before contacting the team.

(20) Students may not use ACU letterhead, logo or branding for media releases without approval from the Media Team.

(21) Media are only permitted to access an ACU campus / event with prior permission from the National Manager, Strategic Communications, who will consult with the relevant ACU stakeholders.

Section 8 - Critical Incidents

(22) In the event of a critical incident, as defined in the Critical Incident Management Policy, all contact with the media will be coordinated by either the National Manager, Strategic Communications or Associate Director, Communications and Creative Services, in consultation with the Chief Marketing Officer and Critical Incident Lead.

Section 9 - Support and Training

(23) Training is available for staff who are or will be dealing with the media. Staff wishing to develop their media skills should contact the Media Team for further information.

(24) While the Media Team is available to respond to emerging issues and breaking news, when possible at least two weeks' notice of a media release request / promotional opportunity is required.

(25) If a staff member's public comment has caused or may cause controversy or offence, the staff member should alert and seek the advice of the Media Team.

Section 10 - Review

(26) Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Section 11 - Further Assistance

(27) For further assistance contact Media enquiries.

Section 12 - Associated Information

(28) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	31st January 2024
Review Date	30th April 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	31st January 2024
Expiry Date	1st June 2027
Responsible Executive	Kathy Vozella Chief Marketing Officer
Responsible Manager	Louise Crossen National Manager, Strategic Communications
Enquiries Contact	Louise Crossen National Manager, Strategic Communications --- Marketing and External Relations