

## Policies and Procedures

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### Media Coverage Information Guideline

**Policy Number:** 1.6.4.25  
**Responsible Officer:** Director Strategic Partnerships, Advancement and Communications  
**Policy Editor/Contact:** Manager Communications  
**Approving Authority:** Vice-Chancellor and President  
**Date approved:** 08 February 2018  
**Effective Date:** March 2018  
**Review date:** March 2021

#### 1. Introduction

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is the premier provider of tertiary education across the Pacific region. USP is a progressive and successful institution that is playing an important role in helping countries deal with an increasingly, open, competitive and knowledge dependent world. This is visible in the increase in the University's activities, profile and reputation both regionally and internationally. We are in the final year of implementation of our Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and have already embarked on the development of the new Strategic Plan 2019 -2024. This year also marks five (5) decades of USP's existence, which we are celebrating by organising a number of specific events in all our campuses.

#### 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Media Coverage Information Guideline (MCIG) are:

- To provide a guideline to staff on what the Communications Unit of Strategic Partnerships, Advancement and Communications (SPAC)<sup>1</sup> requires from staff in preparing accurate and professional media releases, articles, interviews and responses to the queries that are raised by the media; and
- To define and set out the process and procedures required to be followed by USP sections<sup>2</sup> when requesting media coverage of events, making major announcements, writing articles, and conducting interviews, which assist in raising the University's profile regionally and internationally.

#### 3. Objective

In light of the progress made by the University, it is imperative that pro-active media coverage and public relations exercises are carried out for its programmes and events to ensure that USP continues to be recognised, trusted and admired as the think-tank of choice for the Pacific region. It is, therefore, important that all sections of the University work in consultation with the

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<sup>1</sup> Previously known as Development, Marketing, Communications and Alumni

<sup>2</sup> Section here refers to any Faculty, Schools, Institute/Centre or Regional Campus.

Communications Unit in SPAC office to produce articles and media releases on a consistent and regular basis, both for internal and external purposes.

It is equally important that we be open and transparent in reporting on the progress of the implementation of the current Strategic Plan (SP) as well as on the development of our new Strategic Plan 2019-2014, for which we have developed a webpage and portal to raise awareness of the process as well as share and discuss the new SP directions through the web and other medium.

Staff members who wish to initiate contact with the media, or who receive news media inquiries, should first coordinate with the University's Communications Unit. Past experiences show that Communications Unit often struggles to get information from respective sections on a timely basis. At times, the information doesn't come within the deadline for response and on some instances, the information provided are not backed by evidence.

#### **4. Role of Communications Unit**

The Communications Unit led by Manager Communications under the overall responsibility of Director SPAC is responsible for:

- Gathering information on all the events and activities at the University and then sharing this information with the widest possible audience;
- Updating of the USP Central website homepage with news and information;
- Production of well-written articles and publications (including press releases, feature articles, USP Beat, Prospectus etc.);
- Editing of USP publications to guarantee clarity and accuracy, information gathering for substantial publication projects;
- Provision of technical advice to USP Faculties/Schools/Sections and Regional Campuses relating to the format and content of publications, and the continuous improvement to all USP promotional materials;
- Organising and facilitating media interviews for the Vice-Chancellor and President;
- Organising media coverage for USP events throughout the region;
- Media monitoring and response;
- Collating data and information relating to various priorities of the University; and
- Creating communications plan for various important events at USP such as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, new Strategic Plan for USP, Solomon Islands Campus development and other important initiatives, which the University undertakes.

#### **5. Media Relations Policy and Guidelines**

The University has a Media Relations Policy and Guidelines which is designed to ensure that the University's (including all of its institutions and staff) communications with the media are clear and consistent. The application of the Media Relations Policy and Guidelines safeguards USP's reputation as a trusted, credible and reliable source of information. It clarifies the responsibilities of the SPAC Office and delineates responsibility for communications and media liaison by the subject and scope of media enquiry.

MCIG will ensure that all USP's events and news are adequately and accurately covered in the media throughout the region in a timely manner.

For handling of media queries, please refer to the Media Relations Policy and Guidelines (Policy number: 1.6.4.02) and this MCIG will support USP Communications. The contact point for both is the Manager Communications, Ms. Kalpana Prasad ([kalpana.prasad@usp.ac.fj](mailto:kalpana.prasad@usp.ac.fj)) or extension: 32210).

## 6. Media Responses

- The Communications Unit should be **immediately** notified of all media queries and responses directed to any section of the University;
- **The Media Relations Policy and Guidelines** should be strictly adhered to in the case that a media response is required from USP. This should be done in consultation with the Manager, Communications and Director SPAC and in case of queries of a sensitive nature the Vice Chancellor and President's approval will be required;
- All media queries should be treated as urgent; and
- All on-campus interviews relating to the University should be accompanied by a representative of the Communications Unit. Relevant sections should alert the Communications Unit, if a request of this nature is made by the media outlets.

## 7. Examples of Stories requiring essential media coverage (Laucala & Regional Campuses)

- Projects worth more than \$10,000;
- MOUs with donors/stakeholders;
- Courtesy calls by Very Important Persons (VIPs);
- Major research & publications;
- International accreditations;
- Notable events, particularly in regional campuses;
- Accreditations;
- Major innovations/inventions and its impact to the region;
- Events that feature VIPs like ministers, donors and development partners;
- Achievement of Strategic Plan goals;
- Event launches & groundbreaking ceremonies;
- CSR engagements;
- Major student announcements;
- Enrolments and other student and programme data;
- Innovations and entrepreneurship;
- Coverage of VC's engagements and important engagements of the SMT;
- Emergency situation e.g. fires, Earthquakes, Tsunami warnings, flooding, OHS issues; and
- HR matters such as major appointments/termination/deaths;
- Coverage of public seminars and consultations; and
- USP's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Events.

## 8. EVENTS REQUIRING ESSENTIAL MEDIA COVERAGE

- Open Day;
- Enrolment drives;
- Orientation;

- Graduations;
- Medals & Prizes ceremony;
- Council Meetings;
- High Level and other Bilateral Consultations;
- Development Partners Forum;
- PICs Diplomat Briefings;
- VC's Forum on L&T;
- VC's Staff & Student Forums;
- Regional Campus Directors meeting;
- Entrepreneurial & Careers Fair;
- Research awards for staff and students;
- International Conferences such as the Pacific Update; and
- Others as appropriate.

*Note: Media coverage on the above need to be done within three (3) days but in some cases should be done immediately following important events such as graduations.*

#### **9. Points to remember when requesting for coverage from the Communications Unit:**

- All sections of the University are to inform the Communications Unit of their events **7 days prior** to their actual event. In case any section needs the media to be present, all necessary information including programme, speeches etc. are to be forwarded prior to the event for media alert and drafting of press release. Please refer *Appendix 1* for Press Release template.
- The Communications Unit cannot guarantee the presence of the media at your event. However, it will ensure that your press releases will be circulated widely to the local, regional and international media and the same would be updated on the USP website as well as published in the monthly USP Beat publication as appropriate;
- Ensure that all relevant information is provided to the Communications Unit as per the Media Alert template (*Appendix 2*) in order to invite media to cover your event;
- In the case where a Press Release is compiled by the Communications Unit, it needs to be vetted by the respective faculty or section head, and the approval needs to be given at the earliest to ensure timely dissemination of information;
- The Communications Unit will not be responsible for any last minute requests for coverage with the exception of the Vice-Chancellor and President's office as there are unforeseen circumstances where VC&P has to meet VIPs at a short notice;
- In the case that the Communications Team has not been invited for coverage of an event, the responsible section should provide details within 24 hours of the event to cover the news. Details should include at least three (3) good high-resolution photos accompanied by captions, with a write-up as per the Press Release template attached in Appendix 1;
- If a section requires coverage of an event outside Suva, they are responsible for providing Communications Unit staff transport, per diem and meal allowance. Emergency contact details

including a mobile phone contact and email address of the relevant personnel should be provided to the Communications Unit staff; and

- If the event is in the evening or over the weekend, the respective section is required to pay for the overtime costs and meal allowance to the Communications Unit staff.
- Note that the Communications Unit is not responsible for professional video recording and photography. All footage and photos taken by the Communications Unit remains the property of the SPAC office and these photos are organised in the Photo Management System (PMS) which can be accessed upon request to the Webmaster or Communications Manager.

## **10. Liaison Officers**

All faculties/schools/sections/regional campuses are to assign at least a staff or two with the responsibility of liaising with the Communications Unit with regard to event coverage of their respective offices. Their contact details including mobile phone number and email addresses should be forwarded to Manager Communications (email: [kalpana.prasad@usp.ac.fj](mailto:kalpana.prasad@usp.ac.fj)).

## APPENDIX 1 - USP PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

### Paragraph 1 (Intro)

Summary of story mentioning the following:

- i) WHAT is/was the event (for instance workshop/course/launch/celebration/enrolment/Open Day);
- ii) WHO officiated at the event (Chief Guest, Keynote Speaker etc.);
- iii) WHERE the event took place; and
- iv) WHEN the event took place;

### Paragraph 2 (Elaborate)

Mention the following:

- i) WHY the event took place, costing (if it's a project) etc.;
- ii) HOW it eventuated (for instance was it the result of a study/was it in response to a demand etc.);
- iii) WHO all were involved (for instance USP and name of stakeholders); and
- iv) Include direct quotes from those actually involved in the event and ensure a balanced article with at least 2 to 3 sources.

### Paragraph 3 (Elaborate further)

Mention the following:

- i) Result or impact of the event (for instance how will workshop participants and University benefit);
- ii) What is the follow up to the event (recommendations etc.);
- iii) Include direct quotes from at least 3 different sources including people who have executed a project or people who have benefitted from an event/project; and
- iv) Outcome of the event backed with evidence and sources.

### Paragraph 4 (Conclusion)

Write a summary of the entire story and link it to USP Strategic Plan objectives

*\*For Photos: Ensure that those taken are not only close-ups but also wide shots and it must be of high-resolution. Please provide at least five (5) pictures with captions for consideration and publication. Include portrait and landscape pictures. Ensure pictures of Chief Guest, Keynote Speakers and others who are important to the event.*

## APPENDIX 2 - MEDIA ALERT

### TITLE OF EVENT

#### Para 1:

Brief summary of event and background details

#### Para 2:

Detailed description of event including:

#### Date:

#### Time:

#### Venue:

#### Name of Chief Guest

#### Footer:

Contact detail of staff responsible for the event

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For further queries please contact Manager Communications, Strategic Partnerships, Advancement and Communications office on (679) 3232210: email [Kalpana.Prsasd@usp.ac.fj](mailto:Kalpana.Prsasd@usp.ac.fj) or [communications@usp.ac.fj](mailto:communications@usp.ac.fj)

1. **Policy or Procedure** *<The actual Policy is detailed in this section. This section may have several parts and should be numbered accordingly at 4.a, 4.b, etc.>*  
  
    <insert here>  
    a) <list, if required>  
        i) <second level list, if required>
2. **Section** *<Any other relevant sections you may think appropriate to add.>*  
  
    <insert here>
3. **Section** *<Insert sections as appropriate>*  
  
    <insert here>
4. **Related documents** *<Insert any Legislation, Charter, Statutes, Policies, Procedures, etc. that was referred to in the development of the Policy/. Also include here any document that must be read together with this Policy, for example a Procedure or Schedule, or Forms>*

<insert here>

**Section/xx month year**

Font: Arial; Size 11; Colour: black; Spacing – single; Alignment – Justified

<example: **CCCS/11 June 2014**>

<*Note: Delete all comments and template use instructions when completed*>  
*CCCS will insert hyperlinks where possible.>*