Communications and Public Comment Using The University of Queensland's Name Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) This Policy aims to safeguard the reputation and standing of The University of Queensland and assist and protect staff by outlining their responsibilities when making public comment at times when they are or may reasonably be identified as University of Queensland staff members.

Section 2 - Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
Media	Traditional and new media, including print, television, radio, social media and online forums (including but not limited to news sites, comment boards, social networking sites, blogs, podcasts and video channels). It includes news, comment, documentary, feature films, and books.

Section 3 - Policy Scope/Coverage

(2) This Policy applies to all University of Queensland staff making public comment or media statements in any forum, including without limitation, websites, social media channels, letters to the editor in newspapers and media releases.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(3) This Policy governs the association of personal and professional comment to the name, branding, logo or associated image of The University of Queensland in the public arena. When making public comment, staff must observe the University Staff Code of Conduct Policy, act in a professional and ethical manner and must not harass, vilify, intimidate or defame the University or its employees. This Policy should be read in conjunction with, and is subject to, the UQ Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026 (or as amended or replaced).

(4) All requests for media access to University campuses and facilities should be referred to the relevant Faculty or Institute Communications Manager, or their delegate, immediately. Such requests should only be approved if the Communications Manager/delegate is confident the access does not pose:

a. a physical risk to media representatives or any members of the UQ community;
b. a legal, reputational, ethical or intellectual property risk to the University or any member of the University community;
c. a privacy risk to staff or students.

(5) Requests deemed to pose such risks should be escalated to the relevant Head of Organisational Unit and discussed with the Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, and with the relevant University Senior Management Group member and/or UQ Legal Services as appropriate, before approval is granted. The Marketing and Communication office (M&C) is to be advised of all approved requests, and of all high risk requests, including any that

are denied.

Section 5 - Standards

Responsible use of the University's Name

(6) Seeking and imparting knowledge are fundamental functions of a University. The University affirms these functions in a number of policies and its Strategic Plan. The University respects and upholds intellectual and academic freedom and as part of its engagement objectives and encourages staff to contribute to public debate and media comment in their areas of expertise or specialisation while identifying themselves as members of the University.

(7) The highest quality standards should apply when making public comment, to protect the reputations of University of Queensland staff, and to uphold the University's good name and standing in the community.

Public Comment

(8) While making public comment within their areas of expertise, staff have a professional responsibility to uphold the outstanding reputation of the University. Information provided by staff should be accurate.

(9) Staff are obliged to respect rights and responsibilities in respect of intellectual property, and the confidentiality and privacy of information entrusted to them in the course of their employment (for example, staff and student academic records).

(10) Staff, when making public comment, should do so respectfully and without causing injury to reputations or by defaming others. If staff have any concerns that material in the public domain may be the subject of, or have the potential to cause legal action, they should seek advice from Legal Services as to the options available to them.

Online Communications

(11) The University supports the responsible exchange of intellectual opinion and debate that is fostered by use of the internet. Online contributions to correspondence and discussion including social media, may, in certain circumstances, be construed to be representative of the University's position and may enter the mainstream media. Staff must make clear whether their contribution is made on behalf of the University or in a personal capacity.

Use of University Letterhead

(12) University letterhead is reserved for correspondence on University affairs. Personal or outside professional correspondence should carry the name of the University, if at all, only as an address.

Section 6 - Relevant Expertise

(13) The University supports engagement in the public arena made by those staff with the most appropriate expertise.

Appropriateness of Comment

(14) It is accepted practice that where a staff member is speaking on a subject which is clearly within their range of professional expertise in the media, it is appropriate for the staff member's University position title to be given; for example, if an engineering professor is discussing an engineering matter.

(15) If, however, the same member of staff is writing on, or discussing a political, religious or social matter, with expertise no greater than that of a member of the general community, then no indication of association with the University should be given. In this instance, it should be made clear by the staff member that the views expressed are

those of them as an individual, and in no way represent the position or views of the University.

(16) While the University encourages staff to participate in public debate, staff who receive media queries in their areas of expertise are free to make comment or decline to make comment as they see fit. Media queries that do not seek expert comment, or where the staff member declines to make comment, should be referred to M&C.

Authority to Make Statements on Behalf of the University

(17) Only the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, members of the Senior Executive or other authorised senior members of the University should comment publicly on behalf of the University as a corporate entity, for example, on University management, policies or operational issues. Faculty Deans, Institute Directors and Heads of School are authorised to make public comment on their respective faculty, Institute or School operational matters, which might include quality of research, or teaching and learning, and similar matters.

(18) If other staff comment to the media about the University as a corporate entity, they are considered to be offering personal opinions, which are not endorsed by the University. In circumstances where audiences might reasonably conclude a personal view is representative of the University, staff expressing personal opinions must clearly state that such opinions are their own and are not representative of the position or views of the University.

Public Spokesperson in a Crisis

(19) In times of crisis the University will appoint one or more public spokespersons. The public spokesperson(s) will be briefed by the Crisis Management Team Leader, the Executive Communications Adviser and the Media Coordinator. If the situation demands, alternate spokespersons may be appointed, for example, from the Police or Emergency Services.

Embargo on Communications

(20) University staff must not communicate with members of the judiciary about current or pending litigation to which the University is a party.

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Status and Details

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Policy Owner	Kelly Robinson Chief Marketing and Communication Officer
Enquiries Contact	Marketing and Communication

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