



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

Media requests and media releases

Standard operating procedures

June 2021

Media requests and media releases

The M&C team processes a high volume of requests to edit and distribute media releases from across the University. Our submission process helps us to triage these requests so that University resources are used in the most effective way, and achieves the best outcomes.

Our standard operating procedures address the following:

1. Single point of distribution
2. Submit a media release request
3. Timeframes
4. Media contact
5. Embargoes
6. Senior executive quotes
7. Working with government and third parties
8. Essential editorial requirements for media releases
9. Images and video
10. Media release versus direct pitch
11. Mainstream versus industry/internal news

Media requests and media releases

1. Single point of distribution

All UQ media releases are to be checked and distributed by the central Marketing and Communication team, in line with The University of Queensland policy [1.50.06 Communications and Public Comment using The University of Queensland's Name](#).

2. Submit a media release request

Our media release practice reflects UQ's branding and provides a consistent, professional standard. As such, requests for UQ media releases should:

- Project a strong news angle
- Provide three key messages the release would seek to convey
- Outline the benefit to the broader community – the 'so what?'
- Detail the images and video available or that could be obtained.

Where a request does not substantially meet these requirements, the Communication team will provide feedback and suggest alternative options.

When submitting a media release request, please ensure that you use the appropriate naming convention: faculty/institute-MDA-subject yymmdd (for example, HABS-MDA-diabetes 210620).

Submit a request through the Wrike portal or via the [Media Request form link](#).

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3. Timeframes

If you require urgent assistance, please call the team so that we can give your release priority.

The team will respond to requests for media releases **within one working day** of submission. The exception is where further information is required to assess the request.

Once a request has been accepted, the M&C team aims to process and distribute media releases **within 48 hours of receiving the draft media release.**

Contact the Communication team if you do not hear back within two days of the draft being submitted.

4. Media contacts

M&C has a dedicated team for media liaison and operates a 7-day per week on-call roster – **0429 056139**

We recommend including a mobile telephone number for the relevant spokespeople in media releases whenever possible, or providing out-of-hours contact details.

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5. Embargoes

Embargoed media releases can result in better outcomes by giving journalists time to research and prepare stories before the embargo lifts.

Embargoed releases cleared by M&C can be distributed under strict conditions to trusted journalists or loaded to the Australian Science Media Centre (Scimex) and EurekaAlert! before the embargo lifts.

The University's communication team will work with researchers and journals to ensure embargo conditions are strictly adhered to.

6. UQ senior executive quotes

M&C will manage approval of media releases that include suggested quotes from the Vice-Chancellor or senior UQ executives.

Proposed quotes should be informative and meaningful, so they add to the story.

*Allow at least **48 hours for approval.***

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7. Working with government and third parties

Where proposed media releases involve quotes or require approvals from government or other third party organisations, it should be checked first by the M&C team. This will ensure the release meets UQ standards before being distributed to an external party, and should prevent having to seek their approval twice.

In the interest of efficiency and maintaining positive relationships with government stakeholders, the following protocols must be followed for any media release involving a state or federal government minister:

- If the media release coincides with a ministerial visit, alert M&C immediately so relevant internal stakeholders can be notified.
- If the Minister wishes to distribute their own media release about the event/announcement, M&C will wait for it to be released before posting a UQ version.
- UQ releases that include ministerial quotes must be cleared by M&C before being forwarded to a minister's office. Proposed ministerial quotes should be drafted with a notation that they have not been approved.
- M&C will contact the minister's office for approval of releases that involve ministers. Most Ministerial offices require draft releases to be submitted **at least 10 business days before** the release date.

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8. Essential editorial requirements for media releases

All University media releases must meet essential requirements to best position UQ, to ensure clarity and to encourage media up-take. The Communication team will contact the author to discuss options if submitted media releases do not substantially meet the following requirements and require significant further work:

- All releases must be accurate – facts and statistics should be double-checked before submission.
- A relevant, action-style headline of 6-8 words (fewer than 65 characters and including a verb) will boost pick-up by search engines.
- The University of Queensland must be mentioned in the first two paragraphs and its organisational primacy must be clear (in relation to any other UQ bodies mentioned). If an institute, centre or other UQ body is mentioned, it should be phrased to ensure it is seen to be part of UQ.
- Appropriate approvals for content (including quotes and images) must be obtained before the release is submitted. Check with your faculty/institute about the relevant internal approval process, including sensitivities around intellectual property and commercial contracts.
- Plain English must be used, with technical terms explained to enable the general public to understand them.
- The immediate or potential impact of the subject of the releases should be stated in a clear and accessible way. What does it actually mean to the community?

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8. Essential editorial requirements for media releases (continued)

- At least one quote must be included, with a maximum of two speakers quoted. The speaker should be introduced in a discrete paragraph before a direct quote appears. For example: UQ School of Economics Head Professor John Smith said the project was revolutionary. “This will change the way we think about blah for ever,” Professor Smith said. (Note that the verb of attribution – said – dictates the tense of sentences comprising indirect speech.)
- Quotes should be positioned before the fifth paragraph, and ideally in the second or third. Ensure quotes are informative and add interest to the story. There shouldn’t be more than five direct quotes in a row from the one speaker.
- One sentence per paragraph. Keep sentences short and concise (25-30 words maximum). The lead need to be as strong as possible to ensure journalists read beyond it. This is the hook that catches the reader. Keep it short and snappy, with the most interesting point first. For example: *All women love long-haired cats, UQ research shows* rather than *UQ research shows that all women love long-haired cats*.
- Standard media release practices are expected, such as ordering the information so that the most important point comes first, paraphrasing in the past tense and introducing the speaker before the quote.
- Overall length of the media release should not be more than one page.
- Hyperlinks to relevant sites - do not include “boilerplates”.

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Images and videos

Still or video images will boost uptake. High-quality landscape images (300dpi or greater resolution) are ideal. Articles cannot be distributed to media or highlighted on UQ News or on social media without an image.

M&C may be able to assist with production of video and audio for media use. If your media release is suitable for video, contact the Communication team as soon as possible. Please also let us know if the story is suitable for TV news channels if the spokesperson is willing to be interviewed.

Video assets should carry the correct UQ branding, and be recorded in TV news format (using a tripod, interviews framed with subjects head and shoulders, hold shots so they can be edited to run about 3 seconds, shoot sequences with establishing wide shot and then closer shots, etc.)

It is recommended that good quality images are uploaded to the Digital Asset Manager for future use.

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10. Media release versus direct pitch

Communication/media staff in faculties and institutes may choose to pitch their story idea directly to media contacts where there is no reputational risk to the University.

This option may be particularly effective where timeliness is important, to target a particular media outlet/audience, or where a spokesperson has limited time for media engagement.

Please discuss this option with M&C to help with the best timing of your media strategy.

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11. Mainstream versus industry/internal news

Generally, M&C will distribute stories to media outlets which have mainstream/general public appeal. For example, a collaboration leading to discovery that will have a tangible public benefit is considered mainstream, whereas a general academic partnership might be industry-specific or internal news.

M&C will distribute stories to the media that are about:

- High-impact research developments with clear clinical or practical applications
- Innovative programs or initiatives involving a significant number of students or staff that would be of interest to people outside of UQ
- Major grants, investments, donations or awards that have an associated news angle
- Key events with significant UQ involvement that would be of interest to people outside of the University
- new facilities that have an associated news angle or would be of interest to an external audience.

M&C will publish some articles on UQ News under the “Uni news” section that are of internal interest, such as:

- Some staff appointments and accolades
- University achievements
- Scholarship recipients
- Publication of academic books
- Grants and donations that do not meet the requirements for a media release.



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Need more information?

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