

NMIT and the MEDIA

(INCLUDING CRISIS COMMUNICATION)

Section	Institute Governance and Management		
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PURPOSE

All communications presented, or perceived to be presented, by NMIT should be consistent with NMIT's values and objectives as outlined in mission statements and goals and strategic plans. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure NMIT delivers a timely, consistent and credible message to preserve, promote and enhance NMIT's reputation as a provider of high-quality tertiary education.
- Outline the process for identifying, gathering and delivering positive news to the media, including traditional media as well as social media.
- Identify the people/positions authorised to speak on behalf of NMIT.
- Outline the process for handling crisis communication situations or challenging issues in the public arena.

SCOPE

This policy relates to all written and verbal information and visual images provided to news media, or posted to social media, under the name of Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT).

The policy covers all external news media including broadcast, electronic, print and web-based, including social media (also refer to [NMIT's Social Media Guidelines](#) and [Staff Social Media Policy](#)).

The policy applies to all employees and contracted staff as well as members of its governing Council.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For consistency of message and professional presentation, NMIT communications will adhere to the following principles:

1. The design of all printed matter and information published electronically should adhere to NMIT brand guidelines and have a uniform appearance in regard to logo, presentation format and style including typography.
2. All pictorial material intended for publication should, as far as possible, be of a uniformly high standard.
3. NMIT communication should be erudite, clear, concise and avoid jargon.
4. Media material issued by NMIT should:
 - Be consistent with NMIT's vision, mission, values and strategies.
 - Respect the privacy of individuals.
 - Be accurate and timely.
 - Meet legal requirements.
 - Be sensitive to NMIT's domestic and international cultural communities.
 - Present a positive image of NMIT activities, staff, students and stakeholder relationships.

RESPONSIBILITY

All NMIT staff are encouraged to identify newsworthy stories involving students, staff, activities, achievements and events that will help promote a positive image of NMIT.

The Marketing Team will work with staff / students to prepare stories for release to media and distribution via web sites and social media platforms.

Managers are asked to actively encourage their staff to submit ideas which can be passed on to the Marketing Department for further action or assistance.

The following people/positions or their appointed representatives are authorised to speak to media on behalf of NMIT:

Chief Executive	Policies / planning, opinion, resources / budget, staff, politically sensitive issues, responses to local/central politicians, Official Information requests, external agencies including Ministry of Education.
Chairman of the NMIT Council	Governance-related matters, Council policy, CE contract related queries
Director of Marketing and International Development	Marketing/PR, International, education programmes, student body, general (not sensitive) issues not otherwise assigned.
Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality	Academic issues, education programmes

PROCEDURE

To ensure NMIT meets objectives of consistent, timely, credible communications, NMIT requires staff to comply with NMIT procedures before information is released on behalf of the institute.

1. All media material must be approved by the Chief Executive or delegate, or Director of Marketing and International Development or their authorised staff before it is released on behalf of NMIT.
2. Media requests to use NMIT sites or facilities for interviews, photography, audio, video etc. should be referred to the Marketing team for approval and/or liaison assistance.
3. Media requests to interview NMIT staff should be referred to the Marketing team for approval and advice (unless approved prior as part of NMIT's media release material).
4. All material released to media must meet NMIT standards of format, style and presentation as determined by the CE or Director of Marketing and International Development or their authorised staff (see 'Guiding Principles' and the current NMIT Brand Guidelines).

INQUIRIES ON MATTERS OF GOVERNANCE OR POLICY MAKING

Media inquiries on matters of NMIT governance and policy making will be referred to the Chair of the Council for comment.

The Chair may refer any matter to relevant Council members or the CE.

PRIVACY ISSUES

1. Written approval on a standard release form must be obtained to use photographs, video or statements from individuals in prepared media material released by NMIT.
2. Media requests for official information held by NMIT must be referred to the Chief Executive.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Please refer to [Staff Social Media policy](#) and [NMIT Social Media Guidelines](#).

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

In crisis situations, internal and external communication often takes place under extreme pressure. Crises – on or off campus – involving staff and/or students on NMIT-related activity may include events such as fire, accident, threat, allegations against the Institute or its representatives. It is important, therefore, to be well prepared when a crisis occurs and to have roles, responsibilities and processes clearly defined.

NB: It is a requirement that all members of the Crisis Response team have several hard copies of this document, together with copies of the [Crisis Response Team's Information](#) (available on POLLY, for Staff access only), readily accessible, for example in each vehicle they own, somewhere easy to find at home, their daily handbag, briefcase, backpack etc AT ALL TIMES.

Normal access to computers etc. may not be available in a crisis situation.

PROCEDURE

1. In the event of a crisis on or off-campus, the senior person with knowledge of the crisis should immediately notify the Chief Executive or deputy and/or Director of Marketing and International Development and refer all media inquiries to them.
2. CE/deputy or Director of Marketing and International Development/deputy should inform all members of the Crisis Team immediately*.
3. Convene Crisis Team as soon as possible. It will consist of the CE and/or Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Marketing and International Development, Campus Services Manager, the head of the department involved in the crisis situation, SANITI manager and/or other specialist people as required (e.g. Police, Fire, PR consultant, legal counsel, Iwi, Safety, Health and Wellbeing Manager),
4. Crisis team to agree on a communication plan and appoint a lead manager and/or spokesperson as well as a deputy.
5. Inform all staff of the crisis as soon as possible and remind them not to speak to media, but refer all inquiries to the nominated spokesperson(s).
6. Nominate a venue to be used as a media centre as needed.
7. Establish, where necessary and practical, an 0800 response line.
8. Identify, contact and inform key stakeholders (eg. NMIT Council Chair, local authority, emergency services, partners/sponsors, and other groups that need to know).
9. Update website as necessary.
10. Record crisis actions taken, external responses, timeline.

*extension numbers and mobile numbers are listed on the [Crisis Team Contact document](#) available on the front page of the NMIT Intranet.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Controlling the interview process and delivering consistency of messages is key to managing the crisis. That is why all inquiries/interviews should be restricted to one spokesperson (and a deputy).

Media should be treated with courtesy and professionalism. If media arrive unannounced they should be directed to the media centre, or the crisis spokesperson.

Responses to media enquiries should be as fast as possible, respecting deadline needs where practicable. If you need to check information before responding, inform the reporter you will call back shortly, and do so.

The primary consideration during the crisis is for the safety and welfare of staff/students and any others involved and this should be a key message in communications for media and others.

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

1. The crisis communication team should determine, as soon as possible, the appropriate key messages to address the emergency and an appropriate statement to the media.
2. A 'holding statement' may be necessary along the lines of "we are aware of the situation, we are investigating and will give more details as soon as we can". Basic, factual information should be given as quickly as possible.
3. "No comment" is not an acceptable response to media.
4. If the crisis breaks (goes public) via social media, the first response by NMIT should be issued to that same source. For example, if the news breaks on Facebook, then the institute's first response should be via Facebook. As other media become involved, they should then be included in any responses.
5. The first news release should include as much information as appropriate (and having regard to privacy issues), and include the key messages agreed by the Crisis Communication Team.

- Consider issuing a fact sheet if appropriate to summarise key facts.
- The following 'boiler plate' can be used on the bottom of media releases:

The Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) has been educating successful graduates since 1905 in the Top of the South Region. Over 7,000 students study at NMIT every year. As well as supporting business needs in our regions, NMIT specialises in providing education in viticulture and winemaking, aquaculture, maritime, aviation engineering and conservation. NMIT is a NZQA Category 1 institute (the highest possible), and is ISO9001:2015 accredited. Students study among award-winning buildings, full time, online and part-time, guided by industry savvy tutors and the latest technologies. Graduates leave NMIT with internationally respected qualifications, work and world ready.

6. Minimum information should include the "who, what, when and where" of the situation. Provide only the facts that have been confirmed. Do not speculate, provide opinion or embellish.
7. All media inquiries should be directed to the appointed spokesperson.

8. Keep a record of contacts, to ensure any subsequent communications go out to all relevant parties.
9. Arrange any necessary resources to manage the crisis (e.g. press conference needs, background/fact sheet information, on-site signs, visuals, leaflets etc.).
10. Where multiple media are involved, arrange a news conference as soon as possible and advise media of time and place as soon as possible and ensure the spokesperson is well briefed on any key messages.
11. Provide a script for the NMIT receptionist/s receiving incoming calls or others likely to be first point of media contact or concerned stakeholders.
12. Appoint staff to direct media arriving at the scene of the crisis to a specific media centre/meeting point.
13. Remind staff or students that they may not distribute visual or other information from the scene of any NMIT crisis by any means without approval of the designated crisis spokesperson.

APPENDIX

[APPENDIX ONE: Checklist for Crisis Communication](#)

REFERENCES

INTERNAL

[Crisis Response Team](#) (available for staff only, on intranet)

[NMIT Social Media Guidelines](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Staff Social Media policy](#)

CHECKLIST FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Set up crisis team	
	Establish crisis team, per # 3 in Procedure (p.4, above) and agree responsibilities. Agree on media spokesperson and deputy. Assess the media situation and agree plan and messaging, per the guidelines above.
	Identify any immediate risks/threats or dangers, and plan mitigation actions. This may be related to buildings, facilities, equipment, IT systems, groups who are currently off-site. Safety of people is the first priority.
Campus closure decision	
	Decide on any partial or full campus closures. Decide for Nelson, The Glen, Richmond, Marlborough, Woodbourne, Auckland.
	Make signage/posters with appropriate messaging. For example 'closed today due to xxx, please check nmit.ac.nz for updates'.
Communications to staff	
	Prepare an all staff email. Ensure this is double-checked by a second person, preferably the person managing media to ensure consistency of message.
	Prepare POLLY update, and plan for the subsequent update/s
	Plan for the subsequent update/s via both email and POLLY
Communications to students	
	Prepare an all-student email. Ensure this is double-checked by a second person, preferably the person managing media to ensure consistency of message. This is distributed via the IT Services team.
	Plan for the subsequent all-student email update/s.
General Communications	
	Record telephone voice message/s for incoming calls. There is a separate staff line (for the 0800 number of the back of staff id cards), a separate student line (for the 0800 number of the back of student id cards), and a general line (with four outside lines able to be linked to this - Nelson, Woodbourne, Marlborough and the public 0800 line) Access to the instructions for this sits with the IEC Manager and IT Services.
	Upload key messages (e.g. "Nelson campus closed today due to weather") to the NMIT website, and Facebook page. These posts can be processed by anyone in the Marketing team
	Advise SANITI so they can put out the same message through their website and Facebook page.
	Assess who else needs to know what. For example neighbouring properties, local authority, iwi, affecting groups, police, suppliers.
	Are there any outside parties on campus, or with imminent bookings (venue hire customers)? Plan and manage their communications.
	Plan for the subsequent update/s to all the above channels.