UNIVERSITY
of
OTAGO

Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND

Emergency Communications Plan

1. PURPOSE

During a State of Campus Emergency, staff, students, the public and the media need timely, accurate information on the situation and appropriate instructions regarding actions that should be taken to minimise injuries, loss of life and damage to property.

This Plan sets out how the University will communicate with its stakeholders during a State of Campus Emergency, who is responsible for communication efforts, and the resources that will be used.

2. DEFINITIONS

Emergency is an event, or series of events, that can cause death or significant injuries to staff, students, or the public; or that can suspend business, disrupt operations, create significant physical or environmental damage, or that can threaten the University's financial standing or public image.

Emergency Operations Centre is a dedicated facility on campus that is the base for the Incident Management Team. It houses all the physical and information resources, and the tools to manage an effective response to an Emergency.

Incident Management Team is a group led by an Incident Controller who have been assembled from throughout the University and who have the training, skills and knowledge required to react effectively during a State of Campus Emergency. The Incident Management Team is responsible for the operational management of the incident in line with the Emergency Management Plan with the immediate focus on saving life and property.

A State of Campus Emergency is a period following a declaration by the Vice-Chancellor that an Emergency cannot be managed by day-to-day operational management. The Emergency Management plan is activated at this point and continues throughout the State of Campus Emergency.

Strategic Emergency Management Group is the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group with additional support from the Service Divisions and others as necessary. It is responsible for making and acting on decisions requiring the highest authority within the University, managing the business continuity and longer term strategic implications of an Emergency.

3. ORGANISATION OF THE PLAN

3.1. Emergency Communications Team (ECT)

The ECT comprises staff from the Communications Section from the Division of Marketing and Communications and is managed by the Head of Communications.

The ECT is formed when the Vice-Chancellor declares a State of Campus Emergency, which activates the University's Emergency Management Plan.

When a State of Campus Emergency is declared, the core of the ECT will convene at the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) together with the Incident Management Team (IMT).

The ECT is responsible for all internal and external communications during a State of Campus Emergency, with the exception of announcements from the Vice-Chancellor or delegate which shall be drafted in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor or delegate.

The ECT is required to:

i. Support the Strategic Emergency Management Group (SEMG); and
ii. Support the Incident Management Team (IMT) in the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

When an Emergency has an impact on other agencies, the ECT will coordinate communications with those agencies. Agencies are likely to be the Police and Civil Defence.

4. NOTIFICATION OF A STATE OF CAMPUS EMERGENCY

The Incident Controller is responsible for notifying the ECT that the Vice-Chancellor has declared a State of Campus Emergency.

The ECT will then notify staff, students, the broader University community and the general public that a State of Campus Emergency exists.

During a State of Campus Emergency, the University's web page will serve as the primary tool for providing information to stakeholders. Press releases and other more conventional tools will be used as University business functions begin to return to normal — likely the second or third day, depending on the scope of the Emergency.

5. NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

The following tools will be used to provide information to University stakeholders during a State of Campus Emergency:

System	Responsibility
All-staff email	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from HR and ITS.
All-staff voicemail	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from HR and ITS.
All-student text	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from Academic Services and ITS.
All-student email	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from Student Services and ITS.
Scarfie.com	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from Student Services.
OUSA website	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from the OUSA Representative
The University 0800 number	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from the University Information Centre
University website	Head of Web Services or delegate
All-Council email	Registrar
University screens	Head of Communications or delegate with operational support from ITS
Emergency Telephones and/or PA system	The Incident Controller or Head of Communications will use phones/system to broadcast messages as necessary.
Email Media Releases	Head of Communications or delegate
Radio/Television (Including Radio One broadcasts)	Head of Communications or delegate (Radio One broadcasts will be made with support from the OUSA Representative)
Social Media (incl Facebook and Twitter)	Head of Communications or delegate

The Vice-Chancellor will provide Emergency information to TEC and other government agencies as necessary.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor International will provide emergency information to international agencies as necessary.

6. APPROVAL PROCESS

The following process has been designed to ensure that all communications issued by the ECT during a State of Campus Emergency reflect the University's high standards and are accurate, timely and able to be understood by the target audience.

Pre-State of Campus Emergency	**The Head of Communications will prepare pre-scripted warning and instruction messages as appropriate. All pre-scripted messages will be reviewed and approved by the Director, Marketing and Communications.**
During a State of Campus Emergency	**The ECT may release all relevant pre-approved and pre-scripted messages about the Emergency (including those with minor variations) directly to stakeholders.** **All other messages will be approved by the Director, Marketing and Communications prior to release.**
Recovery Phase	**The Recovery Manager may ask the ECT to draft and disseminate information relating to the recovery process.** **All messages relating to the recovery will be approved by the Recovery Manager prior to release.**

7. INFORMATION RELEASE

Information released through the ECT serves as the *only* information about the Emergency which University staff (including DVCs, PVCs, Deans, COO and Directors) should share with internal and external audiences.

University staff who wish to share other information must first consult the Head of Communications. Without prior consultation, inadvertent miscommunications can occur and undermine the credibility of the information released by the University.

During a State of Campus Emergency, *the University homepage website is the primary tool for communicating Emergency related information.* Staff, students, press and the public will be directed to the site for updates. If the internet, electrical power or cell and landline phones are out of service, the ECT will use other communication tools to share information.

7.1. Spokespersons

The Head of Communications may advise the Vice-Chancellor or delegate to conduct news briefings. The ECT will recommend and prepare other spokespersons as necessary.

7.2. News Briefings

A news briefing may be called to allow senior University staff to directly brief news media. The ECT will be responsible for organising the location, timing and general format of the

news briefing, and notifying news media. The default location for Press Conferences is the Robertson Library.

8. GENERAL MEDIA INQUIRIES

During a State of Campus Emergency, *all media queries should be directed to the Senior Communications Adviser on 03 479 8263.*

The ECT is responsible for responding to media inquiries. Subject to Vice-Chancellor approval, the ECT may arrange media interviews with appropriate University staff.

In a rapidly unfolding crisis, or an event occurring during non-business hours, the Police may initiate urgent communications independently. The Police are responsible for answering queries related to police activities. This includes announcements of loss of life.

9. RUMOUR CONTROL

During a State of Campus Emergency, the ECT will monitor TV and radio, Internet news sites and social media sites to identify and correct substantive rumours and misinformation.

10. MEDIA ON CAMPUS

During a State of Campus Emergency, the ECT may set up staging areas where media will have access to University of Otago spokespeople, visuals and other resources.

University staff who are responsible for the use of classroom or building space are asked not to permit media into such areas.

Media must seek permission from the Head of Communications to gain access to a University owned college.

11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1. Director, Marketing and Communications

During a State of Campus Emergency, the Director, Marketing and Communications has overall responsibility for communications with staff, students, the broader University community, the media and the public on behalf of the University. The Director, Marketing and Communications works with the Strategic Emergency Management Group.

11.2.   Emergency Communications Team

The ECT comprises staff from the Communications Section from the Division of Marketing and Communications and is managed by the Head of Communications. The responsibilities of the team are set out below:

11.2.1. The Head of Communications works with the Incident Controller in the EOC to ensure that necessary Emergency information is effectively communicated to staff, students, the media, the wider University community (including families of staff and students) and to the general public. The Head of Communications gains approval from the Director, Marketing and Communications or delegate to release information. The Head of Communications may be asked to attend SEMG meetings and to draft communications at the Vice-Chancellor's or delegate's request. During a State of Campus Emergency the Head of Communications may assign tasks and delegate responsibilities within the Emergency Communications Team, including staff involved in media and/or communications activities at UOC and UOW.

11.2.2. The Senior Communications Adviser (SCA) reports to the Head of Communications. The Senior Communications Adviser coordinates the media response, including dispatching and managing work from the Head of Communications, preparing operations for press briefings (including comments and talking points), managing incoming media calls, scripting 0800 phone recordings, tracking rumours, preparing fact sheets and 'Question and Answer' materials. The SCA may also produce video reports.

11.2.3. The PA to the Director, Marketing and Communications manages the logistical and operational needs of the ECT.

11.2.4. Additional personnel will provide a variety of services as necessary as requested by the Head of Communications or delegate, including posting web updates, press conference set-up, field monitoring, handling calls from students' families, handling media calls, and fielding other incoming calls and emails.

11.3.   Call Centre and University Telephonists (Academic Services)

Manages the University Information Centre (staffed hotline) that will field incoming calls from staff, students and parents. A Call Centre script will be provided by the Senior Communications Adviser.

Records rumours and misinformation from the public and passes that information on to the Senior Communications Adviser.

11.4.   OUSA Representative

The OUSA Representative is responsible for disseminating information that has been provided to him/her by the Head of Communications or delegate to University students using Radio One, social media, the Critic web site and other OUSA and Planet Media channels.

11.5. Communications Coordinator for Accommodation Services (PA to the Director, Accommodation Services)

Disseminates ECT issued information to Accommodation Services and ensures that all media enquiries received by Accommodation Services are re-directed to the ECT. The Communications Coordinator for Accommodation Services is also responsible for ensuring that each College web site displays a link to the University's main web site.

11.6. Information Technology Services

Holds overall responsibility for the communication and data systems used for Emergency communications needs.

11.7. Human Resources

Is responsible for ensuring that all staff have accurate personal information recorded in Talent2 and for supporting ITS with respect to the use of any HR systems that are required for Emergency communication needs.

12. TESTING AND IMPLEMENTING THIS PLAN

This Plan will be tested at least once a year as part of testing the Emergency Management Plan.

The Head of Communications is responsible for ensuring the Emergency Communications Plan is effectively implemented, that all staff with a role to play in this plan are fully trained and that all notification systems are functional.