Emergency Communications Plan – under review
Critical Incident and Emergency Planning
(November 2018)

1. PURPOSE

During a critical incident, emergency or learner centred event, staff, learners, the public and the media need timely, accurate information on the situation. Appropriate information will be made available prior to events regarding the incident and the actions taken to further minimise injuries, loss of life and damage to property. This Plan, aimed at mitigating risk to Otago Polytechnic staff and learners, sets out how Otago Polytechnic will communicate with its stakeholders, who is responsible for communication efforts, and the resources that will be used.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE PLAN

The Communications Team: The Communications Team comprises staff from Marketing and Communications and is managed by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications. When a Critical Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event is declared, the core of the Communications team will convene at the appointed Incident Control Centre (ICC) together with the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT). The Communications team is responsible for all internal and external communications during an incident or emergency, with the exception of announcements from the Chief Executive or delegate. The Communications team is required to:

  i. Support and advise the Executive Leadership Team and
  ii. Support and advise the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) in the Incident Control Centre (ICC). When an Emergency has an impact on other agencies, the Communications team will coordinate communications with those agencies. Agencies are likely to be the Police, other emergency services, Civil Defense and University of Otago.

3. NOTIFICATION OF A STATE OF CAMPUS EMERGENCY

The Incident Controller is responsible for notifying the Communications team that the Chief Executive has declared a Critical Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event. The Communications team will then notify staff, learners, and the general public that a Critical Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event exists. During this period, the Polytechnic'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 business functions begin to return to normal — likely the second or third day, depending on the scope of the incident.

4. NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

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

System	Responsibility
All-staff email	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from People and Culture and Communications team
All-learner text	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from Learner Services and ISS
All-learner email	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from Learner Services and ISS
All-Board email – in the event of normal communication channels being rendered inoperable, a messenger will be sent	Chief Executive or delegate with operational support from Communications team
Polytechnic website	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from Communications team and ISS
OPSA website	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from OPSA representative
The 0800 number – auto generated voicemail	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from the Team Leader of the Contact Centre
Digital screens	Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications or delegate with operational support from People and Culture and Communications team
Telephones and/or PA system	The Incident Controller or Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications will use phones/system to broadcast messages as necessary.
Email, Social Media Releases	Director: Marketing, Sales andCommunications or delegate
Radio/Television	Director: Marketing, Sales andCommunications or delegate

The Chief Executive will provide emergency information to Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and other government agencies, as necessary.

The Chief Executive will provide emergency information to international agencies asnecessary.

5. APPROVAL PROCESS

The following process has been designed to ensure that all communications issued by the Communications team during a Critical Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event, reflect Otago Polytechnic's high standards and are accurate, timely and able to be understood by the target audience.

Pre-state of Incident or Emergency	The Communications team will prepare pre-scripted warning and instruction messages as appropriate. All pre-scripted messages will be reviewed and approved by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications.[1]
During an Incident or Emergency	The Communications team may release all relevant pre-approved and pre-scripted messages about the Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event (including those with minor variations) directly to stakeholders. **All** messages **must** be approved by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications prior to release.
Recovery Phase	The Communications team may release all relevant pre-approved and pre-scripted messages about the Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event (including those with minor variations) directly to stakeholders. All other messages will be approved by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications prior to release.

[1] *Otago Polytechnic confirm they are dealing with a critical incident. No further details are available at this stage. A media release will be made in the next 30 minutes.*

6. INFORMATION RELEASE

Information released through the Communications team serves as the only information about the Incident, Emergency Learner Centred event, which will be provided to internal and external audiences. Without prior consultation, inadvertent miscommunications can occur and undermine the credibility of the information released by the Polytechnic. During an Incident, Emergency Learner Centred event, the homepage website is the primary tool for communicating related information. Staff, learners, 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 Communications team will use other communication tools to share information.

a.   Spokespersons

The Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications may advise the Chief Executive to conduct news briefings. The Communications team will recommend and prepare other spokespersons, as necessary.

b.   News Briefings

A news briefing may be called to allow the Chief Executive (or delegate) to directly brief news media. TheCommunications team will be responsible for organising the location, timing, and general formatof the news briefing, and notifying news media. The default location for Press Conferences is F215 or in the event of it being unreachable, the Robertson Library.

7. GENERAL MEDIA INQUIRIES

During an Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event, all media queries should be directed to the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications. The Communication Team is responsible for responding to media inquiries, as directed. Subject to Chief Executive approval, theCommunications team may arrange media interviews with appropriate 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.

8. RUMOUR CONTROL

During a Critical Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event, the Communications team will monitor TV and radio, Internet news sites, and social media sites to identify and correct substantive rumours and misinformation. Staff who see rumours on social media should screen shot and send to the Communications team for action. communications@op.ac.nz

9. **MEDIA ON CAMPUS**

During a Critical Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event, the Communications team will set up staging areas where media will have access to Otago Polytechnic spokespeople, visuals and other resources. Campus Services staff who are responsible for the use of classroom or building space are asked not to permit media into such areas. The default location for Press Conferences is F215 or in the event of it being unreachable, the Robertson Library.

11. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

11.1. **Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications.**

During a State of Campus Emergency, the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications has overall responsibility for communications with staff, learners, the media and the public on behalf of Otago Polytechnic and works with the Incident Controller.

11.2. **Communications Team.**

The Communications team comprises staff from the Marketing and Communications team and is managed by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications. The responsibilities of the team are set out below:

11.2.1. **Team Leads:** work with the Director External Relations, Marketing and Communications in the Incident Control Centre (ICC) to ensure that necessary information is effectively communicated to staff, learners, the media, (including families of staff and learners) and to the general public. The Team Leader: Communications gains approval from the Director External Relations, Marketing and Communications to release information. The Team Leader: Communications may be asked to attend ELT meetings and to draft communications at the Chief Executive's request. During an Incident, Emergency or Learner Centred event the Team Leader: Communications may assign tasks and delegate responsibilities within the Communications Team.

11.2.2. **The EA (or delegate) to the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications** manages the logistical and operational needs of the Communications Team.

11.2.3. **Additional personnel** will provide a variety of services as necessary as requested by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications, including posting web updates, press conference set-up, field monitoring, handling calls from learners' families, handling media calls, and fielding other incoming calls and emails.

11.3. **Contact Centre staff** will field incoming calls from staff, learners and parents and record rumours and misinformation from the public and passes that information on to the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications A script will be provided by the communications team.

11.4. **Team Leads:** will draft scripts for the Contact Centre. These must be approved by the Director: Marketing, Sales and Communications.

11.5. **Information Support Services (ISS)** holds overall responsibility for the communication and data systems used for Incident, Emergency, or Learner Centred event communications needs.

11.6. **People and Culture** is responsible for ensuring that all staff have accurate personal information recorded in ME@OP and for supporting ISS with respect to the use of any P&C systems that are required for Critical Incident, Emergency and Learner Centred event communication needs.

12. **TESTING AND IMPLEMENTING THIS PLAN**

The Emergency Communications Plan will be tested at least once a year as part of testing the Critical Incident Management Plan. This will be a desktop exercise one year and a physical exercise the other. The Deputy Chief Executive: People, Culture and Safety is responsible for ensuring the Critical Incident and Emergency Management 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.