

University of Alabama at Birmingham Media Guidelines
Updated January 2025

The UAB Office of Marketing and Communications oversees UAB’s public relations functions, including integrated internal and external communications and media relations. A renowned public doctoral research university and academic medical center with a growing campus, vibrant student life, expansive impact in the community and a \$12.1 billion annual economic impact in the state, UAB is committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge that will change the world.

The Office of Marketing and Communications recognizes the importance of the news media to an informed public and works with reporters to communicate significant developments, as well as information about our people, operations and outcomes. We regularly communicate about how our students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters are advancing all areas of our [strategic plan](#): education; research, innovation and economic development; community engagement; and patient care. In addition, Athletic Communications works with news media to communicate information specific to UAB Athletics.

The following policies and guidelines are intended to support the important work happening throughout the UAB community and facilitate constructive interactions with the news media:

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INFORMATION FOR UAB STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND VENDORS/CONTRACTORS

UAB Faculty and Staff Contact with the Media

The Office of Marketing and Communications is UAB's designated contact point for the news media and is the source of official information about the university — including the central/traditional campus and the Health System. The exception is the UAB Athletic Department communications; Athletic Communications coordinates with the media for Athletic Department-specific stories. With the exception of athletic-specific communications, the Office of Marketing and Communications is responsible for all proactive media outreach, and should be made aware of all incoming media inquiries and requests.

Faculty and staff members who wish to initiate contact with the news media, or who receive news media inquiries, should contact the Office of Marketing and Communications and take advantage of its expertise and resources.

Incoming Media Requests: In order to accommodate a timely response to media inquiries/interview requests of UAB faculty, staff or students, the Office of Marketing and Communications should be notified immediately of the outreach. Some faculty, staff and students prefer to first notify the communications director in their school, department or service line. That is an approved practice; communications directors alert and coordinate with the Office of Marketing and Communications.

During business hours, call the Office of Marketing and Communications at 205-934-3884. After business hours, call UAB Paging at 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call.

UAB regularly receives and responds to media inquiries directed to the Office of Marketing and Communications. We ask that students, faculty and staff contacted by the Office of Marketing and Communications staff respond as quickly as they are able with their availability or information needed to respond in a timely manner.

Proactive Media Outreach: The Office of Marketing and Communications [staff responsible for media outreach](#) work to identify and cultivate UAB news stories across campus and beyond, and use many methods (e.g., news releases, videos, social media, news conferences and direct pitches) to encourage external media coverage. If you have a story you would like to see pitched, request publicity using the online form found at www.uab.edu/reporter/request-publicity.

Academic Freedom, Faculty and University Spokespeople

When public comment on behalf of the university is requested, an appropriate spokesperson will be identified by the Office of Marketing and Communications and senior leadership. Faculty enjoy academic freedom and are encouraged to discuss topics related to their areas of academic expertise, but no one is permitted to speak on behalf of the institution or interpret UAB policy unless designated as a spokesperson.

Faculty and staff are asked to remember that, in responding to the media, they can be seen as representing and speaking for the university. Personal opinions should be clearly and carefully identified as such. Issues that should not be discussed with reporters by faculty and staff include legal issues, personnel issues, questions that involve university integrity (e.g., ethics or issues that may result in harm to others), private student or patient information protected by federal law, or a campus crisis or

emergency. Please consult with the Office of Marketing and Communications regarding all inquiries that meet these criteria.

Federal Privacy Laws

UAB is obligated by federal laws to protect the privacy of our students and UAB Medicine patients. Faculty and staff should be familiar with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) and the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#). Beyond the law, we ask that faculty and staff be respectful of the privacy of others in the UAB community. These expectations extend to UAB partners, including vendors and contractors, research or community partners, and those organizations that work with UAB in emergency management/response.

Vendors, Contractors and Partners

Organizations that do business with or partner with UAB should route any media materials or vet planned media outreach/communications plans that involve or mention UAB to the Office of Marketing and Communications for approval prior to contacting the media. UAB faculty and staff should not route a contract for signature by an authorized UAB signatory that requires public communication or publicity without the Office of Marketing and Communications approval.

Vendors, contractors and partners wishing to conduct a photo or video shoot on campus must obtain the Office of Marketing and Communications' approval. It is recommended that vendors work through their project's point of contact (e.g., a school, department or service line communications director) to contact the Office of Marketing and Communications and obtain necessary approvals. Athletic Communications has the authority to approve and oversee shoots specific to athletics and works with the Office of Marketing and Communications when those shoots occur on campus outside of UAB Athletics venues (e.g., inside academic buildings).

Photo/Video on Campus

Photos and videos of campus are often provided to news media and can be accessed through the Office of Marketing and Communications (205-934-3884). Media wanting to shoot original content should contact the Office of Marketing and Communications for approval and/or an on-campus escort. Still or video images of campus may not be used for commercial or promotional purposes outside of scheduled news coverage without approval from the Office of Marketing and Communications.

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), or drones, may only be operated on UAB's campus in accordance with UAB's [Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy](#). Any UAS operator who captures photos or video footage for use in marketing or media materials is required to obtain approval from the Office of Marketing and Communications prior to using the photos or video footage for such purpose. To receive approval, please page the media specialist on call by calling 205-934-3411.

According to the UAS Policy that has been approved by the University of Alabama System Office, any UAS operator who captures photos or video footage for use in marketing or media materials is required to obtain approval from the [Office of Marketing and Communications](#) at least three (3) days in advance of the desired flight time and prior to using the photos or video footage for such purpose.

The marketing and communications staff will help secure approval through the EHS Campus Safety Office in advance of the desired flight time to request and obtain UAB UAS Usage Approval and Permit.

All approved UAB UAS Flight Permits are for a specific time and a specific location to ensure that

multiple UASs are not sharing airspace. Operators are required to maintain UAB UAS Flight Permits for inspection at all times during the permitted flight.

All UAS operators will have to meet the requirements outlined in the UAB's [Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy](#). Individuals who are operating a UAS on or above UAB's campus without approval from the FAA and EHS Campus Safety are in violation of university policy.

Confirmed violations of this policy will result in appropriate consequences commensurate with the offense, including, but not limited to, removal from campus and issuance of a trespass citation, up to and including termination of employment, appointment, student status or other relationships with UAB. Violations of local, state and federal laws and regulations may result in regulatory and criminal penalties.

News Conferences

The Office of Marketing and Communications is the only on-campus entity granted the authority to call and hold news conferences on behalf of the university. Such news conferences typically are held only for major university announcements. News conferences are convened as a way to efficiently share important news with the media. Athletic Communications may convene news conferences on matters related to intercollegiate athletics. Anyone (including UAB faculty, staff, students, or outside individuals or entities) who would like to request permission or discuss the protocol for calling a news conference should inquire with the Office of Marketing and Communications staff.

Submitting a News Tip or Requesting Publicity/Assistance

The Office of Marketing and Communications works regularly with students, faculty and staff to publicize the work and accomplishments of the UAB community. If you would like to submit a news tip or request publicity assistance (including external communications like media outreach and social media, and internal communication distributions such as the eReporter faculty/staff newsletter and Greenmail, our student newsletter), please fill out the form found at www.uab.edu/reporter/request-publicity with all pertinent details.

Crisis/Emergency Communications

In the event of a crisis or emergency on campus, it is essential that UAB disseminate timely, accurate information and ensure that inquiries are routed to the appropriate sources. The Office of Marketing and Communications is responsible for the development and dissemination of all university communications in the event of a campus emergency. This includes internal communications with students, faculty and staff, as well as communications with the media. The priority will be on maintaining timely and open communications, and providing complete and accurate information that has been confirmed. To access the Office of Marketing and Communications in an emergency, page the media specialist on call by calling 205-934-2599.

Questions/Inquiries Contact UAB Public Relations

- Questions and Inquiries
 - The Office of Marketing and Communications: 205-934-3884
 - Director of Public Relations Alicia Rohan: arohan@uab.edu, 205-975-7515
 - UAB Medicine and Health-related Schools Public Relations Manager Adam Pope, arpope@uab.edu, 205-934-6986
 - Academic Campus Public Relations Manager Brianna Hoge, bhoge@uab.edu, 205-975-3997

- Page the on-call Office of Marketing and Communications media specialist: Call 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call.
 - Athletic Communications: 205-934-0722
- In an emergency: Call 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call.
- Request Publicity or Submit a News Tip (to request internal UAB and/or external publicity):
<http://www.uab.edu/reporter/request-publicity>

INFORMATION FOR NEWS MEDIA

- Interview requests, questions other inquiries of the Office of Marketing and Communications: 205-934-3884
 - After hours: Call 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call.
- UAB Experts Guide: www.uab.edu/news/resources/experts
- UAB News Online: www.uab.edu/news
- Request Documents Under the Alabama Open Records Act: Email openrecords@uab.edu.

Media on University Property

Members of the media often visit UAB to cover news and interview UAB students, faculty and staff. Reporters wishing to coordinate an interview or visit campus should call the Office of Marketing and Communications at 205-934-3884 for assistance (e.g., identifying and reaching the appropriate interview source or on-campus media escort) and necessary approvals.

Visitors to campus — including news media — should be aware that university property is not public space. UAB takes seriously its responsibility to maintain an environment in which important business can be conducted across all areas of the institution’s multifaceted mission — education; research, innovation and economic development; community engagement; and patient care.

The Office of Marketing and Communications must be notified before a member of the media enters UAB property. This includes any indoor and outdoor UAB property. University Police will stop and detain media without an approved escort until the Office of Marketing and Communications can be contacted to approve the activity or provide an escort. As visitors to campus, members of the news media are expected to abide by all parking and traffic ordinances. Requests for special parking accommodations can be made to the Office of Marketing and Communications, 205-934-3884.

UAB Buildings/Indoors/Parking Structures: Media must be escorted at all times in any UAB building by Office of Marketing and Communications staff or an Office of Marketing and Communications-approved UAB employee. This includes parking structures.

UAB Property/Outdoors: Media must receive the Office of Marketing and Communications approval to access outdoor common areas like the Campus Green. Media has the legal right to be on City of Birmingham public sidewalks without approval but must contact the Office of Marketing and Communications to request permission and/or an escort to access on-campus outdoor areas including the Campus Green, UAB parking lots and common areas (e.g., amphitheaters, parks and courtyards).

Emergencies and Special Circumstances: Though the Office of Marketing and Communications traditionally approves advance requests for still and video photography, in the event of an emergency, or to limit disruptions to normal university operations, news media may be restricted to certain areas of campus for filming or live broadcasting.

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Drones on Campus: Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), or drones, may only be operated on UAB's campus in accordance with UAB's [Unmanned Aircraft Systems Policy](#). Any UAS operator who captures photos or video footage for use in marketing or media materials is required to obtain approval from the Office of Marketing and Communications prior to using the photos or video footage for such purpose. To receive approval, please page the media specialist on call by calling 205-934-3411.

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Confirmed violations of this policy will result in appropriate consequences commensurate with the offense, including, but not limited to, removal from campus and issuance of a trespass citation, up to and including termination of employment, appointment, student status or other relationships with UAB. Violations of local, state and federal laws and regulations may result in regulatory and criminal penalties.

UAB Student Media

Student Media may be offered special access to campus events or facilities in recognition of its unique role at UAB.

Expectations of the News Media

We kindly ask members of the news media to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner when contacting or interacting with members of the UAB community and when visiting campus. Please respect the comfort and privacy of our students, faculty, staff, patients and visitors. UAB reserves the right, in the best interests of the UAB community, to deny media members who do not adhere to these standards access to the campus, media events and UAB spokespeople.

UAB News Releases

Members of the media who do not receive UAB news releases but would like to be added to our distribution list(s) should email UAB Director of Public Relations Alicia Rohan at arohan@uab.edu. UAB news stories can be accessed online at www.uab.edu/news.