



Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures
Policy 02.09.01

Section: General Administration	Responsible Vice President:
Subject: Institutional Communication	Responsible Entity: Marketing and Communications

I. Title

Media Relations

II. Policy

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) will respond to all media inquiries in a prompt and responsive manner while ensuring the protection of any confidential or proprietary information. Media requests to UTMB are the responsibility of the President. The President has delegated this function to the Office of Media Relations, a component of the UTMB Marketing and Communications Department. All media requests received by UTMB staff, students or faculty members relating to UTMB education, research, patient care or business matters shall be directed to the Media Relations Office for proper vetting and triaging, in advance of an interview.

Prior to visiting a UTMB campus, facility, clinic or building, all media representatives must notify and be granted consent to do so by the Office of Media Relations. If a reporter, photographer, videographer, news or film crew has been authorized by Media Relations to be on a UTMB property, a Media Relations representative will notify the appropriate UTMB executives, UTMB Police, and other impacted parties of the scheduled media visit. In addition, a member of the Media Relations team will accompany the news media representative(s) for the duration of an event.

If a UTMB patient has agreed to be interviewed by the news media, the Media Relations Office must secure a patient [consent form](#) in advance. In addition, the appropriate health care providers and administrators must be notified in advance of the media visit. The date, time, and location of the interview will be determined by UTMB health care administration. A patient interview may not interfere with patient care.

III. Procedures

General Inquiries

Faculty, staff, and students who are contacted by the media must direct the inquirer to the UTMB Media Relations team. A UTMB Media Relations representative will follow up with the inquirer to obtain details regarding the context, scope, and timing of the request. The Media Relations team member will also determine the best spokesperson to comment or to be interviewed on a given topic. Requests for interviews will be respectfully declined by a member of the Media Relations team if the opportunity for media coverage is not in the best interest of UTMB.

Staff, students, and faculty members who, *in their official capacity at UTMB*, author editorial works (OpEds, guest columns, Letters to the Editor) shall submit their work, in advance, to the Media Relations Office for prior to submission.

While UTMB does not seek or intend to infringe upon an individual's First Amendment rights, editorial comment developed *as a representative of UTMB* should reflect, promote, and align with UTMB's

mission. The Media Relations Office will collaborate with the author to ensure publication of such material in the appropriate news outlet.

Healthcare Emergency or Other Extraordinary Events:

In the event of a health care emergency or other extraordinary event such as a hurricane, natural disaster, or other event of exceptional media interest, the Media Relations Office will designate a location on the UTMB campus for interaction with the media. Any inquiries regarding the event shall be immediately directed to the Media Relations team at the specified location or via the special hotline or email address provided below.

IV. Contact Information

Media Relations: utmbnews@utmb.edu
Media Relations Hotline: 409-772-6397

V. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures

For media inquiries regarding specific patients, please refer to [IHOP – 06.02.02 - Use and Disclosure of PHI for Individual Care, Notification and Directory Information](#)

[IHOP – 09.03.02 – Use of Photography, Video, Audio Recordings and/or Televisiting Patients](#)

VI. Dates Approved or Amended

<i>Originated: 06/09/2020</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Changes</i>

VII. Contact Information

Media Relations
409-772-6397