External and Internal Communications & Promotional Activities			
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Major changes/additions since the last version was approved are indicated by a vertical line in the left-hand margin.

1   Introduction

1.1   Purpose

The purpose of the Communications Policy is to ensure that all Ara Institute of Canterbury Limited (Ara) communication- and media engagement-related activities position and enhance the reputation of Ara as a leader in applied tertiary education. This is integral to Canterbury's future as defined by the Institute's strategic plan including vision, values, and outcomes.

1.2   Scope and Application

This policy applies to the publication and distribution of all Ara communications to external and internal Ara stakeholders relevant to marketing and associated activities as defined by this policy.

Ara Brand Standards apply to all Ara internal and external communications and documentation.

1.3   Formal Delegations

The holders of the positions detailed in the table below are authorised to approve communication activity and speak on behalf of Ara on the matters described in the following schedule.

Ara Position	Associated Authority
Board Chair	Media Spokesperson • Board Chair or under express permission delegated to another Board Member as related to media interest around government policies, the strategic direction of Ara and governing policies.

Chief Executive (CE)	Media Spokesperson(s)
	• The Chief Executive is the primary spokesperson for all Ara media activities and:
	  ▪ may nominate /delegate any further media Ara spokesperson(s) roles as relevant to the media enquiry
	  ▪ May refer matters related to Māori to the Kaiārahi (See Kaiārahi below).

Kaiārahi	Media Spokesperson • The Kaiārahi is the primary Ara spokesperson for all Māori education and Treaty-related issues and activities.

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Marketing Promotions Manager	• Liaises, develops and actions any Ara media-related activity, media releases and corporate positioning statements in consultation with or as delegated by the Senior Communications Specialist.
Senior Communications Specialist	• Liaises, develops and actions any Ara media-related activity, media releases and corporate positioning statements in consultation with the Board Chair and the Chief Executive as appropriate. • Working alongside the Internal Communications Lead to ensure strong alignment between internal / external communication and messaging.
Internal Communications Lead	• Liaises, develops and actions any internal communications activity in consultation with the Chief Executive and TKM as appropriate. • Works alongside the Senior Communications Specialist to ensure strong and consistent alignment between internal communication and media / external activity.

1.4 Definitions

a **Ara Brand Standards:** Approved brand standards which ensure that the Ara brand is communicated correctly through consistency of design, messaging, typography, imagery, and tone of voice.

Brand Standards currently exist for: Ara logo, Ara colour palette, imagery, typography, stationery, internal use of Ara brand, template publications, staff recruitment advertisements, bi-lingual signage, online and offline multi-media marketing and communication platforms, corporate documentation, and presentation templates. Brand Standards also cover the use of Ara sub-brands. NZBS and NASDA.

b **Internal & External Stakeholders:** For the purpose of this policy, our stakeholders are defined as:

i Internal: Board Members and all Ara colleagues.

ii External: All public persons, commercial and community entities not employed by Ara, including but not limited to general public, learners, prospective learners, graduates, industry, tertiary organisations, news media, government agencies, Members of Parliament, Ministers of the Crown, Civil and regional authorities.

c **Internal Communications:** includes all communications that are developed and communicated to Ara's Internal Stakeholders and include change management communications, periodic updates from the CE, TKM or other colleagues that are intended for wider internal audiences.

Internal Communications are managed by the Internal Communications Lead.

d **Marketing Activities:** Includes all Ara marketing, promotional, advertising, communication, media and recruitment-related activities, the publication and distribution of all Ara branded information to the external and internal stakeholders of Ara and including:

i **Multi-Media Platforms:** Refers to any existing and emergent offline and online marketing, advertising and communication platform or tool currently available in the marketplace. This includes, but is not limited to:

• Offline: newspapers, magazines, billboards, posters, bus backs, bus adshells, flyers, newsletters, reports, documents, signage, banners, publications, merchandise, CDs, DVDs.

• Online: websites, web microsites, mobile phones, online newspapers, online magazines, social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram,

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Snapchat, LinkedIn, YouTube and other apps and blogs), television, radio, cinema, ad rolls, programmatic advertising, and proximity advertising.

    ii   **News Media:** Refers to reporters, employers or representatives of any organisation involved in the public distribution of information, comment, or visual images through any multi-media platform.

e   **Marketing Services:** Ara Marketing Services is an organisational unit that sits within the Academic, Innovation and Research Division (AIR) directed by the Executive Director, AIR and managed by a Marketing and Engagement Manager.

    i   Marketing Services has the responsibility for learner recruitment and positional advertising design and development, media buying and placement, brand development, reputation management, media and public relations, corporate sponsorship, external communications, domestic learner recruitment. Marketing Services works collaboratively with Engagement Services, AIR, Internal Communications, other divisions and Ara-wide colleagues with liaison and learner-related service responsibilities.

    ii   Marketing Services liaise, manage, design, develop and produce multi-media advertising and promotional campaigns, stakeholder communications, media releases, sponsorship arrangements and events to an agreed annual Ara Marketing Budget aligned to institute priorities as set by the Ara Board Strategic Plan, Ara CE, Executive Director AIR and/or the relevant Executive Directors.

    iii   Marketing Services liaise, manage, design, develop and produce all Ara news and social media-related activity with responsibility for publishing and distributing media releases, and advising the business on how to deal with the media. It is responsible for ensuring all Ara marketing and external communication initiatives gain maximum positive media coverage.

    iv   Engagement Services has a role in communicating with schools, businesses, and non-governmental organisations as part of their responsibility for learner recruitment.

f   **Colleagues** shall include all Board members and all employees of Ara.

g   **"Speaking"** includes all forms of communication that could be reasonably regarded being in the public domain. For the purposes of clarification, this includes all forms of electronic communications and social media.

Related Ara Procedures	**Related Ara Policies**
• Marketing procedures for requests, approvals, brand, and logo use *(included within this policy document)* • Informed consent for electronic communications *(included within this policy document)* • Ara Brand Standards *(controlled documentation held by Marketing Services)* • CPP208a Staff complaints about staff process • CPP208b Staff complaints about students process	• CPP105 Acceptable Use and Conduct for ICT Users • CPP109 Disclosing Personal Information about Students and Staff • CPP118 Sponsorship • CPP122 Social Media • CPP208 Resolving Employee Performance or Conduct Issues • CPP211 Code of Professional Practice
Related Legislation or Other Documentation Official Information Act 1982 Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act 2007	

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2 Principles

2.1 The publication and distribution of all written and verbal information, comment and visual images provided to the external and internal stakeholders of Ara, in the name of Ara, via any Ara multi-media platform will:

a Effectively reflect the vision, values, and strategic outcomes of the Strategic Plan of Ara and how these are demonstrated in the operations of the institute.

b Adhere to Ara Brand Standards.

c Demonstrate the commitment of Ara to the use of Te Reo in all the appropriate marketing and corporate communications of Ara.

d Demonstrate a commitment to 'best practice', collaboration, communication, and stakeholder engagement.

e Include only approved content, which is current, consistent, accurate, and timely.

f Meet legal requirements, including the copyright, trademark, intellectual property rights and privacy of individuals, at the time of publication or distribution.

g Target the level of detail, tone, and imagery appropriate for the intended audiences and platforms.

h Ensure communications are contextualised within strategic multiplatform communications plans.

i Be sensitive to the domestic, international, and cultural communities of Ara.

j Build a positive profile of Ara, its colleagues, learners, graduates, and stakeholder partnerships.

k Ensure collaborative communications plans with strategic partners embody the communications principles of Ara.

2.2 Every Ara colleague has a commitment to promote the Institute positively as part of their responsibility to ensuring all activities align to the Strategic Focus Areas and Priorities for Ara – our vision, values, and strategic outcomes.

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3   Associated procedures for Ara Corporate Policy on Communications

3.1   News Media: Media Releases/Relationships

a   Ara is committed to openness of information that is factual, appropriate, complies with legislation, and is in the best interest of Ara.

b   The communications team provides or organises media training and preparation for interviewees.

c   For external communications advice, Ara colleagues should contact the Marketing Promotions Manager, Senior Communications Specialist, or relevant marketing advisor.

d   All Ara media releases will be prepared and distributed by the Marketing Services Communications Team. The Senior Communications Specialist has oversight of all Ara-related media activity and therefore any media releases or activity drafted outside of this team must be submitted for approval prior to distribution.

e   No person, unless a designated spokesperson, may send "Letters to the Editor" that imply the content of the letter is the official view of the organisation. If such a letter is a personal view and not one held by the organisation, the author of the letter should not include their position at Ara in their sign off.

d   Any spokespeople will consider the potential impact on Ara of any information, comment, or visual images they provide or authorise. They must ensure that any impact is beneficial to the interests of the Institution.

e   The Senior Communications Specialist and/or CE must be informed of any proposed contact with news media reporters. No Ara employee is to have contact with or make comment to the media without their consent.

f   All media releases must be forwarded to the Senior Communications Specialist for confirmation of approval and distribution.

g   **Consideration of Privacy Issues**

         i   Ara employees engaged in any media-related activity need to become familiar with the CPP109 Disclosing Personal Information about Students and Staff policy.

         ii   Written release to use photographs, testimonial statements of any person in communications or promotional material or any multi-media platform must be obtained using the release form only available through Marketing Services.

         iii   Whenever an identifiable individual is to be mentioned, that person's authorisation or the permission of the Privacy Officer must be obtained prior to mention being made.

         iv   Special consideration needs to be given if any images or pictures are taken at either the Ara Early Learning Centre or Te Waka Huruhurumanu ki Otautahi. Please contact the relevant centre manager prior to any images or picture being taken.

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h   All requests for official information held by the Institute are to be referred to the Official Information Officer. The Official Information Officer will notify the CE and advise the Senior Communications Specialist as appropriate with regard to potentially contentious issues.

i   **Role of Board**

From time to time the media may approach members of Board to comment on a particular issue. The following points outline the expectations of Board members in responding to the media:

i   The Chair of Board is the first point of contact for the official view on any matter concerning the affairs of the Board.

ii   The Chair of the Board may refer any matter to the relevant committee chairperson or the CE for their comment.

iii If the Chair of the Board is contacted by the media to comment on operational issues at Ara, the enquiry will be re-directed to the CE.

iv   No other Board member may comment on behalf of the Board without having prior approval from the Chair.

v   Appointed/Elected members are free to express a personal view to the media provided it is made clear that this view does not necessarily represent the views of the Board.

vi   No member of the Board may speak to the media regarding matters deemed to be confidential.

vii No member of the Board may publicly criticise a colleague. This includes Board meetings conducted in open session when media may attend.

viii Board agendas, minutes and papers will be made available to the media before meetings.

3.2 Public Communications and Statements

To provide guidance for colleagues speaking publicly as part of their role at Ara.

a   Ara as a whole is represented publicly by the Ara Board, through the Chair and by the CE or their delegates.

b   Ara colleagues may speak publicly in one of three roles:

•   As an academic or expert speaking publicly on a matter related to their area of expertise and their role at Ara.

•   As an official of Ara or delegate of the Board Chair or CE representing the official view of Ara.

•   As a private individual speaking publicly about matters not related to their area of expertise and/or their role at Ara without identifying themselves as an employee of Ara.

c   **Policy**

i   When speaking publicly colleagues should consider in which role they are acting and identify clearly to the recipients of that communication that role – as an academic or expert, as an official of Ara or as a private individual.

ii   **Speaking as an academic or expert:** Colleagues can make statements to the media, or respond to media queries, or make public statements in subject areas where they have recognised special expertise or recognised competence, provided it is made clear that when making such a statement or communication that it is not made by or on behalf of Ara. Such statements should implicitly, or preferably explicitly, refer to the recognised expertise or competence.

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Colleagues making such statements or communications must advise Ara's Senior Communications Specialist.

iii **Representing Ara:** No colleague or learner is to speak for, or to publicly commit Ara as an entity on any issue, as to any expenditure, or to create any liability for Ara unless that person has an explicit delegation to do so, flowing either from the Board or the CE.

iv **Speaking in a private capacity:** When speaking in a private capacity or when representing another organization that is not connected with Ara, colleagues should not include in the communication any material that may suggest that this communication relates to their role at Ara. An Ara title or honorific should not be used where a colleague is making a statement or communication that is intended to be, or submitted as, speaking, or writing in that person's private capacity.

v **Private Communications:** Colleagues should conduct private communications such that a recipient is in no doubt that the colleague is writing or communicating in their private capacity and not on behalf of Ara. Particular care must be taken in using any Ara email or web address when communicating in a private capacity. Private communications are not to be carried out using an Ara email or web address in circumstances where there might be a perception that such communications are on behalf of Ara. Where communicating (in hard copy, emails, electronically or online) in their private capacity, colleagues must not use, for example, Ara letterhead, paper, business cards, envelopes, or sign offs whether electronic or otherwise. All colleagues should be aware that all Ara communications, whether sent as part of official Ara business or for private purposes, are subject to discovery as part of an official investigation or as a result of a request under the [Official Information Act 1982](). Colleagues must be mindful that communications made using Ara resources (letterhead or email or similar) must not in the normal course be representing or reproducing third party logos, advertising, or affiliations.

3.3 Ara Online Communications

This refers to the websites at Ara, Waituhi (our staff intranet), MyAra, social media, and any new and emergent online media platforms.

a Strategic planning, visual design, content management processes, content development and performance delivery of the online marketing of Ara and communications presence as defined above is the responsibility of Marketing Services and will be developed, maintained, and managed with the oversight and approval of the Marketing Promotions Manager within the approved annual marketing budget.

b Source and implementation of any ICT-related software to support marketing and communications initiatives and activities will be a carried out in conjunction with the Ara ICT Division.

c Any development decision or strategic direction that relates to or interfaces with any ICT online platform and/or Ara business system will be made in consultation with the relevant Executive Director and the Executive Director, Operations. Recommendations are required to be referred to the Ara ICT Governance Group for consideration and approval.

d **Websites** (Extranet): Ara will have one website, www.ara.ac.nz as its primary public website interface. This website and any Ara web microsites must be aligned to the Ara website Purpose and Vision, Ara Brand Standards.

i Website Vision: Ara website will be perceived as accurate, current, leading edge, innovative and referred to as an exemplary tertiary website.

ii Website Purpose: Ara website will be an effective marketing and communications channel that:

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- Provides accurate, relevant, and timely information on Ara activities, educational pathways, outcomes, and opportunities.

- Supports students in their decision to enrol and engage with Ara.

- Showcases and brings to life the Ara strategic vision, values, and outcomes.

- Meets the identified needs of potential learners and other stakeholders.

Any future domain names must be approved by TKM.

All approved academic programme, course and specialisation detail displayed on the Ara website is sourced from Ara's Student Management System, which contains all the relevant course and programme information as approved by the Ara Academic Board and therefore is the central source of accurate, up-to-date, and approved programme information.

e **Waituhi** (Digital Workspace / Intranet): Waituhi is our digital workspace tool which is designed, maintained, and supported as the primary communication channel and repository for information related to colleagues work at Ara.

   i Content will include, but not be limited to corporate updates, news, successes, policies, procedures, and the institute's progression toward achieving its vision, values and outcomes.

   ii Responsibility for management and maintenance lies with various stakeholders who are the content owners across Ara and is overseen by a Waituhi Coordination Group (WCG). The Internal Communications Lead also plays a key role to maintain the home page of Waituhi and is a key member of the WCG, which also includes representatives from ICT, the office of the Kaiārahi, key member of the WCG, the Research office, AIR and Operations.

f **MyAra:** MyAra is an app which has been developed to support learners' day-to-day needs, providing access to commonly used tools and systems as well as provide a way to communicate news and updates directly with Ara students. The app is also accessible to Ara colleagues.

   i Content includes, but is not limited to, upcoming events, news and information related to all students, and access to systems and resources which students are likely to use regularly.

   ii Responsibility for the management and maintenance of MyAra lies within the Marketing Services team, with specific delegated responsibility to the Marketing Promotions Manager.

g **Social Media:** The Senior Communications Specialist is responsible for the development and continuous improvement of Ara external social media presence and engagement. A separate [CPP122 Social Media](#) policy with associated procedures exists to protect and enhance the reputation of Ara.

h **Digital Screens:** a series of digital screens are located across our campus sites and are visible to both Ara colleagues and learners. These screens are used to promote upcoming activities and to reinforce important messages.

   i Content includes, but is not limited to, upcoming events and information related to all learners and colleagues. Content shared on these screens is suitable for public viewing, due to their locations.

   ii Responsibility for the management and use of our digital screens is delegated to the Internal Communications Lead, who is supported by the Marketing Team with creative development and publishing of material.

   iii There is limited opportunity for these screens to be used for sponsorship and partnership opportunities for the organisation. These opportunities are

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identified and agreed by the Marketing Promotions Manager, aligned with the [CPP118 Sponsorship](#) policy.

i **Electronic Communications**: This type of communication refers to email and text communications.

All electronic communications sent by any Ara colleague or Board member sent from an Ara email account identifies the sender as associated with Ara. Therefore, all electronic content must be in accordance with this Communications policy and represent Ara in a positive and professional manner.

All emails must adhere to the Ara Brand Standards and include the approved Ara email signature as specified in the Brand Standards. The approved, correct Ara email signature template should be obtained from Waituhi or Marketing Services.

Ara colleagues must not create their own visual imagery, or taglines or substitute brand logos as part of their Ara email signature.

All permission-based electronic communications should comply with current legislation such as the [Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act 2007](#). Unsolicited bulk emailing is prohibited. In the case of mass marketing or commercial communication purposes, informed consent will be obtained by prior permission or by providing the recipient with an opportunity to "opt-out".

j **Bulk Emailing to learners**

Communication with learners using bulk email can only be used to impart information, not to push marketing material or event promotion.

Regular dates for bulk emails to be issued to learners will be agreed between Marketing and Curriculum and Academic Records, or Student Services. A calendar scheduling the dates for these communications will be scheduled at the beginning of the year and published.

Where required, and not otherwise communicated via MyAra, periodic emails may be sent to learners to advise of relevant or important information from Customer Experience and Engagement (CEE), Facilities Management (FM), ICT, and AIR.

The point of collation and distribution will be with the Marketing Communications team. There will also be one point of contact in each area of business. This person will be responsible for collating and forwarding information to Marketing Services for inclusion in the general email to learners.

Sending emails to all learners through Ara learner email addresses need to comply with the following:

- Bulk emails are not permitted to have attachments.

- Bulk emails will include links to the Ara website, if relevant.

- Format of the email will provide a brief overview. A full more detailed communication will be available on the website.

- The word limit maximum is 250 words.

- Content will include advice of any new services, apps, or service delivery model changes.

- Emergency emails e.g., campus closures: These will be issued by Marketing Services or ICT as required, or the Public Information Manager when our Incident Management Team is in place.

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- Bulk emails will not be sent if the content or information already exists on the website.

- Bulk emails will not be used as reminders or prompts.

- Any other proposed communication not covered above will need to be approved by a TKM and the Senior Communications Specialist informed.

k   **Limited Departmental emails to students**

Departments wishing to advise a defined cohort or group of learners about further study options must discuss with their Marketing Specialist.

l   **Video material**

This type of communication refers to video material produced in house by the Marketing Team to support recruitment campaigns, brand profile, showcase the Ara experience, news stories and department profiles.

The video material will conform to Ara brand standards and align with Ara strategic outcomes and present Ara in a positive and engaging manner.

3.4 Breaches of Policy

a   Infringement of this policy by colleagues may lead to disciplinary action which will be carried out in consultation with the appropriate Head of Department or Department Manager or with the Chief Executive or delegate, as covered by CPP208 Resolving Staff Performance or Conduct Issues policy.