

Research communication strategy



Version 1



Maastricht University
Faculty of Law

INTRODUCTION

This document introduces a coherent strategy for research communication within the Faculty of Law. We want to get more out of research communication by clearly defining opportunities, processes and responsibilities. This fulfils a need for clarity for researchers, policymakers and communication advisors, and provides a hands-on approach.

All research and its output is important and should be communicated. However, the process, resources and people responsible for communicating it depend on the impact of the research output.

This research communication strategy consists of a policy framework and an annex. The first section outlines the policy framework. What is the purpose of research communication? What are the guiding principles? What are the various target groups? Who plays a role in this? And what is the division of tasks between researchers and communication advisors? Annex 1 further explains what this means in practice.

OBJECTIVES

We don't just share our research: there's always something to aim for.

- *Scientific and societal impact:* We communicate our research to increase its visibility and impact. Our research supports the (inter)national rule of law and contributes to public debate. Connection and collaboration with fellow researchers and stakeholders outside academia help moving research forward.
- *Knowledge transfer:* Sharing our knowledge with legal professionals, policymakers, academics and society contributes to a better understanding of legal issues.
- *Recognition and reward:* Not only the impact of research, but also the commitment and expertise of the researchers themselves should be seen. Both inside and outside the faculty, we make the achievements and contributions of individual researchers and teams visible.
- *Funding and collaborations:* Funding and collaborations are needed for the continuity and expansion of research activities. Broadly communicating research results and their societal relevance can help establish new collaborations and acquire funding.
- *Reputation and authority:* By regularly and strategically sharing research findings and stories, the faculty can position itself as a leading and trusted source of legal knowledge.
- *Employer branding:* Research communication also contributes to recruiting new staff and students. By communicating about interesting research projects, the facilities that are available and the support for doing research, we show that our faculty is an attractive place to work.

PRINCIPLES

Research communication tells the real story. It is about sharing relevant and reliable information, not promoting or marketing research. We strive for transparent, truthful and content-rich communication. **In addition, we respect academic freedom in research communication.** This means that every researcher is free to share academic findings independently, provided this is done within the ethical guidelines of the faculty and university. Everyone is aware that they also represent the faculty and university in their communication, both online and offline. If a researcher doubts whether a contribution is in accordance with the guidelines, the communication advisor can advise on the matter.

The researcher, institutes and groups are in the lead in communicating (their own) research outputs. Their input and work is essential for firm communication. They are experts within their field and their substantive input is essential to ensure reliable communication. This responsibility includes deciding how they engage in the public/academic debate, e.g. by giving interviews to media, attending conferences, or otherwise communicating and disseminating their research results. The manuals on the ['How to Promote Your Research Platform'](#) can help them. Institutes and research groups are advised to make internal arrangements on how staff, institutes and research groups communicate about research output generated within the institute or group. **The research communication advisor can be consulted for advice and support.** (S)he acts as a sparring partner who helps to focus the message and deploy the right channels. In all communication, the UM-wide communication guidelines from the [university communication guide](#) are used. This means that we expect researchers to use the house style, language, terminology, logos and (personal/faculty) social media channels correctly.

When the scientific and/or societal impact of research output is particularly high, the research communication advisor takes the lead in the communication thereon. **The directors of institutes and departments inform the research communication advisor about impactful research output** that deserves extra attention through internal and/or external communication. In doing so, they think in the faculty interest. All research, and every publication and event is of value but is not communicated in the same way. Therefore, directors of institutes and departments have a crucial role in advising on which developments are highlighted in communication. Some forms of impactful research output are given **structural attention** by the faculty, such as grant awards, prizes, PhD thesis defences and collaborative projects. Researchers can also inform the research communication advisor themselves about their own impactful publications; the research communication advisor determines, in consultation with the director of the institute and/or department, which form of communication is applied.

ROLES WITHIN RESEARCH COMMUNICATION

RESEARCH OUTPUT

Researcher

Takes the lead and actively shares research output through his/her own channels. Proactively keeps contact with the research communication advisor for advice and support.

Research communication advisor

Provides support and advice. Edits texts and/or blogs written by researcher. Keeps contact with the internal communication advisor.

Law Events Office (LEO)

Provides support in organising and promoting academic events.

IMPACTFUL RESEARCH OUTPUT

Directors of research institutes or departments

Assist in identifying impactful research output within research institute/group or department and share this with the research communication advisor.

Research communication advisor

Arranges an interview with researcher(s) involved. Writes news items based on information and interviews provided and ensures timely publication. Maintains proactive contact with the central UM marketing communications team for publication on the UM website.

Internal communications advisor

Provides news item on Umployee and other internal communication channels based on news article.

Researcher

Proactively collaborates with the research communication advisor on news item. Responsible for content and takes into account possible deadlines.

IN PRACTICE

How does this work in practice? The scenarios below illustrate what is expected of the researcher and research communication advisor.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH AT A CONFERENCE (RESEARCH OUTPUT)

A researcher is about to launch a new book on criminal justice reforms and wants to present it at an international conference. The research communication advisor provides support to the researcher, who is responsible for reporting.

The researcher plans to post relevant posts on their personal social media channels (such as LinkedIn) before and during the conference. The research communication advisor can advise the researcher on how best to reach his/her network and how to sharpen the message. In addition, the researcher can consult the ['How to Promote Your Research Platform'](#). As soon as the post is published, the faculty account will 'like' the post. This contributes to visibility.

The researcher also wants to post a blog about his/her book on Law Blogs Maastricht. He/she shares the blog with the research communication advisor, so that (s)he can edit and publish it on Law Blogs Maastricht. After publication, the blog contribution will be posted on the faculty's LinkedIn channel. The researcher shares this post on his/her channel.

POLICY PAPER (IMPACTFUL RESEARCH OUTPUT)

Faculty researchers have jointly written a policy paper commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security. The paper focuses on policy recommendations regarding digitalisation in the constitutional state. The research communication advisor hears about this paper from a director of an/a institute/department and sees this as an opportunity to highlight the researchers' work and the social impact of this paper.

The research communication advisor schedules an (online) meeting for an interview with the researchers and, based on this conversation and the policy paper, drafts a news article for the faculty website.

The news article is published on the faculty website, the faculty and university's social media channels and on the websites of relevant research institutes and groups. The research communication advisor informs the internal communications advisor to ensure the article is shared via Umployee. Additionally, they notify the press officer of the central UM marketing and communications office about the article. The press officer assesses whether the news article is suitable for broader distribution via the UM website or as a press release to the media. If necessary, the press officer coordinates media contacts.

The researcher provides substantive input for the article, reviews draft versions with feedback, and ensures the content is accurate and clear. Once the news article is published on the website and shared via the faculty's social media channels, the researcher further disseminates it through their personal (social media) channels and, if relevant, informs his/her professional network and the ministry.

WANT TO BRAINSTORM ABOUT AN IDEA? OR DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

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Research output - Researcher takes the lead		
	Researcher	Research communication advisor
Publication book (contribution), paper, blog, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates own coverage of the publication or event. If desired: shares draft versions with the advisor research communication. Shares the messages on personal (social media) channels. Think of: Umployee, LinkedIn, Pure, etc. Tags the faculty in the reporting on LinkedIn (@lawinmaastricht). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advice on the use, formulation and tone of the reporting and edits where necessary. Likes the researcher's message on LinkedIn on behalf of the faculty.
Event (participating)		
Event (organising)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively seeks cooperation with Law Events Office for organisation and promotion of the event. 	
Grant provision Not ERC, NWO, Comenius, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides and shares own communication on grant for personal (social media) channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a message on Umployee containing all research funding obtained per quarter.
Media appearance TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, podcast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively collaborates with UM press office for requests received through them. Shares link to output of media appearance on personal (social media) channels. Informs research communication advisor of media appearance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares link to media appearance on Umployee within section 'Colleague in the media'. Likes the researcher's post on LinkedIn on behalf of the faculty.
Impactful research output - Research communication advisor takes the lead - Structural communication		
	Researcher	Research communication advisor
Grant provision ERC, NWO, Comenius, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input for the interview with the research communication advisor. Reviews the news item for factual inaccuracies before publication. Shares the news item on personal (social media) channels after publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a news item for the faculty website, based on an interview with researcher(s). Shares the news item on the faculty's LinkedIn channel and Umployee. Keeps in touch with the UM press office in the event that the grant provision receives UM-wide attention.
PhD thesis defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides own reporting on thesis defence on personal (social media) channels with a link to thesis page on Maastricht Graduate School of Law (MGSL). Writes a blog about thesis with a focus on its social impact. (• Participates in an interview about thesis if thesis has social impact. This is decided in consultation with vice-dean research/supervisor(s).) Shares blog (and news item) about thesis on personal (social media) channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a page about thesis on the MSGL page on the faculty website. UM press office provides information. Invites PhD candidate to write a blog about his/her thesis. (• Invites PhD candidate for an interview) Posts an announcement on Umployee in the week leading up to the defence. Shares a post on the faculty's LinkedIn channel on the day of the thesis defence with a link to the defence's livestream (and news item). Keeps in touch with UM press office in the event that the thesis receives UM-wide attention.
Collaborative projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input for the interview with the research communication advisor. Reviews the news item for factual inaccuracies before publication. Shares the news item on personal (social media) channels after publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consults with the vice-dean of research and research policy advisor on which collaborative projects will be highlighted. Creates a news item for the faculty website based on an interview with the researcher(s). Shares the news item on the LinkedIn channel of the faculty and Umployee. Keeps in touch with the UM press office in the event that the research project receives UM-wide attention.
Impactful research output - Based on advice by directors of institutes and departments		
	Researcher	Research communication advisor
Prizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input for the interview with the research communication advisor. Reviews the news item for factual inaccuracies before publication. Shares the news item on personal (social media) channels after publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a news item for the faculty website based on an interview with researcher(s). Shares the news item on the faculty's LinkedIn channel and Umployee. Keeps in touch with the UM press office in the event that the prize/publication/event receives UM-wide attention.
Publication/event regarding finished research		
!! If multiple parties are involved in reporting on impactful research output (such as another university, grant provider, etc.), this will be mentioned in the reporting.		