

March 8, 2017

## How to write a press release

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To write a good press release, you have to think more like a journalist and less like a researcher. Researchers begin with background and methodology, eventually discussing their conclusions. Journalists do the exact opposite – starting with the results – so that's how a press release needs to be written. Whatever is most interesting goes first, followed by more in-depth explanations and discussions.

To consider:

- What about the research is interesting to the general public? Make sure this is clear in your text.
- Choose a title that clearly describes the research results.
- Write an ingress/introduction (3-4 lines) that tells who, what, when, where and why. The introduction should basically be a summary of the rest of the article.
- Include a quote from you to make the piece more newsworthy. A quotation should be no more than 2-3 sentences and should read like natural speech.
- Use concrete examples – preferably ones that are relevant and interesting to as many people as possible. Try to tie them to current events.
- Avoid jargon and technical terms. Use straight-forward, clear language in your text. Tell about your research as if you are speaking to someone with no prior knowledge of the topic.
- Keep the text to one A4 page (about 2000 characters, including spaces). A press release doesn't need to say everything, just make reporters curious enough to write their own article, hopefully including an interview with you where you can give deeper insight into your research.
- Is more information needed to put your work in context? One way (without adding too much text) is to add a fact box at the end of your press release. Links to relevant websites can also provide the bigger picture without lengthening or complicating your text.

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### External Relations and Communications Office

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- Answer the phone. Journalists expect you to be available by phone after the press release. It's best to provide your mobile number as well as other contact details. If journalists can't reach you easily, there's a good chance they will drop the article due to a short deadline.

### **Examples:**

Look here for examples of press releases:

<http://www.su.se/english/about/news-and-events/press/press-releases>

### **Send your draft to us early**

Be sure that there's plenty of time between sending your draft to us and when you want to send it to the media so we have time to help you. We'll get back to you with proposed changes, usually about making it more readable and "newsy." A press release is a collaboration between you, the researcher with field-specific knowledge and us, the press team, with expertise in journalism, editing, and communications. Because we don't have specialised knowledge about your field, you'll want to check the version we send you. Send your draft to [press@su.se](mailto:press@su.se).

### **English or Swedish**

We mostly work with the Swedish press, but occasionally work internationally. Every press release must have a Swedish version. If you want your release sent internationally, let us know early so we have time for translation. To ensure a quality translation, it's best if you can translate the finished press release so that all the terminology is correct, or alternatively to have a colleague in your field help with the translation.

### **Pictures**

Pictures that illustrate your research and/or a picture of you can increase your likelihood of being published. Send us the relevant pictures along with your text. Make sure that your pictures are not rights restricted. Don't forget to include a description of the picture and the name of the illustrator/photographer.

### **Where do we send the press release?**

We send the press release to relevant editors and journalists, publish the text on su.se as a web article, and send an announcement on SU's twitter account.



For those defending a PhD who grew up in Sweden, let us know your hometown. There's a higher chance for publication in your home region.

Tell us if you know of a small-ish publication that might specifically be interested, and we'll be sure to send them the release.

### **When is the press release sent?**

Press releases about dissertations are sent soon after the defence in most cases. Exceptions occur because of the candidate's work situation or because we have too many press releases at a time – not uncommon in May and December. For academic publications, we honour the embargo rules which journals set.

We usually send press releases in the morning but other times can work, too. We avoid sending them on Friday afternoons and weekends.

### **What happens next?**

It's hard to predict which press release will capture media attention. In some cases it's easier to predict – when the subject falls within the media's normal coverage or when it's tied to current events or discussions. In some cases, interest comes mostly from trade publications. Sometimes, it doesn't come at all. We know from our statistics, however, that many different people read the press releases on our websites, not just the media but other parties interested in research and education. The information is searchable online and is often viewed well after it's posted.

### **We're waiting for your draft!**

If you have questions or would like more info, contact us at [press@su.se](mailto:press@su.se) or 08-16 40 90.