

Social Media - Procedures

1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 These procedures operationalise the Social Media – Operational Policy and support the effective use and management of social media at the University.

2. Scope and application

2.1 These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the Social Media – Operational Policy. These procedures apply to the use of social media, including the identifiable private use of social media, by all University staff and students, as well as any other members of the University community to whom the Staff Code of Conduct – Governing Policy or the Student Conduct – Governing Policy applies.

2.2 This policy does not apply to the non-identifiable private use of social media by staff and students as defined below.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

Social media is a broad term that encompasses interactive online communication channels that enable users to create and share content, opinions, experiences, and knowledge. These can be written comments, video, photographs, or audio files. Social media channels may include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Snapchat.

Official University social media refers to any public social media account, group or site that seeks to represent the University as a whole or in part for promotional purposes, including (but not limited to) promoting University initiatives, research or events. Official University social media channels are managed by, or in consultation with, Marketing.

Identifiable private use of social media is use of social media in a way that may associate the user with the University and/or may have an impact on the University or on members of the University community.

Non-identifiable private use of social media is use of social media by a member of the University community in a way that does not associate the user with the University and does not impact on the University or a member of the University community in ways that could be reasonably considered to be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct – Governing Policy or the Student Conduct – Governing Policy.

4. Procedures

4.1 Acceptable use

4.1.1 Acceptable use of social media at the University is set out in section 4.1 of the Social Media – Operational Policy.

4.1.2 Comments on matters outside a staff member's area of expertise should be made with no association to the University. If association is made, staff members should refer to section 5.2 of the Social Media – Operational Policy.

4.1.3 Staff must not release any University information unless it is classified as 'public' information. Staff should also take care to avoid any perception of promotion of private business interests while interacting on social media as a staff member. Refer to the Staff Code of Conduct – Governing Policy and the Conflict of Interest – Governing Policy.

4.1.4 The responsible use of social media for activities undertaken by student groups and associations or individual students is encouraged by the University. However, this use is independent of the University, in the sense that these organisations and individuals do not represent the views of the University nor hold any official role in the University's media management. The University's trademarks must not be used on social media without the prior written consent of Marketing.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global and Engagement)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global and Engagement)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Marketing and Communications

FIRST APPROVED

3 September 2021

LAST AMENDED

4 September 2024

REVIEW DATE

2 September 2024

STATUS

Active

4.1.5 Staff and students who use official University social media channels and/or engage in identifiable private use of social media are required to comply with the University's policies and procedures.

4.1.6 Personal use of social media by a student or staff member, in a way that does not associate the user with the University, is considered non-identifiable private use and is outside the scope of these procedures.

4.2 Unacceptable use

4.2.1 When using official University social media channels, engaging with social media in a University learning and teaching or research context, and/or when making identifiable private use of social media, staff and students must not:

- (a) post material or make any comment that is, or might be construed to be, racial or sexual harassment, offensive, obscene (including pornography), defamatory, discriminatory towards any person, or inciting hate;
- (b) post material or make any comment that creates, or might be construed to create, a risk to the health or safety of a student, contractor, staff member or other person, including material that amounts to bullying, psychological or emotional violence, coercion, harassment, sexual harassment, aggressive or abusive comments or behaviour, and/or unreasonable demands or undue pressure;
- (c) post material or make any comment that infringes copyright, is fraudulent, breaches intellectual property rights, constitutes a contempt of court or stalking, breaches a court order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- (d) imply they are authorised to speak as a representative of the University, or give the impression that the views expressed are those of the University (unless officially authorised by the University);
- (e) use the identity or likeness of another student, contractor, staff member or other member of the University community;
- (f) use or disclose any University confidential information obtained as a member of the University community;
- (g) sell, purchase, share, post or offer to write assignments or other assessable work that would be considered a breach the Student Conduct – Governing Policy; or
- (h) post answers to practice questions, tutorial questions, practice exams or other such material issued by the University.

4.2.2 Where a student or staff member uses social media in a manner that is suspected of breaching University policy, or has the potential to adversely impact on the University's reputation, or could reasonably be considered to be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct – Governing Policy or the Student Conduct – Governing Policy, the University will act in accordance with the relevant policy.

4.3 Regulatory compliance

4.3.1 The University must comply with legislative obligations including in relation to (but not limited to) public records, privacy, spam, copyright, anti-discrimination, defamation, Human Rights, education services for international students and health and safety.

4.3.2 Staff and students who use official University social media channels, and/or engage in identifiable private use of social media, are required to comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, and standard codes of practice. Official University social media channels must clearly identify the University and its CRICOS Code.

4.3.3 Social media users should not post content that might be defamatory to an individual or that could be construed as placing an individual in a negative or false light.

4.3.4 When using images and video on social media, a consent and release must be obtained before posting, sharing, or distributing images or video footage of individuals who can be identified. More information is available on the staff intranet.

4.3.5 If the personal information of children, vulnerable adults or research subjects or clinical patients is used, additional approvals (such as research ethics) may be required.

4.4 Promotion

4.4.1 The University uses social media services as key marketing channels to promote the University. Such activity occurs through official University social media channels and is also subject to the conditions outlined in the Marketing and External Engagement – Operational Policy.

4.4.2 As custodians of the University brand and the University's corporate identity, Marketing must approve any social media channel or site that seeks to represent the University as a whole or in part. This includes any channel or site that is established for promotional purposes, including (but not limited to) promoting University initiatives, research or events. In addition, Marketing may, at its discretion, require the deactivation of any non-official social media channel that seeks to represent the University as a whole or in part.

4.4.4 Requests for staff to act as spokespersons on behalf of the University through social media are managed through referral to Marketing.

4.5 Reputation and logo

4.5.1 Staff and students must not use the University's logo or any other University trademark without the prior written permission of Marketing and must not use the University's name, directly or by association, in a manner that is likely to be misleading or bring the University into disrepute.

4.5.2 Only official University social media channels may purport to represent the University.

4.5.3 Any member of the University community who identifies a suspected fake social media account purporting to represent the University should immediately report this suspicion to Marketing.

4.6 Official University social media channels

4.6.1 Official University social media channels are either managed by, or in consultation with, Marketing.

4.6.2 To seek permission to become an official University social media channel, contact Marketing via the staff intranet.

4.7 Learning and teaching

4.7.1 University learning and teaching material should not be provided to students via social media channels.

4.7.2 Social media channels may be used as a supplementary communication tool in a learning and teaching context, alongside other modes of student communication including (but not limited to) University email and posts in the University's learning management system.

4.7.3 Learning and teaching-related social media channels are not official University social media channels and must not use the University logo, brand, promotional images or other assets.

4.7.3 Social media used as a learning and teaching communication channel must be restricted to students enrolled in the particular course, with the channel closed at the end of the relevant teaching period. All users must be aware of their responsibilities set out in this and other University policies and procedures.

4.7.4 The use of social media in a learning and teaching context should align with the learning outcomes and graduate attributes of the particular course or program.

4.8 Research

4.8.1 Social media can be effective in improving research impact. However, it should form part of a broader impact strategy.

4.8.2 Resources to strengthen capability in the use of social media for improving research impact are available to Academic staff and HDR students.

4.8.3 The use of social media to facilitate research should be underpinned by a commitment to uphold the University's reputation and integrity.

4.8.4 Staff who wish to use social media in the conduct of research, and who require an association with the University brand, must consult with Marketing, as well as the Office of Research, to determine the appropriate strategy.

4.9 Access controls

4.9.1 Passwords for official University social media channels will be centrally managed via a university-controlled platform. The platform is administered by Marketing.

4.9.2 Passwords should be reset immediately when channel administrators leave their role and/or the University.

4.10 Non-compliance reporting

4.10.1 Any person concerned that a student, staff member or other member of the USC community is operating in contravention of this or other University policies and procedures may report their concerns.

4.10.2 Reports regarding staff conduct should be sent to the Director, People and Culture. Reports will be reviewed to determine whether the matter requires investigation or action under the appropriate policies and procedures and/or a response on behalf of the University.

4.10.3 Staff members who believe they are being bullied, harassed, or discriminated against on social media channels may also address their concerns to the Director, People and Culture.

4.10.4 Breaches of this Policy and Procedures that are suspected to constitute student misconduct should be reported to the Academic Registrar and Director, Student Services as set out in the Student Conduct – Governing Policy.

4.10.5 Students who believe they are being bullied, threatened, harassed, sexual harassed or discriminated against on social media channels may address their concerns through the Student Grievance Resolution – Governing Policy, Student Grievances – Procedures and the Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment and Respectful Relationships – Governing Policy and associated Procedures. These policies and procedures outline various options to resolve the grievance including conciliation, mediation, making a disclosure or a report to Student Wellbeing/SafeUSC and/or reporting to the police.

4.11 Non-compliance cooperation

4.11.1 Where required by the University, a user is expected to remove, and cooperate with all attempts to remove, any comment, post or other online content where the University forms the view that the content is in breach of the University's expectations of staff or students.

5. Records management

5.1 Records related to the use of the University logo, approval of channels, talent releases, reports and investigations into non-compliance, and any matter related to this policy and procedure must be captured as complete, reliable and accurate evidence of business decisions, actions, recommendations, advice or instruction in relation to social media.

5.2 Activity on the University's official social media channels must be captured as complete, reliable and accurate evidence of University operations and engagement activities.

5.3 All records must be captured in an approved records management system, in accordance with the University's Information and Records Management – Procedures.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Acceptable Use of ICT Resources - Operational Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Resources - Procedures
- Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying and Harassment - Operational Policy
- Conflict of Interest - Governing Policy
- Copyright - Academic Policy
- Data Governance - Operational Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - Operational Policy
- Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom - Academic Policy
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing - Governing Policy
- Marketing and Communications - Operational Policy
- Records Management - Procedures
- Resolution of Complaints (Staff) - Guidelines
- Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment and Respectful Relationships (Students) - Operational Policy
- Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment and Respectful Relationships (Students) - Procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct - Governing Policy
- Student Complaints Resolution - Academic Policy
- Student Conduct - Governing Policy
- Student Misconduct - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Social Media - Operational Policy

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

- Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)
- Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cwlth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cwlth)
- Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld)
- Queensland Information Standards
- Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)
- Work Health & Safety Act 2011 (Qld)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwlth)
- Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)
- Defamation Act 2005 (Qld)
- Fair Trading Act 1989 (Qld)
- Student Charter
- Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)
- Records Governance Policy (Qld)