



University of  
South Australia

# Social Media Reference Guide

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## **GENERAL**

### **Purpose**

The University of South Australia ('the University') recognises that social media is an increasingly essential business tool. However, use of social media may create legal and ethical dilemmas if online behaviour is inappropriate, unprofessional, or unlawful. This Social Media Reference Guide aims to inform staff members of the types of social media used by the University and expected standards of use and the consequences of inappropriate use. This reference guide is designed to protect staff, as well as the University's image and reputation, confidential information, and intellectual property.

### **Scope**

This reference guide applies to all employees, volunteers (including adjuncts), agents, contractors, and subcontractors performing work for the University. This Social Media Reference Guide should be read in conjunction with University Policies and Procedures which relate to social media use (see [Policies and Procedures](#)). This reference guide does not detract from a staff member's rights and responsibilities under relevant University policies and procedures.

### **Definitions**

'Personal Use' [of social media] means private use, at work or at home, that does not occur at the either at the direction of the University or as required in relation to the duties and responsibilities of a University staff member. It includes, for example, posting on a personal Facebook 'timeline', writing and sharing a blog post from a personal blog, or sharing photographs taken with a personal device.

'Professional Use' [of social media] means use in an official capacity as a representative of the University, or at the direction of the University, and/or with the University's express consent. It includes, for example, social media use in the course of creating, maintaining, and monitoring Academic Unit, research or unit profiles, or under existing University social media channels, maintained by the Communications and Marketing Unit (CMK), or to provide an opinion as an expert and/or approved representative of the University.

'Social media' refers to websites and applications used for social networking. Common social media applications include social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, blogs (personal, professional and those published anonymously), and discussion forums and message boards.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

### **Primary Goals of Social Media**

The University embraces social media as a set of communications channels for a variety of reasons. Social media can assist with:

- Engaging with prospective students early in their decision-making process and making them feel part of the University community
- Promoting the benefits of studying at UniSA and providing information, support, and advice to prospective students
- Building relationships and increased engagement with current UniSA staff and students.
- Providing student support services to current students
- Building contact with other researchers and promoting UniSA research work.
- Connecting staff nationally and internationally; including recruitment of new staff.
- Delivering a high level of customer service to enquirers
- Developing relationships with key community groups online
- Building a national and international profile and reputation for the academic profile of the University.

UniSA's Communications and Marketing Unit (CMK) has oversight of the University's primary social media channels. For details on the use of social media, see the [CMK Intranet](#) (staff access only).

### **How is the University using Social Media?**

The University uses social media to create a vibrant digital community that inspires, educates, entertains, communicates and highlights achievements, successes, research, partnerships, campus culture and student life.

Below are some of the more prominent social media tools currently being used by the University to facilitate conversations with key stakeholders. While there are many other social networking sites, the select number shown are those channels where the University's key target audiences can be found. Currently the primary channels used are:

- Facebook – An information-sharing platform used by the University to share stories and showcase student culture
- Twitter – Micro blog, news and events
- YouTube – Video
- LinkedIn – Professional networking, news and events
- Instagram - A photo and video sharing platform used by the University to showcase student life and campus culture
- Weibo (Chinese) – Micro blog, news and events, videos, photos.

The UniSA Library has developed a guide to [help researchers use social media](#). In addition, the Communications and Marketing Unit has a [range of resources](#) (staff access only) to support professional use of social media and can facilitate training if required. Training sessions are scheduled and published on the [UniSA Content Management System user training website](#) (staff access only).

## **Emergency Communications**

Social media also plays a primary role in the University's crisis communications plan. The University has deemed that social media will be the first channel used for University communication during identified crisis situations and will be managed by the Communications and Marketing Unit. Please refer to the [Crisis Communications Plan](#).

## **Target Audiences**

The University of South Australia uses social media to connect and engage with key stakeholders including:

- Current students
- Prospective students
- International students and agents
- Donors / Alumni
- UniSA staff
- Industry
- Media
- Academics and researchers.

## **Applying for a UniSA Social Media Account**

Units and teams interested in creating new social media accounts should contact the Communications and Marketing Unit for advice. Guidance is available on the [CMK Intranet](#) (staff access only).

In some instances, the University also uses Social Media feeds to add interest and current content to website pages. For enquiries about this, please contact [webenquiry@unisa.edu.au](mailto:webenquiry@unisa.edu.au).

## **PROFESSIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Posting on University Social Media**

Material posted on University social media platforms has the same status as any public communication from the University. Relevant [policies and procedures](#) should be observed and approvals should be obtained before posting. For detailed advice, please see the documentation on the [Communications and Marketing Unit Intranet](#) (staff access only) but the following principles apply:

#### **Think about the audience**

When responding to comments or tweets, be personable, accurate, relaxed and friendly, as appropriate to the channel or social media site.

#### **It's not a one-way conversation**

Engage with and listen to others. Social media is not a broadcasting tool. Comment and respond to the conversations (see section below on monitoring comments).

#### **Respond in a timely manner**

Responses to queries should be timely and information posted should be up-to-date and accurate. State openly how long it will take to reply to enquiries once they are made. The preferred average time to respond to an enquiry is three hours.

#### **Ensure confidentiality**

Where confidential, private or sensitive information is concerned, be wary. Social media is inherently insecure, so unless the sharing of information is authorised or specifically requested, do not disclose.

#### **Abide by the law**

Do not post content that violates any state or federal laws. Ensure you secure permission to use or reproduce copyrighted content and acknowledge the content owner, as appropriate

#### **Trust and credibility**

Always act honestly to ensure the credibility of the University's operations and reputation is maintained. If mistakes are made, be the first to admit them, and where possible make public corrections. Depending on the nature and sensitivity of a planned correction, you may wish to seek the advice of a representative from the Communications and Marketing Unit before posting.

#### **Be a valued community member**

If sharing information from outside the University, ensure it is relevant to the target audience and from a trusted and reliable source. This will increase the value of its profile and will ensure that the University is a valued member of the community.

#### **Use of images and/or video**

In most cases, prior permission (i.e. a signed release form) must be obtained to post, share or distribute images of individuals whose images are identifiable. For that reason, it is always best to use content, such as photographs or videos, obtained by University representatives specifically for the

purpose of posting or distribution. For assistance with release forms, contact the Communications and Marketing Unit. Ensure the use of images / video is done in a respectful and culturally appropriate way. For example, [Yurirka: Proppa Engagement with Aboriginal Peoples](#) provides guidance on how to work, engage and partner respectfully with Aboriginal Peoples.

### **Monitor and remove potentially defamatory comments**

On 8 September 2021, the High Court decided that, for the purposes of defamation law, an organisation that hosts or facilitates online or social media sites is considered to be a “publisher” of any comments by third parties that are posted to those sites, and therefore responsible for those comments. The decision highlights the need for any University staff involved in posting to social media platforms to regularly monitor sites where members of the public may make comments which are not moderated and are available for viewing by anyone who can access the site. Defamatory comments must be removed as soon as practicable – ideally immediately and preferably within 24 hours. If you have any questions or wish to seek additional guidance on issues arising from this legal case, contact Council and Legal Services at [legal.services@unisa.edu.au](mailto:legal.services@unisa.edu.au). or by submitting a legal enquiry via [Appian](#).

If comments on a social media post from a University account are unable to be monitored by the staff involved in making the post, please consider and implement options for disabling, moderating or hiding comments.

### **Remove inappropriate content as soon as possible**

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) states that businesses such as the University can be held responsible for posts or public comments made on the University’s social media pages by others, which are false, or likely to mislead or deceive consumers. University staff need to regularly monitor social media pages they are responsible for and remove any posts / comments that may be false, misleading or deceptive as soon as they become aware of them. The ACCC offers additional advice on [managing social media](#) and can require companies to substantiate any claims on their social media pages.

In addition, the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) considers business-managed social media pages, including user-generated comments on those pages, as a form of digital marketing. It recommends that these pages be regularly monitored (at least once every day), and for at least two hours after any post. Please see the [AANA Marketing in the Digital Space industry practice note](#) for further details.

### **Understand that not all comments will be positive**

Respond to negative comments professionally and provide any additional information that may help resolve the issue. In some cases it is best to ignore, hide or remove negative comments. If you’re unsure how to respond to a concerning comment, it may be best to flag it with your line manager or contact the Communications and Marketing Unit ([social.media@unisa.edu.au](mailto:social.media@unisa.edu.au)) for advice.

### **Comply with the Participation Guidelines**

When posting on a University hosted social media site, review and abide by UniSA’s Social Networking Participation Guidelines (see below). These guidelines are published on UniSA’s primary social media accounts. UniSA’s Social Networking Participation Guidelines read as follows:

*The University reserves the right to edit or delete any content (including but not limited to comments, images, videos) that it deems to be offensive, discriminatory, profane, indecent, slanderous, obscene, soliciting, threatening or illegal and to block any users who post such content. This also includes*

*commercial content and unsolicited advertising. Please do not post material that could be considered an infringement on the rights of others.*

*Remember that these are public forums and whatever information you share will be viewed by others. The University has no control over the policies and practices of these third party sites. Once you leave [www.unisa.edu.au](http://www.unisa.edu.au), or any of its related sites you are subject to the policies of the third party sites.*

*If you are a staff member or student of the University, please remember that all laws and University policies apply. We suggest that you take time to review these [policies](#). Please consult the News and Communications team (CMK) ([social.media@unisa.edu.au](mailto:social.media@unisa.edu.au)) if you have questions about the appropriateness of your comment.*

## **Posting as a Representative of the University on Externally Hosted Social Media**

Representation as a University staff member may be explicit, for example, by posting under a profile which identifies the staff member as employed by the University (such as LinkedIn), or implicit, for example, by providing information which makes it demonstrable that the staff member is associated with the University. When this occurs, the following guidelines apply. Staff members must also adhere to the [Freedom of Speech policy](#) and related [Public Statement Procedure](#).

### **Seek Approval**

Do not post in a representative capacity on social media without first obtaining or confirming approval to do so from a manager or supervisor.

### **Use a Disclaimer**

For example, state that: “The comments on this site are mine alone and do not reflect the views of the University of South Australia.”

### **Be Professional**

Use courteous and professional communication, at all times.

### **Refrain from Using the UniSA Logo or Make Endorsements**

Do not use the UniSA logo or images on third party social media platforms. Do not use the University’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.

### **Comply with Third Party Policies**

Review and abide by the host site’s policies and practices. If those policies and practices are inconsistent with duties owed to the University, do not post on the site.

### **Avoid Untrustworthy or Unlawful Sites**

Do not participate in social networking activities which use language (text or audio) or images which portray or can be interpreted to portray illegal activities, harassment, profanity, obscenity, pornography, abuse of people or animals, defamatory or libelous matter, threats, infringement of



intellectual property rights, invasion of privacy, hate, discrimination, embarrassment to any person or entity, or matter otherwise injurious, objectionable, or inhospitable to professionalism or the image of the University.

## **Further Advice and Assistance**

For assistance with establishing or maintaining social media profiles please consult the News and Communications team (CMK) ([social.media@unisa.edu.au](mailto:social.media@unisa.edu.au)).

## **PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

In certain circumstances, inappropriate or unapproved personal use of social media may contravene the policies and procedures of the University and could, if established as such, amount to unacceptable performance and/or misconduct or serious misconduct, which may result in termination of employment. A staff member may be directed to remove content shared or posted privately by them if it contravenes relevant university policies.

### **Use Social Media responsibly during Work Hours**

The University supports occasional and responsible personal use of social media during work hours. As a guide, staff members are required to limit their use to breaks. Responsible use means behaviour that is aligned to the University's [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) and which is in accordance with the guidance provided in this document.

### **Refrain from Discrimination, Harassment, and Inappropriate Behaviour**

UniSA prohibits conduct which may comprise discriminatory, harassing or bullying behaviour toward students, a staff member or a group of staff members. Such conduct may include:

- making discriminatory, harassing, or bullying representations
- using offensive language
- inappropriately sharing information
- issuing threats or insults
- posting, sharing, or liking offensive material privately on social media, within or outside of work hours, whether or not publicly viewable.

### **Refrain from Making Defamatory Statements**

Social media is a public forum. A staff member who makes a public representation on social media, whether or not in a professional capacity, which damages the reputation of another person may be deemed to have defamed that person. For abundant caution, staff members should refrain from making false or misleading statements on social media which might be damaging to the reputation of another person and ensure that their social media feeds are not publicly viewable, where possible (for example, by switching to 'private').

### **Be mindful when posting on social media**

Staff should refrain from knowingly posting, sharing, or liking false or misleading material on social media which is disparaging to the University and which may cause damage to its reputation.

Be aware that many social media platforms are public by default, so staff and students can often be associated with the University through the "about" section of their social media profile(s), through their LinkedIn page and/or other websites. Be mindful of this when posting on social media and conscious of the fact that social media use can blur the lines between private and work life.

### **Disclaim**

If a staff member is posting on social media in a personal capacity, an appropriate disclaimer should be used to make it clear that the staff member is sharing their personal views and is not acting as a formal representative of the University.

### **Consider the implications of 'Friending'**

Staff members should consider the short and long term implications of sending or accepting 'friend requests' (e.g. through Facebook) from colleagues or business partners of the University. This has the potential to blur professional boundaries. Care should be taken when posting amongst friends who are also colleagues, as the post may be connected to work and negatively impact on relationships in the workplace. Whereas Facebook tends to have a 'friend and family' focus, LinkedIn is primarily used for professional networking and career development, so may be a more appropriate platform for connecting with colleagues.

### **Further Advice and Assistance**

If a staff member is unsure whether their personal use of social media may contravene University policies, they should speak with their line manager or a senior manager in their area in the first instance. If confidential assistance is required, contact the relevant People, Talent and Culture business partner.

## APPENDIX

### UniSA Policy Bank

#### University Policies - Corporate

- C - 1 Inclusive language
- C - 2 Equal opportunity see also [Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures \(Academic and General Staff\)](#) and [Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures Students Deleted - \(Replaced by Student complaints resolution\)](#)
- C - 12 Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
- C - 20 University activities (Disestablished - see [Outside Work Policy](#)) see also [Intellectual property Guidelines](#); [Personal risk Guidelines \(Disestablished\)](#); [Research & consultancy Guidelines \(UniSA access only\)](#)
- C - 21 Anti-racism
- C - 22 [Acceptable use of Information Technology \(IT\) facilities](#) was C - 22 Use of University information technology facilities)
- C - 38 [Freedom of Speech](#)
- C - 38 P1 [Public Statement Procedure](#)
- [University of South Australia: Statement on Academic Freedom.](#)

#### Information Strategy and Technology Services

- [Acceptable Use Policy](#)
    - [Overview](#)
    - [Scope](#)
    - [Users with Authorised Accounts](#)
    - [Other Users](#)
    - [Acceptable Use](#)
    - [User Accounts and Passwords](#)
    - [University Responsibility](#)
    - [Monitoring Use](#)
    - [Compliance](#)
    - [Exceptions](#)
    - [Implementation and Review](#)
    - [Communication](#)
- Code of Conduct for Students <https://i.unisa.edu.au/policies-and-procedures/codes/students/>  
Code of Ethical Conduct <https://i.unisa.edu.au/policies-and-procedures/codes/ethics/>  
Code of Good Practice <https://i.unisa.edu.au/policies-and-procedures/codes/good-practice/>