



University of  
South Australia

# Social Media Guidelines

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## **GENERAL**

### **Purpose**

The University of South Australia ('the University') recognises that social media and social networking are valuable and increasingly essential business tools. However, use of social media may create legal and ethical dilemmas if on-line behaviour is poorly thought through, unprofessional, or unlawful. These Guidelines aim to inform staff members of the types of social media used by the University, business benefits of social media, as well as expected standards of use and the consequences of inappropriate use. These Guidelines are designed to protect staff, as well as the University's image and reputation, confidential information, and intellectual property.

### **Scope**

These guidelines apply to all employees, volunteers (including adjuncts), agents, contractors, and subcontractors performing work for the University. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with University Policies and Procedures which relate to social media use (see Policy Bank). These Guidelines do not detract from a staff member's overarching duty not to act in a way that may cause damage to the University or risk of harm to the health or safety of members of the University community.

### **Definitions**

'Personal Use' [of social media] means private use, at work or at home, that does not occur at the direction of the University. It includes, for example, posting on a personal Facebook 'wall', writing and sharing a blog post from a personal blog, and 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, or with the University's consent. It includes, for example, use in the course of creating, maintaining, and monitoring division, school, research or unit profiles, or under existing University social media channels, maintained by the Communications and Marketing Unit, or to provide an opinion as an expert and 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 and LinkedIn, blogs (personal, professional and those published anonymously) and microblogs such as Twitter, content sharing websites such as YouTube and Instagram, and discussion forums and message boards.

'Social networking' means the use of dedicated websites and applications to communicate with other users, or to find people with similar interests to one's own. (Oxford Dictionary)

## **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 like 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.

### **Social Media Landscape**

Social media refers to online community sites including Facebook and LinkedIn, file sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube, blogs, forums and microblogging sites like Twitter. Social media allows for the easy sharing and re-purposing of existing content, expanding the reach of work, and enabling others to share it with their friends and networks. Social media is a type of digital communications where the emphasis is on user generated content. The benefits and characteristics of individual sites and platforms vary, just as they do in the print media or other communication mediums.

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

Social media channels are used by the University in a similar way to other media forms. Social media is a tactic and its use can vary depending on the communications and marketing strategy pursued.

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 – Micro blog, news and events, videos, photos
- Twitter – Micro blog, news and events
- YouTube – Video
- LinkedIn – Professional networking, news and events
- Flickr – Photos
- Instagram - Photos
- Google+ – Micro blog, news and events, videos, photos
- Weibo (Chinese) – Micro blog, news and events, videos, photos
- Youku (Chinese) – Video

Social media also plays a primary role in the University's crisis management strategy. 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 Management Communications policy.

## Target Audiences

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

- Current students
- Prospective students and influencers
- International students and agents
- Donors/ Alumni
- UniSA staff
- Media
- The academic and research community

## Applying for a UniSA Social Media Account

Units and teams interested in creating new profiles need to address the following questions through a submission for approval to the Communications and Marketing Unit. These questions have been shaped in order to assist the area to confirm their communications objective and also scope required resources.

### **What is the communications goal?**

If the goal to promote an event or to share news about the unit, submitting content for UniSA's existing social media sites might be a better option. Social media outposts such as those on Facebook and Twitter require daily maintenance and follow up on enquiries in a timely manner.

### **Who is the audience?**

Determining the type of audience will help identify the best platforms to use. Consider who is being targeted and what strategies will be put in place to continue to build and engage with that audience.

### **What is the message?**

This is a trick question. Social media is about connecting, not pushing a message. A good social media participant is, foremost, a good listener. The online community will communicate what they want to hear. Regular monitoring is the key to finding out what the audience is talking about.

### **What is the special content?**

What information, benefits, access or commentary will be provided? Can it be provided on a regular basis suitable to a social media environment?

**Will the platform be sufficiently resourced?**

Who will be responsible for monitoring and the moderation of the page? How will enquiries be fielded? Unlike email, social media demands an immediate response. Will the environment be updated at least every other day?

**Will the UniSA logo be used?**

Social media sites created on behalf of the University should use simple graphics that represent the UniSA brand. The Communications and Marketing Unit can provide guidance with graphics and design. The CMK style guide provides information on logo permissions and standards [www.unisa.edu.au/cmkt](http://www.unisa.edu.au/cmkt)

## **PROFESSIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

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

Material posted on University social media sites and platforms has the same status as any public communication from the University. Appropriate policies should be observed and approvals should be obtained. The following guidelines also 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.

#### **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 3 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. Get permission to use or reproduce copyrighted content.

#### **Trust and credibility**

Always act honestly to ensure credibility is maintained. If mistakes are made, be the first to admit them, and where possible make public corrections.

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

Share the best information from trusted sources outside of the University. 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 release) 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.

## **Remove inappropriate content within 24 hours**

A ruling by the Advertising Standards Bureau, and supported by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, dictates that Facebook Pages are a form of marketing and therefore subject to regulation under advertising codes. It stipulates that brands are responsible for all pictures, comments, posts and other user generated content and can be held accountable for failing to remove discriminatory, false, and misleading information within 24 hours of it being posted.

## **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 negative comments.

## **Comply with the Participation Guidelines**

When posting on a University hosted social media site, review and abide by the applicable Social Networking Participation Guidelines. The standard 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 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 an employee 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, 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 Public Statements and Representation by Members of University Staff and **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 libellous 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, the personal use of social media may contravene the policies and procedures of the University and amount to unacceptable performance and/or misconduct. Depending on the circumstances, if inappropriate use constitutes serious misconduct, this may result in termination of employment. These Guidelines outline the expectations of the University in respect of responsible personal use of social media. A staff member may be directed to remove content shared or posted privately by them if it contravenes these Guidelines.

### **Moderate and Responsibly Use Social Media during Work Hours**

The University supports moderate and responsible 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; and
- 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').

### **Do not Disparage UniSA**

It is a condition of every staff member's employment that they refrain from making any adverse statements or do anything else, publicly or otherwise, which may bring discredit to the University. Staff members must refrain from posting, sharing, or liking false or misleading material on social media which is disparaging to the University or which may cause damage to its reputation.

### **Disclaim**

If a staff member may be deemed to be 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.

### **Further Advice and Assistance**

If a staff member is unsure whether their personal use of social media may contravene these Guidelines they should speak with their local 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 - 5 Public statements and representation by members of University staff and students
- 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)

#### 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/>