

Social Media Policy



Responsibility for policy: Director of Marketing

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: March 2025

Next review date: March 2029

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff of the University of Waikato.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - a. provide guidance to staff with respect to both personal and official University use of social media, and
 - b. set out the accountabilities and responsibilities of staff in relation to the University's social media presence.

Scope

3. This policy is broad in nature to accommodate the fast-changing landscape of social media as new digital tools and platforms emerge.

Related documents

4. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:
 - [Computer Systems Policy](#)
 - [Freedom of Expression Statement](#)
 - [Media Policy](#)
 - [Personal Information and Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Social Media Guidelines](#)
 - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)

Definitions

5. In this policy:

social media means the collective of online communication channels, portals and websites dedicated to facilitating community-based interactions, sharing and collaborations. Social media allows people to socially interact, converse, network and share with one another online; examples of social media platforms include BlueSky, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, X, WeChat, Neighbourly and YouTube.

Principles

6. The University of Waikato supports the use of social media as a way of facilitating communication and dialogue between its various audiences, e.g. prospective students, current students, staff, alumni, the business sector, the research community, University stakeholders, the media and the general public.
7. Staff must always be alert to the fact that postings on social media sites can be immediate, public and permanent; any consequential actions to modify or delete content can aggravate and escalate situations.

Personal social media involvement

8. A staff member who uses a social media page or group as a private individual:
 - a. must not post confidential or proprietary information of or about the University of Waikato, its students, staff (including former staff and Council members), former and current Foundation trustees, donors or alumni which was acquired in the course of the staff member's employment at the University
 - b. when posting about the University, must do so in a professional manner that discloses their relationship with the University and must consider how the post may reflect on the University brand if it brings the University into disrepute; this is particularly relevant where the subject matter is controversial
 - c. must consider the privacy of co-workers, and must not post photos, videos, or details of internal conversations that may identify them without their consent
 - d. must not use the University of Waikato coat of arms or any University logo on personal social media pages
 - e. must not use the University of Waikato name, coat of arms, campus imagery or any University logo to promote a product, cause, political party, or national or local government candidate, and
 - f. must ensure that any information posted about the University of Waikato is factually correct.

University of Waikato social media pages, groups or presences

9. A staff member who wishes to establish a University social media page, group or presence must seek prior approval to do so from the [Social Media Manager](#).
10. As part of the approval of the establishment of a social media page, group or presence a staff member in the relevant area will be assigned with responsibility for maintaining it; the Social Media Manager must be advised of any delegation, transfer or vacancy of that responsibility.
11. Staff with responsibility for the maintenance of all University social media pages, groups or presences must share administration rights and access details with the Social Media Manager or delegated authority.
12. Staff must not reproduce or modify content, photographs, videos, recordings, trademarks or other material protected by another person's or entity's copyright on any University social media site without first obtaining the appropriate permission either by consent of the original author or by acknowledging them as the source of information, whichever is relevant under the circumstance; images may be able to be sourced from the University's digital library (available from [Marketing](#)) or purchased online.
13. All University social media pages, groups or presences will be monitored through a social media tool (currently [falcon.io](#)) that measures social analytics, community engagement and provides reports for governance purposes.
14. Any post to a University social media page, group or presence that has the potential to bring the University into disrepute must be directed to the administrator of the page, group or presence or to the [Social Media Manager](#) so that it may be managed appropriately.
15. Any approach made by the media to a University social media page, group or presence must be directed to [Communications](#) who will respond.

16. In an emergency situation, staff with responsibility for the maintenance of University social media pages, groups or presences may only share official information posted about the situation that has been published on the University of Waikato website; they must not create and post their own messages.

Responsibilities

17. A staff member approved by the Social Media Manager as having responsibility for the maintenance of a University social media page, group or presence must:
- comply with the [Social Media Guidelines](#)
 - undertake mandatory social media training
 - use the social media site or presence only for the purpose for which it was established
 - be cognisant of how the general public might interpret the information posted
 - monitor and maintain the social media page, group or presence on a regular basis, and moderate it where appropriate, and
 - ensure that the information posted:
 - is factually correct
 - is up to date
 - is authentic and professional in tone, style and language
 - is wherever possible communicated in the first person
 - includes appropriate links to the University of Waikato webpage
 - complies with the [Personal Information and Privacy Policy](#), and
 - complies with any branding guidelines established by the Director of Marketing for the purpose of social media.
18. The Social Media Manager has authority to moderate any content on any University social media page, group or presence and to require the amendment or deletion of any posts that, in their opinion, pose a reputational risk to the University.
19. Complaints with respect to any University social media should be directed to the Director of Marketing; where possible, complaints should be accompanied by a screenshot of the post in question and include a date and time stamp.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

20. The Social Media Manager is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and reporting any breaches to the Director of Marketing and, in turn, to the Vice-Chancellor.
21. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).

Waivers and variations

22. Only the Director of Marketing has authority to vary or waive the provisions of this policy in individual cases.