

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



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Approved by Council: 9 Oct 2019
Revised by Council: None

Related documents

Information Technology Access and Use Policy

Media Relations Policy

Privacy Policy

Regulation 9 Code of Conduct

Regulation 8 Members of the University

1. Rationale

- 1.1 The University recognises that social media and blogging represent a growing form of communication for educational and not-for-profit organisations, providing a valuable point of connection to engage members and the community on a regular basis.
- 1.2 Significantly, it is also a medium in which rules and boundaries are constantly being tested and the fast-moving pace of changes in social media channels designates that this policy and its procedures will require regular review.
- 1.3 Consistent with the University Vision and the principle of academic freedom, the University actively fosters dialogue and encourages its members to participate in courteous, truthful, engaged and respectful conversation including through social media and blogging.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 This policy seeks to encourage and maximise the University's social media impact, while protecting its members and public reputation. This includes sharing trustworthy information and links with students, staff, alumni and supporters, and utilising the experience of its members and volunteers to generate appropriate social media content.
- 2.2 This policy provides direction for members of the University when engaging in or utilising social media channels.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all members of the University as defined in Regulation 8.
- 3.2 The policy applies to all posting and sharing of original or existing content on social media channels, comments attributed to official University and College accounts, descriptions of units, courses, events or activities and achievements at the University including training badges or other official information on personal social media accounts and comments made by members of the University that may be linked in any way to the University.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Social Media:** Websites and applications that enable users to share content or to participate in social networking. Examples of social media include social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn, media sharing networks such as Instagram and YouTube, blogging networks such as WordPress, micro-blogging networks such as Twitter, and wikis such as Wikipedia.
- 4.2 **Spam:** The use of commenting or posting systems to send an unsolicited message (spam) that is solely promotional or malicious in nature, as well as sending the same message repeatedly.
- 4.3 **Troll:** A person in an online community who deliberately posts offensive, divisive and controversial comments.

5. Policy Statement

- 5.1 The University's social media use is consistent with its Code of Conduct and promotes:
- a) **Integrity:** The University will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals. In addition, it will post in accordance with the University's *Privacy Policy*
 - b) **Professionalism:** The University's social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and consistent tone
 - c) **Information Sharing:** The University encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members
 - d) **Brand:** All social media posts should be in keeping with the overall image that the University wishes to present to the public, and posts made on or through its own social media channels should not detract from its reputation.
- 5.2 The University of Divinity aims to grow its social media base to engage with existing and potential members, alumni, donors, supporters and other stakeholders.

6. Official University Social Media Accounts

- 6.1 The Communications Manager is an officer nominated by the Vice-Chancellor with delegated responsibility for coordination of the University of Divinity's social media management.
- 6.2 The Communications Manager oversees implementation and expansion of social media and supports the development of the University's social media strategy.
- 6.3 Posts may only be made on behalf of the University using its online social media profiles by the Communications Manager or a person authorised by either the Vice-Chancellor or the Communications Manager.
- 6.4 The Communications Manager is responsible for:
- a) Ensuring all posts and comments are in keeping with this Policy

- b) Ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken to correct or remove inappropriate posts or comments, including defamatory or illegal material, and in minimising the risk of a repeat incident
- c) Ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken in repairing relations with any person or organisation offended by an inappropriate post
- d) Moderating and monitoring public responses to social media on the University's official profiles, such as blog and Facebook comments, to ensure that trolling and spamming does not occur, to remove offensive or inappropriate comments or caution offensive posters, and to reply to requests for information generated by any post topic
- e) Seeking to maintain a balance between encouraging discussion and information sharing, and maintaining a professional and appropriate online presence
- f) Delegating the responsibilities outlined above to another staff member or volunteer and providing appropriate training to them.

7. Use of Social Media by University Members

7.1 Members of the University have the same right to freedom of expression as other members of the community. However, recognising their position in the University, and public awareness of that position, members must behave in a way that does not call into question their capacity to act apolitically and impartially in their role. The reputation of the University for scholarly excellence, academic integrity and academic freedom is not to be placed at risk by comments made by members of the University.

7.2 When engaging in social media, members of the University should be aware that content published on the internet can remain public indefinitely. Content may be replicated and shared beyond the original intended audience and then be viewed out of context or used for an unintended purpose. According to the terms and conditions of some third-party sites, the content published is the property of the site where it is posted and may be re-used in ways that were not intended.

7.3 Members of the University:

- a) Must not use a University email address to register personal social media accounts
- b) Must abide by this Policy
- c) Must not make comments that are, or could be perceived to be,:
 - i) made on behalf of the University, rather than being an expression of a personal view
 - ii) interfere with their capacity to fulfil duties at the University in an impartial and unbiased manner
 - iii) so harsh or extreme in their criticism of the University, a member of the University, or its policies, that the author is no longer able to continue in their role professionally, efficiently or impartially

- iv) a gratuitous personal attack that is connected with being a member of the University
- v) intended to compromise public confidence in the University

8. Management of Comments on University Social Media Accounts and Blogs

- 8.1 The University actively fosters dialogue, supports academic freedom, and encourages its members to participate in civil, engaged and respectful conversation.
- 8.2 The posting and presence of content on University of Divinity websites and social media accounts do not constitute an endorsement from the University. Additionally, the University of Divinity does not agree with or endorse every comment that individuals post on its webpages.
- 8.3 The University's moderators have discretion to remove or edit comments that are deemed inappropriate. This includes comments that are:
 - a) Spam
 - b) Solely promotional in nature
 - c) Harassing, intimidating or vilifying of others: while conversation and sharing of different ideas is encouraged, all comments need to be respectful towards contributors and those leaving comments
 - d) Profane, obscene or vulgar
 - e) Defamatory to a person or people
- 8.4 While the University's digital platforms are available at all times, its moderation capabilities are not. The University may not see every inappropriate comment immediately. It asks readers to ignore personal attacks and negative speech or respond politely, and to report such behaviour directly to the Communications Manager.
- 8.5 The University's moderators have the right to block users who breach the principles or procedures of this Policy and to refer complaints about them to social media providers.

9. Acknowledgements

- 9.1 In the preparation of this policy, reference has been made to the *Australian Institute of Community Directors Social Media Policy Template*, and *Australian Government Department of Social Services Social Media Policy and Guidance for Making Public Comment Online*.

10. Review Date

- 10.1 This policy must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2023.