

# Social Media Communication Policy

## Section 1 - Introduction

(1) Social media are important tools for the University to communicate with its students, staff, communities and other stakeholders.

(2) The Social Media Communication Policy provides a framework for participation in social media by University staff and students regarding University matters.

(3) The policy is supported by the University of Newcastle [Social Media Communication Procedures](#) and [Social Media Communication Guidelines](#) and must be read in conjunction with these documents.

## Section 2 - Policy Intent

(4) This policy is to encourage and support staff and students responsible use of social media use when communicating on one of the University's official social media channels or commenting on University matters on other social media channels.

## Section 3 - Policy scope

(5) The policy applies to all University staff representing the University on official or external social media channels or commenting on University matters on other channels.

(6) The policy applies to University students engaging in social media on one of the University's official social media channels or commenting on University matters on external and personal sites (see section 4).

(7) The University's Social Media Policy does not apply to personal use of social media channels where staff and students make no reference to University matters.

(8) This policy also applies to any person formally associated with the University including conjoints, academic visitors, contractors and external members of advisory boards.

## Section 4 - Policy Principles

(9) Information posted on the University's official social media channels, by external parties, does not necessarily reflect the opinions and ideas of the University.

(10) The Chief Marketing Officer will be responsible for monitoring social media channels but does not take responsibility for the accuracy of submitted content.

(11) The University reserves the right to remove content that does not meet the requirements of this policy. The Chief Marketing Officer will also monitor external and personal social media pages and sites that make reference to the University of Newcastle and will initiate any required action.

## **Use of Social Media as a University Representative**

(12) The following principles apply to all staff commenting on or referencing University matters on the University's official social media channels, as well as on external and personal social media channels.

- a. When engaging on social media channels, the University expects staff to disclose their University employment and role and responsibilities where relevant.
- b. The University expects its staff only to offer advice, support or comment on topics that fall within an individual's area of responsibility or expertise in the University.
- c. The University expects staff and students only to provide publicly available information, and not to comment on or disclose any confidential University information. Breaching copyright laws is unlawful.
- d. At all times while engaged in social media, all University staff members will act according to the University's [Code of Conduct](#). The University explicitly prohibits social media being used to harass, vilify, bully or discriminate against another person.

## **Use of Social Media as an Expert Commentator**

(13) The following principles apply to University researchers commenting on topics in their field of expertise, either on the University's official social media channels or on external and personal social media channels.

- a. When engaging in social media, expert commentators can expect the support of the University. This does not imply endorsement of a particular view put forward, but means that their right to speak/post comments as a University staff member in their area of expertise will be upheld.
- b. When engaging on social media channels the University expects employees to disclose their University employment and role and responsibilities where relevant.

## **Wider Use of Social Media - As a Staff Member**

(14) The following principles apply to University employees' personal use of social media when choosing to comment on University matters on the University's official social media channels, as well as on external and personal social media channels.

- a. When engaging on social media channels, the University expects employees to disclose their University employment and role and responsibilities where relevant.
- b. The University expects staff only to provide publicly available information, and not to comment on or disclose any confidential University information. Breaching copyright laws is unlawful.
- c. At all times while engaging in social media, all members of the University community will act according to the University's [Code of Conduct](#).
- d. The University expects that an employee's personal online activities at work will not interfere with job productivity and performance.

## **Wider Use of Social Media - As a Student**

(15) When commenting about the University, staff, students or matters on an official or external social media channel, the University expects its students to act according to the values of honesty, fairness, trust, accountability and respect, as set out in the University's [Code of Conduct](#). The University explicitly prohibits social media being used to harass, vilify, bully or discriminate against another person.

## Section 5 - Consequences of Non-compliance

(16) Non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy is a serious matter. Depending on the severity and implications of the breach, action may be taken to remove the offending material, invoke the misconduct provisions of the relevant agreement, student disciplinary proceedings or complaint mechanism. Sanctions may include a warning, counselling, or disciplinary action.

(17) Breaches of this Policy may also result in referral to, and action being taken by, a statutory authority and/or agency.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	8th August 2012
<b>Review Date</b>	31st December 2019
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	4th December 2011
<b>Expiry Date</b>	15th September 2022
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Nathan Towney Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Equity +61 2 4055 3001
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Future Students, Communications & Engagement

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Area of expertise"** - An area in which a staff member or a student have been peer-reviewed or published.

**"Complaint"** - As defined in Australian/New Zealand Standard - Guidelines for complaint management in organisations.

**"Law"** - All applicable statutes, regulations, by-laws, ordinances or subordinate legislation in force from time to time anywhere in Australia, whether made by the Commonwealth, a State, a Territory or a local government and, where the context permits, includes the common law and equity.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Disciplinary action"** - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this is as defined in the Student Conduct Rule.

**"External parties"** - Any individual or organisation external to the University.

**"Social media channels"** - The University of Newcastle operates a number of social media channels including blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts and an official YouTube channel. The University's official social media channels refer to all channels established by a University staff member/business owner that supports University matters.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.