SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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1.   Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to regulate the use of the University's social media channels and to inform all users of social media platforms of their roles, responsibilities and obligations.

Users of the University's social media channels are required to demonstrate the highest ethical standards and conduct and to act responsibly when they exchange ideas and information on social media networks.

Further, users must understand that they have responsibilities as representatives of the University and that their actions can have either a positive or a negative impact on the public image and reputation of the University.

This document aims to protect the University from any unexpected negative outcome resulting from the use of social media.

2.   Scope

This policy applies to all social media activity undertaken by users of the University's social media networks, including but not limited to students, academic and other staff as well as third-party suppliers representing the University, alumni, consultants or any other person participating in social media and who may be identified as having an association with the University, or where University infrastructure is used to access social media.

The policy differentiates between official use of social media and private usage.

The policy is not aimed at restraining academic freedom and sharing of ideas, information and opinions by staff and students, provided that the information shared on social media does not jeopardise the goodwill, trust and professional relationship between the user and the University.

The policy further does not aim to regulate communication by or between staff and/or students, unless it is in contravention of the University's Code of Conduct for employees and/or students, or is detrimental to the interests of the University.

This policy explicitly does not apply to protected disclosures (whistle-blowing) as dealt with in the relevant policy.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Social Media Guidelines and other relevant policies of the University.

3.   Policy statement

The University embraces the evolution and use of social media as a tool for communicating in the global world.

Given that social media afford users a public platform to express themselves, it is important that the University establishes clear guidelines regarding responsible behaviour, standards of conduct and expectations that users must adhere to when using social media for official purposes or where the use of social media impacts on the University.

The University recognises the importance of social media as a communication tool and with this policy, aims to encourage transparent, responsible, honest and open communication on social media platforms.

The University values entrenched rights such as freedom of expression, association, the ability to disseminate diverse views and academic freedom. It is however important to understand that freedom of speech and or expression is not absolute, but is limited and measured against the existing norms and standards. These include:

- the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights contained in Chapter 2, and or any other relevant law;
- the University's vision, mission, values and strategic objectives, codes of conduct and other applicable rules, regulations, policies and practices;
- the right to freedom of expression, speech and association is not absolute and is limited where such expression infringes on other fundamental rights and may result in discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, marital status, nationality, origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation and/or may constitute bullying or hate speech.

4.   Definitions

Social media	Any website or medium that allows for public communication, including but not limited to social and professional networking sites, blogs, micro-blogging sites, video- and photo-sharing sites, forums, discussion boards and groups, podcasting sites and instant messaging services.

University	University of Pretoria
Users	Students, part-time and full-time employees, contractors and third-party suppliers and/or those authorised to generate content for social media platforms associated with the University, alumni, consultants or any other person participating in social media and who may be identified as having an association with the University, or uses University infrastructure to access social media.
Undesirable conduct	Inclusive of, but not limited to, the generation of content that is detrimental to the image or reputation of the University, that is defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing and/or libellous, or conduct that may create a hostile work environment, amounts to unfair discrimination, bullying and/or hate speech.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Users of social media for official University purposes must:

5.1.1 only disclose and discuss information about the University or its activities which is not confidential and is publicly available (or for which they have explicit consent);

5.1.2 take reasonable steps to ensure that content published is accurate and not misleading;

5.1.3 ensure that the use of social media complies with the relevant rules of the University and the terms of use of the relevant social media;

5.1.4 comply with the laws of the country, for example those on copyright, privacy, defamation, discrimination and harassment; and

5.1.5 Always be respectful and courteous when using social media.

5.1.6 Users must establish and confirm their authorisation to use social media for official University purposes with their division, supervisors and, where necessary, the Office of the Registrar.

5.1.7 Refrain from engaging in undesirable conduct.

5.2 Personal use of social media

5.2.1 Personal use of social media must be conducted in a manner that indicates no link or association with the University.

5.2.2 Users of social media for private purposes must ensure that they do not engage in undesirable conduct.

5.2.3 Where opinions are expressed on social media in a user's private capacity, it must be made clear that the opinion is that of the originator thereof and not that of his or her employer.

5.2.4 Users must take cognisance of the fact that any dissemination of undesirable conduct on social media will be attributed to that user. This includes liking, sharing, re-tweeting, posting or reacting to any social media activity that constitutes undesirable conduct.

5.2.5 The University may take disciplinary steps should users make use of social media in a manner that has a direct, indirect or potentially negative impact on the University's reputation or interests.

6. Privacy

6.1.1 Caution must be exercised before releasing images or videos that are identifiable, and permission must be obtained before release.

6.1.2 Particular care must be taken when dealing with population groups such as minors, patients or research subjects.

6.1.3 Users must refrain from disseminating any private or confidential information of third parties on social media without their consent.

7. Consequences of non-compliance

Users are expected to be mindful of the fact that any activity on social media platforms has an impact on the image of the University, and users should at all times refrain from any activity that may tarnish this image. Users are expected to engage on social media in a responsible manner.

It should also be noted that certain conduct may be regarded as misconduct in terms of the provisions of the relevant Disciplinary Code and Procedure of the University, and that it may also constitute a criminal offence, in which case offenders may be prosecuted by the appropriate authorities.

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The guidelines, rules and regulations governing users' conduct during normal interaction as set out in the University's code of conduct apply to users' conduct online.

8. Registering your social media site

All university owned social media sites/platforms must be registered with the Department of University Relations. To register your site, please fill out the [Social Media Registration Form](). Registering your site will allow it to be added to the University Social Media Directory and allow your site administrators to become members of the UP Social Media Alliance.

9. Security of University managed social media account

University members are responsible to ensure passwords and other access controls for official University social media accounts are of adequate strength and kept secure. Under no circumstances should passwords be shared except with other administrators authorised to use the relevant University account. Passwords must be changed when an account administrator leaves the University or changes role within the University. Staff should be familiar with privacy settings and ensure that these are appropriate for both content and intended audience.

Passwords must be changed when there is a compromise or suspected compromise of an official University social media account. Using two-factor authentications to access official University accounts is good practice but is not required. All University members must comply with the University's Information Technology Security Policy and Password Policy at all times.

10. Responsibility for implementation

Deans, directors and heads of academic and support service departments, as well as student leaders, take reasonable steps to ensure that all users take note of the contents of this policy.

10.1 Photos: It is a best practice to obtain a [photo release form]() from any individual identifiable in the photos you share.

10.2 Profile logo: Proper and consistent usage of University of Pretoria logos is critical to reinforcing a clear and compelling visual brand. Faculties and departments within

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the faculty should use the faculty logos to build their profiles. Dimensions can be found here: http://bit.ly/2eJqDJB

11. Policy life cycle

This policy should be reviewed every five (5) years.

12. Document metadata

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