

# Social media guidelines

## for academic and administrative units

University Communications + Marketing

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## Introduction

This document provides advice from University Communications + Marketing (UC+M) to academic and administrative units at UVic who use social media in their **department's communications strategy**.

Departments can use social media to promote their programs and events, build community, monitor and enhance their reputation, network and provide thought leadership.

These guidelines are intended to help departments be as effective as possible in meeting their communications goals, while also mitigating risks.

University community members use social media for many other purposes as well, such as research, teaching and personal use. These guidelines are not meant to apply to these uses of social media.

If you have questions, contact the Social Media Coordinator in UC+M at [socialmedia@uvic.ca](mailto:socialmedia@uvic.ca).

# What is an official UVic social media account?

Official UVic social media accounts are accounts that represent the entire university as well as academic and administrative units. **These guidelines are intended to apply to these official accounts**, not other uses of social media by UVic community members.

## Official social media accounts

**Primary presences** for the university on major social media channels are initiated and maintained by UC+M and include:

- Facebook: [facebook.com/universityofvictoria](https://facebook.com/universityofvictoria)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/universityofvictoria](https://instagram.com/universityofvictoria)
- LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/edu/school?id=10808](https://linkedin.com/edu/school?id=10808)
- Twitter: [@uvic](https://twitter.com/uvic), [@uvicnews](https://twitter.com/uvicnews)
- YouTube: [youtube.com/uvic](https://youtube.com/uvic)

**Secondary presences** are developed by units across campus. Some examples include:

- Faculty of Fine Arts: [twitter.com/uvic\\_finearts](https://twitter.com/uvic_finearts)
- Co-op and Career: [facebook.com/uviccoopandcareer](https://facebook.com/uviccoopandcareer)
- My UVic Life (student blog): [uvic.ca/myuviclif](https://uvic.ca/myuviclif)
- Vikes: [instagram.com/UVicVikes](https://instagram.com/UVicVikes)

See the full list: [uvic.ca/socialmedia](https://uvic.ca/socialmedia)

## Using social media strategically

A unit's social media strategy should be a well-planned **integration into the unit's overall communication strategy**. Here are some components you should consider when developing your strategy.

**Goals:** This isn't about getting more Twitter followers. What are your long-term goals for your department overall? Some examples include:

- Increasing admissions applications
- Increasing attendance at campus events
- Retaining existing students
- Increasing first-time alumni donors
- Recruiting more student volunteers
- Increasing traffic to departmental website
- Improving campus brand awareness

**Targets:** The next step is to define your goal by setting specific values in a limited timeframe. Some examples include:

- Increase admissions applications from the Greater Toronto Area by X% in the 2016-17 recruitment cycle.
- Increase attendance at Ideafest by X additional people over the previous year.

**Tactics:** Plan how you will use social media to meet your targets. Some examples include:

- Create a series of blogs posts where UVic students from the Greater Toronto Area talk about why they chose UVic. Use Facebook ads to show these blog posts to students who attended the same high school as the student featured in the blog post.
- Use Twitter to talk to influencers (people with a large number of followers) about Ideafest. Invite them to attend events and share things they find interesting with their followers.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPI):** KPIs are key metrics to measure if your tactics are getting you closer to your targets.

- Number of applications from Toronto
- Number of people who attend Ideafest

**Social Media KPI:** Since a number of different channels (newspaper ads, call campaigns, email marketing) may have been used to work towards your targets, you may want to develop social media specific KPIs. For example:

- Number of applicants who were referred from Facebook
- Percentage of Ideafest attendees that heard about the festival on Twitter

## The UVic Edge brand

We want people to immediately recognize UVic everywhere we are. Consistent messaging and a unified look and feel support the story we want to tell about UVic, bringing our distinct advantages to life.

The UVic Edge was developed from talking to over 10,000 people on and beyond campus. It comes from the powerful fusion of three ingredients:

1. **Dynamic learning** that creates a natural advantage for our students: *research-inspired teaching integrated with hands-on experiences to accelerate personal growth and career success.*
2. **Vital impact** that drives our sense of purpose: *as an internationally renowned teaching and research hub we tackle essential issues that matter—to people, places and the planet.*
3. **Our extraordinary academic environment** that inspires new ways of thinking and bold action: *discovery, creativity and innovation come naturally here, in a vibrant Pacific Rim community rich with Indigenous and international perspectives.*

### You should use the Edge to meet your social media goals.

For example, you've decided to create a series of blog posts where students talk about why they chose UVic. Prompt students to write about their **dynamic learning** opportunities, such as field schools and co-ops.

Students have a variety of reasons they love UVic, so in addition to talking about their favourite field school, they may also write about their friends and being close to the beach. This mix of content makes for a great blog post: it represents a student's authentic experience, it's fun to read and it incorporates components of the Edge.

When you share this blog post on Facebook, again you can draw attention to the Edge-related elements. Instead of writing a post about how much Kevin loves hanging out at Cadboro Bay, focus on the month he spent in Peru learning about sustainable ecology.

Learn more at [uvic.ca/brand/](http://uvic.ca/brand/).

## Creating new social media accounts

Before creating a new account, social media managers should:

1. Check the list of official UVic social media accounts ([uvic.ca/socialmedia](http://uvic.ca/socialmedia)) to ensure no one else has already started a similar account. If something similar already exists, consider opportunities for collaboration.
2. Obtain permission from the chair, dean, director or manager whose unit will be represented by the new social media account.
3. Discuss the plans for the new account with those who are responsible for communications in relevant areas. For example, someone in an academic department should talk to their faculty communications officer and anyone else managing social media accounts in their department. This is to ensure well-coordinated efforts between units.
4. Contact the social media coordinator in UC+M to discuss strategy and resources ([socialmedia@uvic.ca](mailto:socialmedia@uvic.ca)).

The new account should be easily identifiable as a UVic account:

- “UVic” should be included in the handle and the account name.
- The *about* or *description* field should include a description of the unit and a link to the unit’s official website.
- UVic’s official social media avatars should be used as the profile image.
- UVic brand guidelines should be followed when making other design decisions (photos, colours, fonts) wherever possible.

Social media accounts are often targets for hacking or hijacking, which can have a significant negative impact on UVic’s reputation. To guard against this, accounts should be created with a strong password. If an email account is used as a login for the account, the email address should be a UVic email account that has a strong password. For social media accounts where a single login is not used (such as Facebook pages), at least two people should have administrative rights at all times. This is to ensure that someone always has access to the account, even if someone leaves the university or is away sick.

No one shall create an account that appears to speak on behalf of the university or a unit unless they have been authorized to represent that unit.

Moderation guidelines should be developed before the new account is created. See “Content monitoring” in the next section for more information.

## The role of a social media manager

Like other internet-based communications at the university, social media accounts are the responsibility of the unit that initiates use. These accounts should be managed in a way that is consistent with the unit's communications strategy and the university's strategic direction and objectives.

Each official university social media account should have a **designated social media manager** responsible for maintaining that account. A back-up social media manager should also be identified who will, at a minimum, moderate comments and respond to questions when the primary social media manager is unavailable.

Social media managers are accountable for ensuring a professional presence that reflects the values, messages and culture of the university. This includes:

- **Timely updates:** Unlike static web pages, most social media channels depend on regular updates to maintain their usefulness. Sites that go for long periods without updates appear abandoned and should be removed. The frequency with which you update your channel will vary according to audience and content, but for most channels your updates should be made at least weekly.
- **Timely responses:** Social media managers should respond to feedback as quickly as possible. Questions and complaints provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate attentiveness and goodwill. Failure to respond in a timely way may be perceived as a lack of commitment to this audience and a failure to take its concerns seriously.
- **Appropriate voice:** Many social media channels take the form of a conversation in order to promote a more personal interaction and, as a result, a more informal tone is adopted. While this may be entirely appropriate, be mindful that an informal communications style should still be professional, and that the basic rules of grammar, spelling, etc. should be applied.
- **Moderating content:** You should have a comment moderating guidelines, make it accessible to your community and enforce it. When creating comment moderating guidelines for your channel, consider the following:
  - How to deal with sensational responses, personal attacks, foul language, and inappropriate content
  - Whether your comment moderating policy will result in a channel that represents a professional and positive representation of the university

- Compliance with the guidelines and policies in Appendix 2 of this document
  - Compliance with local, provincial, federal and international law
  - For an example, see UVic's comment moderating guidelines:  
<http://www.uvic.ca/home/about/social-media/moderation/index.php>
- *Monitoring:* Monitoring extends beyond moderating content into networking and reputation management. Social media managers may find it beneficial to watch online conversations on social media that reference the university, their unit or any topics related to their unit. For example, CARBC may find it useful to follow hashtags such as #addiction, #bcpoli and #harmreduction.

## Effective practices

Some trends and effective practices toward building meaningful communities include:

- **Transparency:** Who you are, the purpose of your channel, and your comment moderation guidelines should all be evident to your audience. Maintain authenticity and do not suppress dissenting voices unless they are vulgar, hateful, threatening or off-topic. Different points of view lend credibility to your effort.
- **Respect and civility:** Engage in thoughtful and respectful dialogue, correct misinformation, delete vulgar or irrelevant postings (in keeping with your comment moderation guidelines), and do not engage in heated arguments. See also the university's policy GV0200 on Human Rights, Equity and Fairness.
- **Moderating:** Pay attention to your channels on a frequent basis. Timely responses demonstrate your willingness to listen to your audience and to take feedback seriously.
- **Add value:** Simple repurposing of information from your website or news releases undervalues the potential of these channels. Change your style to fit the social media channel you are using. For example, you can share student photos of an event (with permission and credit). Or you can ask a question when you share a link to an article, inviting people to add their personal input and observations.
- **Consider your content carefully:** Once you post, it can be difficult to take it back.
- **Remember your audience:** Keep your material relevant and appropriate.
- **Remember your institution:** Your presence on any channel is a reflection of the university.
- **Remember your objectives in creating the channel.**

The key to good utilization of social media is a simple understanding that your behaviour and responsibility as a member of the university community extends to the social media community as well.

## Sharing content from non-UVic accounts

Accounts that are not hosted or developed by the university may be of value to the university in their relation to other university initiatives.

Examples include articles written by news organizations, videos created by other organizations, a faculty member's Twitter account or a student's Instagram account.

Content from these non-UVic accounts may be cited or linked to in official university communications.

If a manager of an official account would like to share this type of content, a few things should be considered first:

- Is it appropriate for the university to be affiliated with this person or organization? Review recent posts, about us/me sections and associated photos in person or group's social media account.
- Seek permission to share or link to the content when appropriate.
- Recognition or credit to the source of the content should also be given in a way that is appropriate for that social media channel.
- Follow the Terms of Services for the social media channel you are using to share the content.
- Obey all relevant Copyright Laws. (Contact UVic's Copyright Office if you have questions.)

It is outside the scope of this document to give specific instructions for particular social media channels. Best practices are constantly evolving as social media companies are updating their apps, websites and Terms of Service. Please contact the Social Media Coordinator at [socialmedia@uvic.ca](mailto:socialmedia@uvic.ca) if you have any questions.

## Appendix 1: Other uses of social media at UVic

UVic community members use social media for many purposes including teaching and learning, research, employee's personal use and student's personal use.

Although UC+M is not the authority on these other uses of social media, we have provided some information below as a reference.

All of the following information has been taken from **existing policies and guidelines**.

If you have questions about other types of social media use at UVic, contact the relevant party in each section.

### Teaching and learning

Instructors and students may use social media to support learning objectives.

Technology Integrated Learning, Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching, Learning and Teaching Centre and the Chief Privacy Officer are currently working on documents related to teaching and learning at UVic. After appropriate consultations are conducted, this information will be added to the Academic Calendar.

More information:

- Contact Technology Integrated Learning.
- See Appendix 2 for other related policies and guidelines.

### Research

The university recognizes academic freedom as a fundamental value. Faculty members are encouraged to engage with social media, and these guidelines are not intended to interfere with or restrict academic freedom in any way.

In exercising academic freedom, members of the university community must act in a responsible and reasonable manner and respect the rights of other members of the university community.

As with all communications at UVic, faculty members' right to academic freedom is limited only by the university's respectful environment and harassment and discrimination policies.

More information:

- For help promoting your research to the public, please contact the Research Communications Officer in UC+M.
- For questions about academic freedom, please contact the UVic Faculty Association and/or the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.
- UVic's Discrimination and Harassment policy (GV0205).
- See Appendix 2 for other related policies and guidelines.

## **Employees' personal use**

As long as employees' personal use of social media does not impact their role as a member of the university community, the university has no role in governing how employees use social media in their personal lives.

However, Human Resources guidelines are clear that employees should not conduct themselves in such a way as to seriously prejudice the university's interests or reputation.

Using computing resources at work for personal use is acceptable but limited to responsible activities that minimize the disruption of university business while attending to necessary personal affairs.

More information:

- Human Resources Consultant assigned to your area or department.
- UVic's Acceptable Use of Electronic Information Resources policy (IM7200).
- See Appendix 2 for other related policies and guidelines.

## **Students**

As long as students' use of social media does not impact their role as a member of the university community, the university has no role in governing how students use social media in their personal lives.

However, the same university policies that apply to responsible conduct offline also apply to a student's conduct online.

More information:

- Student-related policies:  
<http://www.uvic.ca/studentaffairs/home/policies/index.php>.
- See Appendix 2 for other related policies and guidelines.

## Appendix 2: Reference to other resources

Important policies, standards and guidelines and other resources at the university which extend to social media include:

- UVic Edge Brand Guidelines: [uvic.ca/brand/](http://www.uvic.ca/brand/)
- Communications + Marketing policy [under development]
- Privacy policy [GV0235]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared\\_usec/docs/policies/GV0235.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared_usec/docs/policies/GV0235.pdf)
- Intellectual Rights policy [GV0215]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared\\_usec/docs/policies/GV0215\\_1180\\_.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared_usec/docs/policies/GV0215_1180_.pdf)
- Discrimination and Harassment policy [GV0205]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/GV0205\\_1150\\_.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/GV0205_1150_.pdf)
- Responsible Use of Information Technology services [IM7200]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared\\_usec/docs/policies/IM7200\\_6030\\_.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared_usec/docs/policies/IM7200_6030_.pdf)
- Copyright and the use of video materials [IM7305]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared\\_usec/docs/policies/IM7305\\_3810\\_.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared_usec/docs/policies/IM7305_3810_.pdf)
- What you can reasonably expect from employees [Human Resources]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/hr/assets/docs/hrc/expectations/What\\_You\\_the\\_Supervisor\\_Can\\_Expect\\_From\\_Employesa.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/hr/assets/docs/hrc/expectations/What_You_the_Supervisor_Can_Expect_From_Employesa.pdf)
- Policy on Human Rights, Equity and Fairness [GV0200]  
[http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared\\_usec/docs/policies/GV0200\\_1105\\_.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/shared/shared_usec/docs/policies/GV0200_1105_.pdf)
- Resolution on Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations: [AC1300]  
<http://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/AC1300.pdf>
- Student Athlete Code of Conduct:  
[http://govikesgo.com/documents/2013/9/10/Athletics\\_COC\\_Final\\_Approved\\_September\\_2013\\_1\\_.pdf?id=1045](http://govikesgo.com/documents/2013/9/10/Athletics_COC_Final_Approved_September_2013_1_.pdf?id=1045)
- Violence and Threatening Behaviour [SS9105]:  
[http://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/SS9105\\_1125\\_.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/SS9105_1125_.pdf)
- All relevant Copyright Laws
- Terms of Services for associated social media channels
- All legal liability

Other university policies specific to your area or the content you are sharing may also apply. Contact the Social Media Coordinator in UC+M to discuss further.