



**WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
POLICY**

**Policy Library ID  
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**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

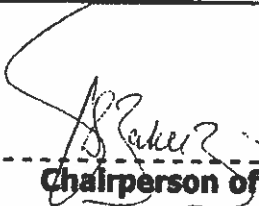
<b>Sponsor division</b>	Marketing, Communication & Advancement
<b>Responsible Department</b>	Marketing, Communication & Advancement

**Related WSU Policies and Acts**

<b>Policy name</b>	<b>Act Reference</b>
Code of Conduct	Bill of Rights
Media Relations Policy	Promotion of Access to Information Act
Internal Communication Policy	Protection of Personal Information Act
	Copyright Act, Defamation Act
	Film & Publications Act, Information Act
	Basic Conditions of Employment Act and
	Privacy Act

**Change History**

<b>Approval authority</b>	Council
<b>Approval Date</b>	02 August 2019
<b>Effective date</b>	Immediately
<b>Next Review Date</b>	January 2022
<b>Number of pages</b>	09

  
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**Chairperson of Council: Mr T Zakuza**

## **1. Purpose**

This policy is intended to provide a framework to guide social media communication of Walter Sisulu University's stakeholders in order to create a harmonious relationship between the stakeholders and protect the image of the University.

Users of social media channels are required to demonstrate high standards of ethics and conduct and to act responsibly when they exchange ideas and information on social media networks, be it the University or individually managed social media platforms.

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.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. The Social Media Policy applies to the all staff (permanent, contract, temporary, volunteers and interns), alumni, students and third-party suppliers representing Walter Sisulu University.
- 2.2. This policy applies to all social media activity undertaken by users of the University Community on various social media platform such as SnapChat, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.
- 2.3. Non-compliance with this policy and the procedures described in it may constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being taken against staff members and/or students
- 2.4. The Department of Marketing, Communication and Advancement (MCA) is responsible for managing the University's social media platforms.

## **3. Policy Statement**

Walter Sisulu University embraces the evolution, wide adoption and use of social media as a tool of communicating.

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 (refer to Social Media Guidelines).

Users are expected to be mindful of the fact that any activity on public platforms has an impact on the image of the University, and users should at all times refrain from any activity that can tarnish this image. 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 authorities. The guidelines, rules and regulations governing users' conduct during normal interaction in the University's Code of Conduct also apply to users' conduct online.

It is the responsibility of the University to allow freedom of expression, academic freedom and the right of association. However, users are expected to exercise these rights in a responsible manner so as not to injure another party in any way.

#### **4. Definitions of Key Words or Concepts**

##### **Social media**

These are primarily internet or cellular phone based applications and tools to share information among people. Social media includes popular networking websites/mobi-site, Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, SnapChat etc. It involves blogging, forums and any aspect of an interactive presence which allows individuals to engage in conversations with one another.

##### **University**

Walter Sisulu University

##### **Users**

Users refers to students, alumni, 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.

##### **Undesirable conduct**

Undesirable conduct is inclusive of, but not limited to, the generation of content (including images and videos) that is detrimental to the image or reputation of the University or any other individual and/or organisation/institution, that is defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing and/or libellous, or conduct that may create a hostile environment.

#### **5. Principles**

##### **5.1. Personal use of social media**

Personal use of social media must be conducted in a manner that indicates no link or association with the University. For this reason personal use is not covered in this policy.

The University will, however, take necessary steps should users make use of social media in a manner that has a direct, indirect or potential negative impact on the University's reputation or interests.

## **5.2. Use of social media for the University**

Users must –

- 5.2.1. only disclose and discuss information about the University or its activities which are not confidential and are publicly available;
- 5.2.2. take reasonable steps to ensure that content published is accurate and not misleading;
- 5.2.3. 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;
- 5.2.4. comply with the laws of the country, for instance those on copyright, privacy, defamation, discrimination and harassment; and
- 5.2.5. always be respectful and courteous when using social media.

## **5.3 Use of images and videos**

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

5.3.2 Care must be taken when dealing with population groups such as minors, patients or research subjects.

## **5.4 Authority**

5.4.1 Users must establish with their division, supervisors and, where necessary, the Marketing, Communication and Advancement (MCA) if their intended actions are authorised. MCA is the owner of this policy.

## **5.5 Confidential information and requests**

5.5.1 Confidential University information should not be disclosed to the media or be made public under any circumstances. Requests for information that is confidential should be referred to the Vice-Chancellor's Office, so that these may be considered within the provisions of the Official Information Act and/or the Privacy Act.

5.5.2 Information about individual staff or students may only be divulged on social media with the explicit consent of the individuals concerned, except in exceptional circumstances with guidance from the University's Legal Officer or the Vice-Chancellor's Office.

5.5.3 Any staff member who receives a request from the media for information should forward it immediately to the Department of Marketing, Communication and Advancement who will respond on behalf of the University.

5.5.4 Staff and students are prohibited from sharing staff and student data with third parties, this is in line with the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act.

## **5.6 Social media**

### **5.6.1 Key guidelines for social media uses:**

5.6.1.1 Protect confidential and proprietary information: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about University students, employees, or alumni. Employees and students should adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees or students who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.

5.6.1.2 Respect copyright and fair use: When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university.

5.6.1.3 Do not use University logos for endorsements, particularly personal social media sites: Do not use the University's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.

5.6.1.4 Respect University time and property: University computers and time on the job are reserved for university-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with the University's ICT policy.

5.6.1.5 Terms of service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

### **5.6.2 When faculties or departments wish to use social media for university reasons, additional considerations are required:**

5.6.2.1 All accounts and Social Media Account Managers/Correspondents should adhere to all applicable University policies.

5.6.2.2 All accounts and Social Media Account Managers/Correspondents will adhere to all requirements and regulations in this document.

5.6.2.3 MCA reserves the right to access and manage Official accounts. It reserves the right to edit and delete content as appropriate. The right to seize and shut down accounts if necessary is also reserved.

### 5.6.3 The following principles shape the University's management of social media platforms

5.6.3.1 The University trusts that good judgment will be used and does not plan to actively screen the content you post.

5.6.3.2 The University will respond to content if/when able and/or applicable. The University is not responsible for any unanswered posts or inaccurate information. However, the University claims the right to remove comments and content from social media accounts if these:

5.6.3.2.1 Are inaccurate, defame, or otherwise impact the University's reputation and integrity.

5.6.3.2.2 Contain confidential information, legal information, and materials under copyright.

5.6.3.2.3 Violate the copyrights, trademarks, and/or intellectual property rights of the University or third parties.

5.6.3.2.4 Compromise the privacy of personnel, students, interested parties, and the University by disclosing confidential and personal information or contravenes South African legislation which impacts right to expression, privacy or defamation, for example.

5.6.3.3 Furthermore, the University's policies strictly prohibit the following actions.

5.6.3.3.1 Impersonation of others.

5.6.3.3.2 Use of offensive language, libellous, slanderous, unlawful, threatening speech.

5.6.3.3.3 Posts are likely to be removed if deemed by the administrators of the site to be potentially libellous or if it maligns a particular person or group.

5.6.3.3.4 Include spam, repetitive/irrelevant posting, or other activities judged to fall into these categories. This may include topics outside the scope of immediate interest to our community and posts promoting products and/or services unrelated to the University.

## **6. Custodianship of Policy**

The custodian of the Social Media Policy is the Department of Marketing, Communication & Advancement (MCA).

## **7. Effective Date of Policy**

The Social Media Policy comes into effect on the date of the approval by the Walter Sisulu University Council and must be reviewed every three years.