

UWG PROCEDURE NUMBER: 10.2.3, UWG-Related Social Media Guidelines

Authority: UWG POLICY: 10.2 (University Communications)

The University of West Georgia recognizes that social media sites serve as important and influential means for positive communication and professional development. Social networking sites are broad communities with a public audience that may be used to distribute information about UWG, its various divisions, affiliated entities, and programs. This procedure applies to current and emeritus UWG faculty and to staff, students, and student organizations that engage in official UWG social media marketing.

This procedure does not apply to UWG faculty, staff, and students who participate in social media sites for course-related purposes, such as didactic and clinical interactions. Please consult the Office of the Provost for further information.

The Vice President of University Advancement, pursuant to the authority of UWG policy 10.2, establishes the following procedures for institutional social media guidelines:

A. Definitions

1. **Approval Process** – Each university unit is encouraged to develop a social media approval process for official UWG social media marketing within their own units to establish sites and content; however, such sites are still subject to this procedure.
2. **Blogs** – A blog is website that logs an individual’s personal opinions, activities, and experiences, usually on a daily or regular basis.
3. **Official UWG Social Media Accounts** – Official accounts are the only accounts that can speak on behalf of the entire university. The following are established official accounts:
 - a. **Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfWestGa/>
Facebook is a social networking site that should be used to engage and interact with other users by creating and maintaining Facebook profiles or pages. Facebook pages allow UWG organizations, departments, etc., to upload photos, videos, links, text, and other information to promote the university as a whole and engage with community members, alumni, and current and potential students, faculty, staff, parents, and friends (defined as key constituencies).
 - b. **Instagram** – UWESTGA
Instagram is a social media platform that should be used to promote UWG’s positive campus culture and diversity, embrace photos taken by the community of students, engage with graduates, the community, and UWG supporters from around the world who follow UWG on Instagram.
 - c. **LinkedIn** – University of West Georgia
LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
 - d. **Pinterest** – UWGwolves
Pinterest is a social media site allowing users to endorse, share, and recommend images, products, and web links. Users also gain inspiration from Pinterest and search the social media site regularly for new ideas to share. UWG-related accounts can use Pinterest to share ideas and offer an inside look into the UWG “Go West” culture and experience to key constituencies.

e. **Snapchat – UWESTGA**

Snapchat is a social networking application allowing users to create short videos and photos referred to as “snaps.” Snaps can be sent to followers as well as the user’s “story.” In the story, snaps can be seen by followers for only 24 hours. Users can add handwritten or short typed messages on the photo and videos (snaps). Users can add active filters for snaps that are based on geotags.

f. **Twitter – @UnivWestGa**

Twitter is a social media platform used to relay information to an audience in a timely manner using 140 characters or less. UWG Twitter accounts provide an up-to-the-minute account of the university to key constituencies who follow UWG.

4. **Official UWG Social Media Marketing** – Official content is defined as content that has been, or should be, approved through the established **Approval Process** by individuals at the dean, director, vice president, or comparable level for purposes of promoting the interests of UWG.
5. **Podcasts** – A podcast is a digital audio file made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or portable media player, typically available as a series received by subscribers automatically.
6. **RSS Feeds** – RSS feeds provide a means of delivering frequently updated information (i.e., blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video) via standard web feed formats.
7. **Social Media** – Social media is defined as forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, photos, personal messages, and other content. Examples include but are not limited to: Blogs, Facebook, Flickr, LinkedIn, Myspace, Podcasts, RSS Feeds, Second Life, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Periscope, Yik Yak, and Snapchat.
8. **UWG-Related Social Media Accounts**- For purposes of this procedure, these are accounts held by university departments, organizations, clubs, and other UWG affiliates that promote an official presence of UWG. These accounts cannot speak on behalf of the entire university but represent entities of the university.
9. **YouTube** - YouTube is a video-sharing website in which users upload video content to be viewed publicly or privately. UWG accounts using YouTube provide an in-depth look into life at UWG. It allows a greater audience to be introduced to UWG and its constituents on a more intimate level.

B. Procedures

1. Registration.

- a. **Group administrators must register their accounts** with University Communications and Marketing (UCM) or the Center for Student Involvement (CSI) to be recognized by UWG as a university social media account by completing the registration form for every social media account.
- b. **Inform UCM of all existing and new social media accounts.** An assessment of the account will be done to determine its continuance.
- c. **Social media accounts may be created by UWG employees** for committees and group initiatives. Examples include Wolf Wellness and other university groups, clubs, and initiatives. These accounts must also be registered with UCM.
- d. **It is critical for student groups to provide logins and passwords** to CSI for their advisors’ benefit when students organizations register through CSI.

2. Registration Follow-up.

- a. **Name your account and notify UCM.** Create a profile name that clearly and concisely identifies your program and its UWG affiliation. Do not identify yourself simply as “UWG” or “University of West Georgia” as that implies you are speaking for the institution.
- b. **Identify the person or persons** who will have primary responsibility for populating, maintaining, and monitoring your site.

- c. **Appoint a staff or faculty member** as administrator for all social social media accounts recognized by UWG. Site administrators are responsible for their social media networks, and UCM only serves as a monitor. The administrator reserves the right to restrict or remove content that is deemed in violation of these social media guidelines or any applicable policy or laws. Advisors serve in the administrator role for student group social media sites.
 - d. **Send a list of the official administrators to UCM.**
 - e. **Create a backup system.** Ensure a social media backup system is in place. If the administrator responsible for social media is out of the office, terminated, or resigns, an identified designee should have log-in access and be trained on how to monitor and update the pages. This ensures that UCM may communicate efficiently during an emergency; track usage; and remove content that violates guidelines or any applicable laws. UCM has no ability to persuade social media networking sites to release individual account information.
 - f. **Ensure that social media pages clearly indicate** they are maintained by the department and display departmental contact information prominently.
 - g. **Post a link to this disclaimer on your site.** *“The University of West Georgia (UWG) welcomes the exchange of ideas about university programs, issues, events, and activities on social media websites. The material posted does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the university. The university reserves the right to remove pages, posts, comments, or other content from UWG social media sites that do not adhere to university standards. The university may remove content that is deemed a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, commercial or promotion of organizations or programs not related to or affiliated with the university, or otherwise in violation of applicable policy or law. By submitting content to any UWG social media site, users understand and acknowledge that this information is available to the public and that UWG may use this information for internal and external promotional purposes. Links to content or other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the organizations, entities, views, or content contained therein. UWG is not responsible for the content of those external websites. Also be aware that other participants may use posted information beyond the control of UWG. Users who do not wish to have information they have made available via these sites used, published, copied, and/or reprinted, should not post on the social media sites.”*
 - h. **Become familiarized with copyright and fair use laws.** These laws also apply to social media. For information on use of copyrighted text or media (i.e., video, images), refer to <http://www.westga.edu/copyright>.
3. **Administrator/Employees.**
- a. **Keep personal and professional accounts separate.** If you identify yourself as an employee, faculty, or staff member, please clearly state that the content shared are your personal views and opinions and do not represent the official views of UWG. Do not use any UWG marks or images on your personal online accounts. Do not use UWG’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party, or political candidate. Under no circumstances may employees use any state property, resources, or materials in conjunction with any political campaigning.
 - b. **Pages created by university departments or units should be used solely for educational purposes** and for the communication of official departmental information, such as scheduling, events, information about classes, and department policy. Pages cannot support or advocate a specific political, social, or religious candidate or party. Pages cannot advertise items or services for sale, with the exception of items specifically related to the university.
 - c. **In a crisis situation, do not post on social media accounts until official statements have been released from UCM** and posted on the official social media accounts. Refer all social media activity around the crisis to UCM. All press inquiries made through social media should be referred to UCM.

This excludes departments and personnel who are professionally qualified to provide assistance to students during a crisis.

- d. **Notify your supervisor or administrator immediately** should an employee become aware of or have knowledge of any posting, website, or web page in violation of the provisions of these guidelines so the violation may be removed.
 - e. **Report problems or concerns** regarding the use of a social media site or page immediately to UCM.
 - f. **Ownership of content belongs to you.** As an employee, you are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Ensure that what you post will not expose you, UWG, or the university system to legal liability.
 - g. **Protect important information.** This includes passwords and information that may conflict with HIPAA, FERPA, NCAA, or other regulations.
4. **UCM Responsibilities.**
- a. **Official Information.** UCM is responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of UWG.
 - b. **Removal.** UWG may contact legal counsel for assistance to immediately remove the page and its content if any policies are violated. Other disciplinary action may follow if the action violates any policy of UWG.
5. **Avoiding Risk.**
- a. **Adhere to UWG policy and procedures.** As an employee of UWG, you represent the university and the state of Georgia. Material or posts that contain obscene or sexually explicit language or images should not be used at any time, except as it may relate to pedagogy or academic studies. UWG will investigate and take appropriate actions against employees who violate UWG policy and procedures, or federal and state laws, on discrimination and bias.
 - b. **Do not divulge information gained by reason of your authority.** Refrain from making any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements or publishing materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of your department without express authorization from the department director.
 - c. **Safeguard information.** The following actions may be addressed by applicable laws and therefore pose a risk for you or the university. Please do not:
 - i. Publish or post false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation).
 - ii. Publish or post private facts and personal information about someone without permission that has not been previously revealed to the public; is not of legitimate public concern; or would be considered offensive to a reasonable person.
 - iii. Use someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose.
 - iv. Publish the creative work of another, use trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
 - v. Post images taken outside of a public domain to avoid violating anyone's privacy. Public domain settings include parks, public buildings, etc.
 - vi. Use social media pages to post detailed policy or procedure information, for example, program admission criteria. Rather, users should be directed to official UWG publications or website for such information.
 - vii. Include sensitive personal information in a post unless the subject of the information has given written consent for the disclosure of that information.

6. Branding/logo usage.

UWG branding guidelines apply for all UWG social media accounts. See westga.edu/ucm for University Branding Guidelines.

7. Guidelines.

UCM is authorized to establish and update guidelines that create expectations for content displayed through affiliated UWG-Related social media sites. UCM is authorized to establish additional standards or materials to assist with developing official UWG social marketing for social media sites.

Issued by the Vice President of University Advancement, the ____ day of _____ 2016.

Vice President, University Advancement

Reviewed by President: _____

ADMINISTRATION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Short Title: "Social Media"

Previous Versions: While no official policy, procedures, or guidelines have been published on an institutional level, the UCM website currently references the role of UCM as a management resource and subject matter expert in the university social media engagement process.

Oversight: Vice President of University Advancement

Additional Resources (Hot link provided where available):

- University Communications and Marketing (UCM) website <http://www.westga.edu/ucm/>
- <http://www.westga.edu/ucm>