



UNIVERSITY OF
WEST GEORGIA

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Area	Administration/ Governance (Procedures)
Responsible Party	University Communications and Marketing

Social Media Usage

Authority for Procedure granted by [UWG PL #1003 Online Resource Ownership, Control, and Use](#).

This procedure is intended to guide individuals managing and/or posting to an account representing any aspect of UWG on any Social Media platform. It seeks to outline the acceptable use of Social Media by the UWG Community and assist in creating a professional online persona.

This procedure applies to all UWG-sponsored and affiliated Social Media accounts and platforms.

Exclusions:

- Individual, private Social Media accounts created by faculty, staff, student employees, etc.
- Social Media sites for course-affiliated purposes, such as didactic and clinical interactions. For further information, consult the Office of the Provost.

A. Getting Started

Individuals should review the Board of Regents (BOR) Policy Manual, [08.02.18.01 Ethics Policy](#), UWG PL [#5001 Technology and Use](#), UWG PL [#4002 Non-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment](#) and their associated procedures, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject individuals to disciplinary action.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

University Communications and Marketing (UCM) is responsible for posting, reposting, linking, and/or publishing official information online on UWG's behalf. UCM is authorized to establish and update guidelines, standards, and materials for content displayed through Social Media sites.

UCM only serves to monitor UWG-sponsored and UWG-affiliated Social Media sites.

Units are responsible for posting, reposting, and linking content on their respective UWG-sponsored Social Media sites. Content must be applicable and brand-compliant to strengthen the UWG brand by showcasing campus events and opportunities to the University Community and external stakeholders. (see section B for additional responsibilities)

B. Registration Process

1. Registration

Prior approval from UCM is required before establishing a new UWG-sponsored Social Media account. Registration information requested includes the name and contact information of Site Administrators, URL or username for the site, etc. (see [UWG Social Media Registration Form](#)).

To ensure continued use, any pre-existing UWG-sponsored Social Media accounts must undergo approval by UCM. It is essential to keep the registration of Social Media accounts up to date and active. Units having multiple Social Media accounts are strongly encouraged to maintain a local record of responsible employees, usernames, and passwords.

Social Media accounts may be created for UWG-sponsored committees and group initiatives (e.g., Wolf Wellness and other University groups, clubs, and initiatives).

See the [UWG Social Media Directory](#) for approved Social Media account site information.

UWG-affiliated Social Media accounts (e.g., student organizations and groups) shall register their Social Media accounts with the Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion (CSII) to be recognized by UWG as a University organization. (see [Student Organization Registration](#))

Site Administrators are responsible for their Social Media networks, registering their Social Media accounts, and site content (i.e., account username, password, populating, maintaining, and monitoring).

2. Account Naming

Social Media accounts shall be affiliated with generic UWG email accounts (e.g., legal@westga.edu) where possible to ensure business continuity and prevent a lapse in coverage of the Social Media account. Individual employee email accounts (e.g., janedoe@westga.edu) may be used when Social Media platforms require an individual email address.

Social Media account profile names should clearly and concisely identify the Unit, program, etc., and UWG affiliation. Individuals or organizations with Social Media accounts are prohibited from simply identifying as "UWG" or "University of West Georgia," as that implies the individual or organization is speaking for the institution.

The following are examples of good profile names:

UWG-sponsored - "UWG Business" or "UWG SON" or "UWG CACSI"

UWG-affiliated - "UWG Girls With Voices" or "Girls With Voices at UWG."

3. Appoint Site Administrators

Site Administrators are responsible for the posting, reposting, and linking of content applicable to their respective UWG-sponsored or UWG-affiliated Unit, program, group, organization, etc.

UWG-sponsored Social Media accounts shall have a minimum of two full-time employees as Site Administrators to ensure business continuity and prevent a lapse in coverage of the Social Media account. When a full-time employee is unavailable, a part-time employee may be appointed. Students shall not serve as Site Administrators for UWG-sponsored Social Media accounts.

Student Organizations: Site Administrators for UWG-affiliated Social Media accounts shall provide account handles, usernames, and passwords to their UWG Advisor(s) as a part of the student organization registration process.

Create a Backup System

Any time a Site Administrator is away or separates from UWG, a new Site Administrator shall be appointed and trained to manage the site content as part of the employee exit process. This shall occur before the employee departs UWG.

The transfer of responsibility allows UCM to communicate efficiently during an emergency, track usage, and remove content that violates UWG policy, guidelines, or applicable laws. UCM cannot persuade Social Media networking sites to release individual account information.

4. Site Administration

- **Ensure Social Media pages clearly indicate the name (i.e., Unit, group, student organization, program, etc.) and contact information prominently.**

- **Become familiar with Copyright and Fair Use Laws.**

Copyright laws extend to the digital space, so online users need to know how to respect copyright and protect their own copyrighted works on social media. For information, visit the [U.S. Copyright Office](#).

C. Content Requirements

Content on Social Media must meet the following requirements.

1. **Adhere to All Applicable Policies.** Use Social Media in a manner that complies with all applicable UWG and University System of Georgia (USG) policies, procedures, and guidelines. In addition, make sure all relevant state and federal statutes are followed.

UWG will investigate and take appropriate actions against individuals who violate UWG policy and procedures or federal and state laws on discrimination and bias.

2. **Solely for Educational Purposes.** UWG-sponsored Social Media sites should be used solely for educational purposes and for communicating official Unit information, such as scheduling,

events, class information, and Unit guidelines. Material or posts containing obscene or sexually explicit language or images should not be used at any time except as they may relate to pedagogy or academic studies. UWG-sponsored Social Media sites shall not support or advocate a specific product, cause, political party, or political candidate. (see UWG PL 4001 associated Procedure, [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment](#))

UWG-sponsored Social Media sites shall not advertise items or services for sale except specifically related to the University or as authorized per UWG PL 3005, [Solicitation, Advertising, and Sales](#) and associated procedures.

3. **Appropriate.** Refrain from commenting or conveying information that is outside your area of expertise. Content should be associated with the Unit's professional domain and have a business/professional purpose that advances the mission of UWG.
4. **Keep personal and professional accounts separate.** Refrain from using social media during scheduled work hours or on UWG-issued equipment unless authorized by your supervisor or consistent with UWG policy and procedures. Do not use UWG email addresses (e.g., @westga.edu or @my.westga.edu) to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

The use of the UWG name, marks, or images on personal Social Media accounts is prohibited and shall not be used to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party, or political candidate.

5. **Professional.** Do not post, repost, or link material that is harassing, obscene, defamatory, libelous, threatening, or embarrassing to any person or entity. Do not post, repost, or link jokes or comments based on an individual's age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status ("protected status"). Privacy does not exist on Social Media. Understand that content contributed to a Social Media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully regarding how they reflect on the individual poster and/or UWG.
6. **Truthful.** Credibility is critical, so do not share unverified information, as the public may assume the data are representative of the University. Provide informed, well-supported opinions and cite sources.
7. **Unbiased.** Be careful what is posted, reposted, linked, tweeted, or retweeted about another product, company, organization, or individual. Sharing information on commercial products, vendors, and other third parties may appear to show favoritism to that entity – something that must be avoided at a public University. Stick to only factual information about a product or relationship.
8. **Direct Links/Source Materials.** Social Media sites are to be directed to or linked directly to Official UWG publications, policies/procedures, or websites for information, where possible. Do not recreate, copy, or repost UWG source material.
9. **Trademarks, Logos, Images, and Copyright.** Approval from UCM is required before using any

of UWG's licensed trademarks, logos, or images as a part of any blog or Social Media profile. Do not post, repost, or link to any images or content from another source unless the content is in the public domain or the owner has granted permission. Never plagiarize, and properly cite all sources.

10. **Moderation of Comments.** As a public university, UWG must be mindful when moderating any comments on a Social Media post. Units are required to contact the Office of Legal Affairs (legal@westga.edu) before deleting any comment.
11. **Avoid posting on Social Media sites during an emergency or crisis.** UCM will issue and post official statements to the official Social Media accounts. Employees should not speak to the media on the University's behalf. All media and press inquiries are to be directed to UCM [Media Relations](#).
12. **Report problems or concerns regarding the use of UWG-sponsored Social Media sites immediately to UCM** (socialmedia@westga.edu).
13. **Report procedural violations.** Any person aware of or knowledgeable of any posting, site, or webpage violating this procedure should notify UCM immediately (socialmedia@westga.edu).
14. **Safeguard Information.**
Applicable laws may address the following actions and therefore pose a risk for you personally and/or the University.
 - i. **Privacy and Personally Identifiable Information (PII).** UWG prohibits the disclosure of federally protected information (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA) or PII from being posted or shared that would invade a person's privacy (e.g., passwords, financial, etc.) or jeopardize an individual's or property's health and safety unless the subject of the information has given written consent for the disclosure.
 - ii. **Protect Private Information.** Do not post, repost, or link confidential or proprietary information of UWG, its students, faculty, staff, or alums that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation). Do not use an individual's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose.
 - iii. **Refrain from divulging information gained by reason of your authority.** Refrain from making statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements or publishing material that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of your Unit without express authorization from the Unit head.
15. The University of West Georgia is committed to providing accessible digital communications. All individuals responsible for managing, creating, publishing, or approving content on UWG-sponsored and UWG-affiliated social media accounts must ensure that content complies with the accessibility standards outlined in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA and all applicable university accessibility policies. UWG-sponsored site administrators are responsible for reviewing content before publication to verify compliance. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in the removal of content, and/or additional

D. Disclaimers

Disclaimers for Social Media accounts are posted on UCM [Social Media Disclaimer](#) webpage. It is strongly recommended that UWG-sponsored and UWG-affiliated Social Media accounts link to this webpage.

1. Employee Disclaimers

While not required, it is recommended that UWG employees add an opinion disclaimer to all personal Social Media accounts to clearly separate the employee's personal opinion from that of the University. Without a disclaimer, Social Media posts could be interpreted as official statements of the University when an employee identifies as a representative of UWG.

Below are examples of suggested opinion disclaimers.

- i. Views expressed are my own.
- ii. All opinions are my own.
- iii. The opinions expressed here belong solely to me and do not reflect the views of my employer / [insert name of employer].

E. Branding/Logo Usage

[UWG Branding Guidelines](#) apply to all UWG Social Media accounts.

The UWG shield identifies all Official UWG Social Media profile images with the group's official name underneath the shield. Using a standard image ensures UWG's brand is consistent across the University and its divisions, offices, departments, centers, programs, colleges, and schools to project a unified, professional image that enhances UWG's reputation. For more information, refer to the Social Media Toolkit.

F. Removal

UWG reserves the sole right to review, edit, and/or delete any comments it deems inappropriate. Comments, including but not limited to the following, may be deleted or edited by UCM or Site Administrators with approval from the Chief Legal Officer.

- Posts that include fraudulent, inaccurate, libelous, or misleading information about the University, Units, programs, etc.
- Posts that are disparaging or include offensive, inflammatory, or inappropriate commentary or content.
- Posts that contain threats or suggest violence or illegal behavior
- Posts that include profanity or are defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, or demeaning.

- Posts that contain confidential information protected by law or PII.
- Posts that spam, solicit, advertise, promote, or endorse any commercial, financial, political, or government organization.
- Posts of marketing messages or URLs to external sites for promotional purposes.

Student Organizations: Advisors of student organizations or groups serve as monitors for UWG-affiliated Social Media sites. Advisors shall not serve as Site Administrators for UWG-affiliated Social Media accounts.

G. Violations

In addition to the penalties in the law, the University may take additional actions against any employee or student who violates the law, USG, or UWG's policy. Employees may be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including termination. Students will be referred to the Office of Community Standards for disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or expulsion.

H. Recordkeeping

Records will be maintained for the retention period, as stated in the [USG Records Retention Schedules](#) or federal requirements, whichever is longer.

Definitions

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) - any information that can be used to identify an individual, either directly or indirectly. This includes names, identification numbers, addresses, and other data linked to a person, regardless of their citizenship or affiliation with the institution.

- **Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information (Sensitive PII)** - a subset of PII that, if disclosed without authorization, could cause significant harm, embarrassment, disruption, or unfairness to the individual, such as Social Security numbers or immigration identification numbers. Sensitive PII requires stricter protection and handling due to the increased risk if compromised.

Social Media - media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques online.

UWG-affiliated Social Media Accounts - accounts held by university organizations, groups, clubs, and other affiliates that promote an official presence of UWG. These accounts do not speak on behalf of the University.

UWG-sponsored Social Media Accounts - official accounts are the only accounts that can speak on behalf of the university.

Unit - For purposes of this procedure, any college, department, research center, business service center, campus service center, office, or other operating area.

University Community - (1) All persons enrolled at or employed by the University, including University

students, faculty, staff, administrators, and employees, and (2) recognized University-affiliated entities, including University departments, foundations, and registered University student organizations.

Forms

- [Social Media Registration Form](#) - for UWG-sponsored Social Media accounts
- [Social Media Account Names](#) - for UWG-affiliated Social Media accounts

Guidelines/Related materials

The following are available on the University Communications and Marketing (UCM) [Work West webspace](#) for UWG-sponsored Social Media accounts.

- Social Media Toolkit
- Social Media Guidelines - UWG-sponsored Social Media accounts

For UWG-affiliated (e.g., student organizations and groups), see the ~~Student Organization Handbook available on the Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion's (CSII) Student Organizations Resources webpage~~[Registered Student Organization Handbook](#).

Approval Signatures

Step Description

Approver

Date