Social Media Usage

Authority for Procedure granted by UWG Policy 1003, University CommunicationsUWG PL #1003 Online Resource Ownership, Control, and Use.

The University of West Georgia (UWG) recognizes that social media sites serve as an 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.

A. Procedures

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.
B. Getting Started

Individuals should review the USG 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)

C. Registration Process

1. Registration Registration

   i. 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.

   ii. Inform UCM of all existing and new social media accounts. An assessment of the account will be done to determine its continuance.

   iii. 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.

   iv. It is critical for student groups to provide logins and passwords to CSI for their advisors' benefit when student organizations register through CSI.

2. Registration Follow-up

   i. 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.

   ii. Identify the person or persons who will have primary responsibility for populating, maintaining, and monitoring your site.

   iii. 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.

iv. Send a list of the official administrators to UCM.

v. 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.

vi. Ensure that social media pages clearly indicate they are maintained by the department and display departmental contact information prominently.

vii. 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 on 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.”

viii. 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 https://www.westga.edu/administration/policy/copyright.php

3. Administrator/Employees

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

v. Report problems or concerns regarding the use of a social media site or page immediately to UCM.

vi. 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.

vii. Protect important information. This includes passwords and information that may conflict with HIPAA, FERPA, NCAA, or other regulations.

4. UCM Responsibilities

i. Official Information. UCM is responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of UWG.

ii. 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

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. Safeguard Information. The following actions may be addressed by applicable laws and therefore pose a risk for you or the University. Please do not:

a. Publish or post false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation).

b. 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.
c. Use someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose.

d. Publish the creative work of another, use trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.

e. Post images taken outside of a public domain to avoid violating anyone's privacy. Public domain settings include parks, public buildings, etc.

f. Use social media pages to post detailed policy or procedure information, for example, program admission criteria. Rather, users should be directed to the official UWG publications or website for such information.

g. 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 www.westga.edu/ucm for University Branding Guidelines.

i. Be consistent with your profile image. As a social media manager of UWG, you represent the university's brand identity. Therefore, all official UWG social media profile images will be the UWG shield along with the groups' official name underneath the shield. This will ensure brand consistency across the board. This standard will communicate the university's identity and visually link its many divisions, offices, departments, centers, programs, colleges, and schools to project a unified, professional image that enhances UWG's reputation. Consistency is key to the effective presentation of UWG's image. Please refer to our social media toolkit for examples.

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.

8. Addendum and Approval

Addendum Ga. requires all official UWG social media profile images to feature the UWG shield along with the groups' official name underneath the shield.

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.
9. 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.”

10. 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.

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.

11. 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. UWG-sponsored Social Media sites shall not advertise items or services for sale except specifically related to the University. (see UWG PL 4001 associated Procedure, Conflicts of Interest and Commitment)

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
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 gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, or religion. 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 Person ally 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.

### 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 Usage.
F. Removal

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.

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.

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

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.

Blogs - A blog is a website that logs an individual's personal opinions, activities, and experiences, usually on a daily or regular basis.
**Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** - information that can identify an individual when used alone or with other relevant data. PII may contain direct identifiers (e.g., passport information) that can identify a person uniquely or quasi-identifiers (e.g., race) that can be combined with other quasi-identifiers (e.g., date of birth) to recognize an individual successfully.

**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.

**Official UWG-sponsored Social Media Accounts** - Official accounts are the only accounts that can speak on behalf of the entire university. The following are established official accounts:

- **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).

- **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. e.

- **LinkedIn** - University of West Georgia Linked In 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.

- **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.

- **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 (snap). Users can add active filters for snaps that are based on geotag.

- **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.

**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.
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.

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.

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, Vik Yak, and Snapchat.

UWG-Related Social Media Accounts - For purposes of this procedure, UWG-Related - 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.

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.

Unit - For purposes of this procedure, any college, department, research center, business service center, auxiliary 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.
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