



**University
of Suffolk**

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

A guide for staff



September 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Our University is committed to harnessing the power of social media, to develop authentic and inspiring online communities for our students, staff, alumni and applicants.

Social media can be used for a whole host of reasons, to promote your course or services, raise brand awareness, engage with potential applicants, keep in touch with alumni and to connect with the local community.

There are many benefits to social networking, including the opportunity to:

- Promote the University and increase brand awareness
- Promote the work of colleagues, students, media and shareholders
- Support learning and teaching
- Publicise the wealth of expertise within the institution on a global basis
- Provide opportunities for academic debate
- Develop student communities that creates a buzz about your course or the institution to be seen by prospective students

- Connect with businesses and other partners
- Increase web traffic by linking back to useful content hosted on the University's website
- Boost the institution's search ranking

Social media channels are informal, instant and available to anyone, so it is important that the institution promotes a positive and responsible attitude to participation and for staff to ensure that they are communicating in a responsible and consistent manner.

This guidance applies to any facility for online publication and commentary, including blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr and YouTube.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

All social media channels representing the University of Suffolk are subject to approval by the External Relations Directorate. All social media accounts representing the University must use the official branding and branded assets. This is covered in the branding section on page 3 of this document.

Social media accounts – set up and deletion requests

If you wish to set up a social media account to represent the institution on a School, Department or course level, please contact the Web and Digital Content Officer, Katie Holliday. All University of Suffolk social media accounts are subject to approval by the Head of Marketing/Director of External Relations. All University of Suffolk social media accounts will be required to link to the provided social media email address. This is for security purposes and in case emergency access is required. Accounts not adhering to the Social Media Guide will be reviewed.

The Web and Digital Content Officer will also be able to advise of the best social media platforms for your audience, as well as providing training and tips.

If you wish to delete an institutional social media account, please submit the request to Katie Holliday. This will require approval by the Head of Marketing/Director of External Relations. All University of Suffolk social media accounts will be required to link to the provided social media email address. This is for security purposes and in case emergency access is required. Accounts not adhering to the Social Media Guide will be reviewed.

Important: all owners of social media accounts representing the University should ensure that at least two of their team members have the login for their department or service social media accounts, as well as providing access and logins to the marketing team. This is for security purposes and all login details will be kept in a secure, locked file. Please keep Katie Holliday and Simon Smith updated with the login details to your department or course social media accounts if the password is changed at any point.

Please alert Marketing colleagues when a member of staff leaves, so that the password can be reset and they can be removed as an admin. If the password is changed at any time, please alert [Katie Holliday](#) or [Simon Smith](#).

Representing the University

- Be careful what you share, publish and post. You are personally responsible for what you share and remember that this will be open to public scrutiny and therefore needs to represent the ethos of the institution.
- All institutional pages must have an employee who is identified as being responsible for managing and moderating content.
- Individual department/service/special interest pages associated with the University must have a plan in place for accessing and managing the account in the event that the main account holder is absent.
- University of Suffolk social media accounts must only be accessed and managed by a member of staff, unless agreed otherwise with Marketing.

Tone of Voice

- Posts on social media sites should protect the institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste.
- When your social media account is being set up, we will select an appropriate name and profile picture to reflect your department, service or course.
- More information on tone of voice can be found in the [brand guidelines](#).

Branding

- The use of the University of Suffolk brand is carefully monitored and should not be used in any locations or for any purpose that might damage its reputation.
- When referring to the University, please use 'University of Suffolk' or 'the University' where possible. Please refer to the [brand guidelines](#) for more information on how to refer to the University.
- Prior permission to use the brand must be obtained from the Marketing and Communications Team. Please email your request to marcomms@uos.ac.uk

Protect Proprietary or Confidential Information

- Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the institution, its students, employees, or alumni. Confidential information includes unpublished details about confidential or planned projects, courses or new products in development, financial information, research, and trade secrets. Employees must follow the applicable UK legislation as well as all applicable privacy and confidentiality policies. Each social media provider will also require adherence to their own terms and conditions of use which may go further to protect the individual.
- Social media is covered under the Data Protection Act. All individuals monitoring a social media account linked to the university must adhere to the Data Protection Act at all times. If you are unsure about a piece of information you would like to share, please refer to the [Data Protection Act guide](#) or contact marcomms@uos.ac.uk for guidance.
- Social media use and data protection are covered in our [IT policy](#). It should be noted that any breach of these policies and procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

Respect copyright laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including the University's own copyrights and brands.

Any images you find on Google or other sites will be copyrighted, and using these could break the copyright law and result in a fine. If you are looking for a specific image, please contact marcomms@uos.ac.uk

Terms of service

Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed and if you wish to create competitions for data capture, please contact the our Web and Digital Content Officer.

Complaints handling

On social media, you may experience negative comments or complaints. Please do not delete these, as the individual will notice and this could cause aggravation and further negative comments. Instead, post a professional response answering their query, providing them with any necessary information or supplying them with the relevant email address for them to contact so you can investigate their complaint further without it being in the public eye.

Please do not supply your personal email address, as this may be seen by other social media users. Please notify [Katie Holliday](#) if you receive a complaint or negative comment.

Social media advertising and competitions

Please note that all Facebook advertising is managed centrally by the Marketing team to tie in to our recruitment campaigns. Please do not create Facebook ads yourself as they require specialist targeting and may compromise existing adverts we have running. Social media competitions are run by the marketing team and are not advised at course or department level, as there are many rules and regulations to adhere to.

TIPS AND ADVICE

Be friendly

- The tone of voice should be approachable, professional and confident. The tone should be conversational and warm: keep it friendly and accessible and write in the first person wherever possible. Avoid trying to fit in 'with the crowd' and develop your own personality representative of the institution.

Be active

- Social media presences require diligent care and housekeeping. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day and to post fresh content several times a week, reconsider setting up a social media presence at this time. Your site is only as interesting as your last post - if that post is several months old, visitors will consider it dead.
- Sites such as Facebook, have algorithms in place to reward active pages and to essentially penalise inactive pages. Even if you have built a big following, failing to keep them engaged will result in your content being shown to less people. Recent algorithm changes have also made it harder for brands to reach their audience, so we must keep our pages active and fresh to try and counteract this.
- Refrain from linking Twitter to Facebook. Sending your tweets to Facebook can look messy as tweets do not sit well on Facebook's news feed, so this could put your followers off from engaging with you.

Be respectful

- Your posts will reflect on the institution. Be professional and respectful at all times in your social media channel. Do not engage in arguments or overly-heated debates. Do not swear, be aggressive, negative, do not be discriminatory or prejudice in any way. Not only is this not tolerated by the University, but it is also not tolerated by the social media platforms themselves.

Be interesting

- As a consumer as well as a producer of social media, offer comments on interesting posts and share the good work of others using your channels. Social media is not just about sharing your news and success; it's about sharing information that is of interest to your readers and viewers. Avoid too much self-promotion as this will serve to alienate your audience.
- When commenting as part of your job, be sure to indicate who you are and your affiliation with the University. If you see a post that you think requires or would benefit from an official university response, please contact the marcomms@uos.ac.uk or [Katie Holliday](#).

Be vigilant

- Be prepared to accept and respond to comments. A social media site without comments isn't very social. Understand that not all comments will be positive, and respond to negative comments professionally and by providing any additional information that may help resolve the issue. Post a disclaimer on your site (such as in the 'about us' section) stating you reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments. Remove those comments containing vulgar language, those that attack any one group or individual and those that are obviously spam.
- Example disclaimer for a Facebook page: Please note, we reserve the right to remove any inappropriate, discriminatory or offensive comments.

Be timely

- One of the great benefits of social media is the ability to share information almost instantly with a global audience. This timeliness is also one of the expectations of that audience. Be prepared to move quickly in response to new developments, announcements, or emergencies with relevant information on your site. A short amount of accurate information delivered at the right time can sometimes be more valuable than a full report delivered well after the issue has passed.

Be aware

- Remember, quality matters and everything you do online can and will be permanent.
- Use a spell-checker. Always proofread your content and ensure that your selected social media admin has good communication skills.
- Think before you post, remembering that anything you share within social media, even within a closed network, is not private. It can and will be shared, stored and spread globally. Don't post anything online you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing on the front page of a newspaper.

BEST PRACTICE FAQs

How often should I post?



Facebook:

Ideally once a day, or once every other day at the very minimum and no more than 2-3 times a day (unless you have an event on or important information).



Twitter:

Daily up to 3-4 times unless you have an event on or important information to share.



Instagram:

At least 2-3 times per week and no more than twice a day.

How do I know if social media is right for me?

Firstly, review why you are thinking about a social media account and what your aims are. Secondly, do you have enough content to share on a regular basis to keep your social media account active and up-to-date? Remember, potential applicants may be viewing your social media so you want to keep it as fresh and as up-to-date as possible. Thirdly, do you have a designated social media admin who will be able to dedicate time to keeping your account active?

If you need further advice for choosing a social media platform, please contact [Katie Holliday](#). Do not feel like you have to be social media just

because everyone else is, and equally do not feel like you have to be on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram unless you can realistically keep up with all three.

What sort of content should I post?

As your course/department is representing the University, it must be on brand. That doesn't mean you can't post anything fun! Share course trips, events you're hosting, student activities, research and relevant news, subject specific news, University-wide news, local news and events which may be of interest. Even post a nice photo of the campus or Waterfront from time to time!

Are there any rules about photos?

Imagery should be on brand and any photos you take at events should refrain from having people in the shot, or have their **written permission** for you to share the image on social media. We have to be very careful when it comes to sharing photos of students, staff and the general public.

Looking for a particular image or need more guidance? Contact marcomms@uos.ac.uk

In need of further guidance or a one-to-one training session?

Please contact [Katie Holliday](#) (Web and Digital Content Officer).

SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES

Here are a few examples of social media accounts consistently posting engaging content in line with their audience and subject matter.

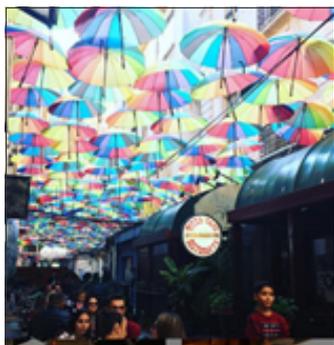
Sport Science

- Post regular content – Sport Science posts every few days to keep their accounts active. Being ‘present’ is one of the most important aspects of social media and will result in better engagement.
- Create varied content – this is important as your audience will become bored if you post the same thing every day. Sport Science posts about engaging workshops, student activities, trips, guest speakers, new equipment and events.
- Get your students involved – providing you have their written consent, it’s great to include photos of students at work or participating in relevant activities. If you don’t have their consent, don’t post the picture, or alternatively take the photo from behind so their face is not visible or identifiable.



International Team

- Be where your audience is - our International team deliberated with which channels to be present on, deciding on Twitter and Instagram as these channels are most used by their audience. Never feel like you need to be present on all social media channels, choose your audience over quantity.
- Play to your strengths – our International team visits a lot of different countries and cities. This provides them with a lot of visual content, which is perfect for targeting their audience on Instagram and Twitter.
- Tailor content per channel – they don’t post the exact same imagery with the exact same wording on all channels. Instead, they tailor their content to the channel they are using. For example, videos are popular on Facebook, whereas images are popular on Instagram, and GIFs and events are more popular on Twitter.



Social media examples continued

Graphic Design

- Utilise the channels that work for you—our Graphic Design course is very visual, so Instagram is a natural fit for them. From student work and art to trips, projects and activities, Graphic Design's social media channels are a hive of engaging imagery.
- Take advantage of the features available—our Graphic Design course team uses the carousel feature on Instagram to display multiple images in a concise and intuitive way. Get to know the channels you are using, as they often have simple yet effective features you can use.
- Be relevant—our Graphic Design team posts interesting articles and industry news on Facebook. This will showcase your expertise and can often encourage healthy debate with your followers. It also contributes to keeping your social media content varied.



PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Many of our academics and professional staff use their personal accounts to share university news and events. This is brilliant and we are pleased to see our staff members being advocates of the University. However, here are a few things to note when using your personal social media accounts:

- Remember, if you are happy to advertise you work for the University in your profile, you are representing the University to a certain degree. The best way to balance this is to add a disclaimer in your profile, something along the lines of 'all opinions and views are my own!'
- Try tagging the University in your Twitter profile if you are happy to as we love to keep up-to-date with our staff and colleagues:
@uniofsuffolk
- Not comfortable using your personal Twitter account? Set up a separate work/professional account which you can use instead. This is an excellent way round it if you'd prefer to keep business and your personal life separate.
- Your personal Twitter account is all about having your own personality. This doesn't have to be corporate or branded, this is all you. Be witty, be friendly, be topical, whatever it is that makes you, you. Just be mindful if you associate yourself with the University in your profile.

- **Please note we advise that you do not add or ‘friend’ students on your personal Facebook account for security and privacy reasons.**
- Many of our academics use their Twitter accounts not just to tweet about their course and the University, but also to tweet about their specific interests. This is great as it shows our academics are experts in their field and some healthy debate can be good. **Ed Packard** from our History course is a good example of how to use Twitter as an advocate of the University.
- In terms of LinkedIn, ensure your conduct remains professional if you are using it for University purposes. Please contact **Katie Holliday** if you would like to set up a business page (these are free) if you are looking to regularly use LinkedIn to promote your department or service to other professionals.

Examples include the **University of Suffolk** LinkedIn business page and the **Alumni** page. Remember to consider your target audience and reasons for using social media.

- It also goes without saying, but please do not speak negatively about the University on social media. If you have a concern or complaint, please use the official avenues to raise the issue. Negative or defamatory comments by staff on social media will not be tolerated.

If you have a query relating to your personal social media or any tips for being an advocate of the University online, please contact **Katie Holliday**.

PARTNER COLLEGES

Partner Colleges should refer to the publicity protocol (Appendix 2 of the Collaborative Agreement) for social media guidance. When mentioning a University of Suffolk course or event, you must clearly reference the University of Suffolk. Alternatively and ideally, you should tag the University of Suffolk’s Facebook or Twitter profile (@uniofsuffolk).

The guidelines around GDPR and branding still apply to Partner Colleges when referring to the University. The **Partner Colleges brand guidelines** can be found online.

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Partner institutions should refer to their individual Publicity Protocol for guidance on social media practice when promoting their Suffolk-validated provision.

Please also refer to the General Guidance section on pages 2-3 of this document, and contact **Katie Holliday** with any plans to launch dedicated social accounts for Suffolk-validated provision so that these can be discussed with the marketing team.

CONTACT DETAILS

Branding, images and publications:
marcomms@uos.ac.uk

Social media set up and login details:
Katie Holliday

Social media advertising:
Simon Smith

Click on icon below for:

Twitter how-to guide



Facebook how-to guide

