

Social Media Procedure			
Parent Policy	Social Media Policy		
Policy Sponsor	Vice President, University Relations	Category	Administrative
Policy Contact	Associate Vice-President, Communications and Marketing	Effective Date	June 2, 2021
Procedure Contact	Director, Communications	Review Date	June 2, 2026

1. Purpose

This Procedure defines the rules of use and engagement on all the University's Social Media accounts established by or on behalf of the University and its business and academic units.

2. Scope

Any member of the University Community, who makes use of these Social Media accounts as part of their job or in a personal capacity where usage may be considered as representing the University, must adhere to this procedure. Usage regarding the University's programs, products, people, competitors and/or business-related activities is also within the scope of these procedures. Additionally, the expectations for acceptable use of the University's IT Assets for Social Media purposes is also in scope.

It does not apply to sharing personal views on personal social media accounts.

3. Definitions

Confidential Digital Information	Information identified as confidential or Protected B Classification as per the Data Classification procedure of the Information Management Policy.
Data Quality (as it relates to online information)	Quality characteristics of the information include accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, and coherence that taken together can affect how it can be used.
FOIP Act	Alberta's <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> R.S.A. 2000, c. F-25, as amended from time to time.

IT Asset or Assets	Digital information and technology assets, which include: Software (applications, database management, operating systems, licenses, etc.); End User Devices (portable storage devices, computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones, displays, net stations, etc.); Digital Information; Cloud-based or on-premise Servers (multi-user physical or logical computers, etc.); Networks (cables, circuits, switches, routers, firewalls, etc.); and Digital Storage Devices and Systems (cloud-based, removable or fixed devices that retain Digital Information, etc.) owned by, under the custody of, or commercially made available to, the University.
Intellectual Property or IP	Any invention, work, information or material, trade secret, data, or technological or industrial design or process, regardless of form, including anything protectable by patent, copyright, industrial design, trademark, or other intellectual property rights.
Official AU Social Media Account	Official University Social Media Accounts are those that are approved, established by or on behalf of the University and its business and academic units by Communications within University Relations.
Official Statement	Any news, announcement, or other communication that has been developed and approved coming directly from, or on behalf of, the university.
Personal Information	Means recorded information about an identifiable individual as specified in section 1(n) of the FOIP Act.
Proprietary Information	Consists of any formula, pattern, device, or compilation of information maintained in secrecy that is used in business, and that gives the business an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not know about it or use it. The nature of Athabasca University's business operations may also be identified as confidential or Protected B Classification as per the Data Classification procedure of the Information Management Policy.
Sensitive Data and Information (Identity)	Sensitive data is associated with a person and is typically identifying. Any data or information that reveals: racial or ethnic origin; political opinions; religious or philosophical beliefs; trade union membership; genetic data; biometric data for the purpose of uniquely

	identifying a natural person; and data concerning health or a natural person's sex life and/or sexual orientation.
Social Media	All forms of public, web-based communication and expression that bring people together by making it easy to publish content to many audiences that may include (but is not limited to) the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat) - Video and photo sharing websites (e.g., Flickr, YouTube, Instagram/Instagram Stories, Pinterest) - Micro-blogging sites (e.g., Twitter, Tumblr) - Blogs (e.g., Corporate blogs, Personal blogs, Media hosted blogs) - Collaborative publishing (e.g., Wikipedia)
University	Athabasca University
University Community	All Board Members, contractors, postdoctoral fellows, volunteers, visitors, and other individuals who work, study, conduct research or otherwise carry on business of the University.
Visual and Editorial Identity and Design Standards	A formal set of guidelines governing the use of an integrated system of identifiers (visual elements, symbols, templates, descriptors, etc.) the application of which ensures consistency, quality and correctness in University promotional or information materials directed to internal and external audiences.

4. Guiding Principles

General Principles

- 4.1. As an online, digital University, engaging in social media is essential to the coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and communication required to accomplish the University's strategic initiatives.
- 4.2. University Relations may establish Social Media accounts on behalf of the University and its business and academic units.
- 4.3. Only individuals authorized by University Relations may make official statements on the University's official Social Media accounts.

4.4. Acceptable Use of University Social Media Accounts

- a) Posts must be accurate and reflect Data Quality principles.

- b) Only public information may be posted on University Social Media accounts unless information is explicitly provided to use for public consumption.
- c) Use of another individual's Personal Information is allowed only where it is authorized by applicable legislation or by obtaining permission directly from the individual.
- d) Comments on University Activities on University Social Media accounts must be appropriate to an individual's role or position at the University.
- e) Posts containing confidential, proprietary, or intellectual property not already available publicly shall not be posted under any circumstances. This may include but is not limited to: Athabasca University products; strategic and financial content; imminent departure of key executives, or, Athabasca University, customer, partner, or personal employee data.
- f) Information about the University's processes and safeguards are addressed by the Social Media Playbook, and these are posted on internal channels for internal use.
- g) Tone and content on Official AU Social Media accounts must not damage the reputation of the University. The sharing of personal views should take place on personal social media accounts.
- h) The University moderates use of its accounts and reserves the right to remove any content or person without notice, and to redirect social media activity to the applicable social media platform. This may include content deemed to pose a reputational risk to the University.

4.5. Attribution to the University

- a) Where a member of the University Community is acting in their personal capacity, they should be clear that any statements, images, or materials are those belonging to the individual and that they are speaking for themselves.
- b) Any Social Media post that makes references to, suggests association with, or appears to represent views of the University, either directly or indirectly, presents a reputational risk to the University. Any member of the University Community intent on doing so should first consult Communications.
- c) Performing a role as a University representative requires approval from Communications.
- d) Members of the University Community are encouraged to share, re-tweet, or re-post social media communications posted on Official Social Media Accounts. Commenting on social media communications posted on Official

Social Media Accounts must be in accordance with section 4.4 of these Procedures.

4.6. Conduct Expectations and Unacceptable Use Violations

- a) The use of the University's official Social Media accounts must conform to relevant legislation and all University policies and procedures.
- b) The University has specific expectations for conduct and acceptable use, as well as sharing of information when engaging with official Social Media accounts. These accounts must be used responsibly, respectfully and in a manner that reflects high ethical standards, mutual respect, and civility.
- c) Unacceptable use of official Social Media accounts will not be tolerated and posts may be removed. Unacceptable use includes but is not limited to the following:
 - To disseminate harassing, abusive, malicious, sexually explicit, threatening, intimidating, illegal information or images or make defamatory comments online.
 - To disparage the employer, or any other members of the University Community.
 - To distribute content that would bring disrepute to the University or harm its standing in the community.
- d) References to a University Community member's nature of work should be factual and kept to a minimum.
- e) Individuals who breach this policy may also be subject to the breach provisions outlined in the applicable Codes of Conduct.
- f) Individuals who breach this policy and who are members of a bargaining unit are subject to the disciplinary articles or any other relevant articles of their respective Collective Agreement.
- g) If there is any doubt or question about conduct expectations and acceptable use of social media accounts, contact Communications.

4.7. Brand management expectations include adherence to:

- a) The University Brand and Editorial Guideline.
- b) Best use practices for Visual and Editorial Identity and Design Standards found in the Social Media Playbook.
- c) Follows the Use of University Identity, Logos, Name and Symbols of Armorial Bearings Policy.

4.8. Administration of the University's Social Media Accounts

- a) Administrative rights for official Social Media accounts are assigned to administrators who are responsible for monitoring appropriate content. Other individuals may be granted access as deemed necessary by the primary administrator.
- b) Media involvement or inquiries must be referred to Communications for further direction.

4.9. When in doubt about the interpretation of any of the above expectations, consult with University Relations.

5. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.A 2000, c.F-25*](#)

6. Related Procedures/Documents

List any related Procedures and templates or other supporting documents related to the policy:

[All collective bargaining agreements in which the Governors of Athabasca are a party](#)

[Brand and Editorial Guideline](#)

[Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Members of the Board of Governors](#)

[Code of Conduct for Members of the University Community](#)

[Communications Framework](#)

[Harassment, Violence, and Sexual Violence Policy](#)

[IT Policy Suite](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Student Code of Conduct and related policies](#)

[Use of University Identity, Logos, Name and Symbols of Armorial Bearings Policy](#)

NOTE: The subject matter and scope of this policy and its related procedures are also supported by internal-use only Guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures.

History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
June 2, 2021	Executive Team (Policy Approved)