UCT Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

The use of Social Media offers the University of Cape Town (UCT) community many opportunities for communication and engagement with its various audiences.

It is essential to acknowledge that alongside these opportunities is inherent risk. The immediacy and widespread nature of Social Media can have unexpected repercussions if not used in the appropriate manner. The potential consequences, often unforeseen and enduring, underlines the need for the application of strategies and policies to ensure the responsible and ethical use of Social Media platforms.

2. Purpose

The Policy aligns with the UCT Digital Presence Governance Framework and sets out the requirements that UCT staff, students and Registered Third Parties should consider when using Social Media Platforms

- on behalf of UCT,
- in their professional capacities, and
- in their personal capacities.

It aims to ensure consistency in the online representation of UCT, and to ensure the currency, accuracy, and reliability of UCT-related information published on UCT Social Media Accounts.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Appropriate Social Media Content	Social Media Content complying with the stipulations of this Policy
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	"[T]echnology that enables computers and machines to simulate human intelligence and problem-solving capabilities. (IBM)
Confidential Information	Personal confidential information about an individual or information which is confidential for professional reasons, including: • trade secrets • confidential research data • personal information about another individual (such as but not limited to information about their medical history, or sexuality) • details of complaints and/or legal proceedings
Digital Content	Text, audio, video, or images on a UCT Website, blog, intranet, extranet, portal, mobile app, chatbot, Social Media Account, and any other application that displays UCT content via a web interface; excludes published scholarly content
Digital Presence	Comprises Websites, Social Media sites and Accounts, including their Digital Content, and the Digital Content on UCT Web Applications, mobile apps, chatbots, and other internet-enabled products and services, etc., whether hosted internally or externally to UCT
Fair Dealing	As detailed in Section 12 of the Copyright Act of South Africa
Intellectual Property	Works eligible for copyright under the Copyright Act of South Africa, 1978 (including, without limitation, rights in computer programs and databases, and moral rights); trademarks; service marks; trade names; domain names; designs; patents; petty patents; utility models and like rights; inventions; designs; know-how; confidential information; trade secrets; and all rights in and to any of the aforementioned
Personal (Social Media) Account	Social Media Account established by a member of staff or a student in their personal capacity
Professional (Social Media) Account	A variant of a UCT Social Media Account: an account established by a member of staff or by a student for a role or position they hold at UCT, e.g. vice-chancellor or Students' Representative Council president
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act

Registered Third Party	A contractor or service provider with a UCT third-party account
Social Media	Includes all means of receiving, posting, or streaming Social Media Content online, or on digital and/or web-based platforms or applications including, but not limited to, blogs, digital journals or diaries, social networking, or affinity websites; web bulletin boards or chat rooms; as well as any other form of social networking site
Social Media Account	Any UCT profile and its contents on a Social Media platform, whether public or private, representing UCT or a UCT Entity, or a UCT staff or student role (UCT Professional Account)
(Social Media) Account Manager	Any member of staff, any student or any registered third party who is formally tasked with managing and operating a UCT social media account or any aspect thereof; may also manage social media practitioners
(Social Media) Account Owner	The person who authorised the creation of a UCT Social Media Account, accountable for its content: In the case of an Account for a UCT Entity, the Owner is the head of that Entity In the case of a Professional Account, the Owner is the person who fulfils the role the account represents
(Social Media) Content	Without limitation, written; verbal; pictorial; photographic; video; and similar or associated content placed on UCT Social Media Platforms; includes direct messages and private posts
(Social Media) Content Owner	The owner of the content on a UCT Social Media Account, accountable for its accuracy and currency
Social Media Platform	Any website or software platform or application that enables users to use Social Media including, but not limited to, Facebook; X; Instagram; LinkedIn; YouTube; TikTok; blogs; and online forums
(Social Media) Practitioners	Any person authorised to maintain Content on UCT Social Media platforms
UCT Entity	Any faculty, department, school, centre, division, group, unit, office, service, centre, or other organisational entity of UCT; or any official staff or student grouping of UCT
Users	The audience of UCT's Social Media Accounts; the consumers of the content on such accounts

4. Applicable to

4.1. This Policy applies to all staff, students, and Registered Third Parties as it pertains to the use of and conduct on UCT Social Media Accounts and Personal Accounts; and all UCT Social Media Sites, Accounts and Content.

5. Exclusions

5.1. None noted.

6. Policy details

6.1. All UCT Social Media Accounts and Content

6.1.1. UCT Social Media Accounts and Content must comply with the relevant South African legislation.

6.1.1.1. The university is subject to all applicable South African legislation.

6.1.1.2. All Social Media Content must be regarded as subject to copyright and intellectual property law, and as belonging to the University of Cape Town in the person of the Registrar (as designated by the Vice-Chancellor).

6.1.1.3. Use of UCT's Social Media Content is governed by the concept of "fair dealing" as described in the Copyright Act.

6.1.1.4. Social Media Content may not constitute unsolicited promotions, advertising, contests, solicitations, or comments which repeatedly post the same or similar message (spam) or otherwise breach the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2008.

6.1.1.5. Any Social Media Content or posts by Users deemed to be in contravention of South African legislation must be removed as soon as possible.

6.1.1.6. The University does not accept any responsibility or liability for content posted to UCT Social Media Accounts by Users other than designated Social Media Account Managers and Practitioners acting in an authorised manner.

6.1.2. UCT Social Media Accounts and Content must comply with applicable UCT policies, standards, and codes of conduct.

6.1.2.1. In particular:

- UCT Values: A Statement of Values for the University of Cape Town and its Members
- Staff Code of Conduct
- General Rules and Policies (Handbook 3: "Rules on Conduct for Students")
- Social Media Standards

6.1.3. Confidential Information must not be posted online without permission to avoid a potential breach of data protection or of UCT privacy rules.

6.1.3.1. It is required per POPIA to obtain consent from any individual identifiable in Digital Content.

6.1.4. UCT Social Media Accounts must be set up following due process with the Communication and Marketing Department (CMD).

6.1.4.1. UCT Social Media Accounts must be set up using generic UCT email addresses that can be transferred to someone else should the Account Managers no longer perform this function.

6.1.5. All UCT Social Media Accounts must be listed in the UCT social media register.

6.1.5.1. The official Social Media Account register is maintained by CMD.

6.1.5.2. All Social Media Account Owners must ensure that CMD is aware of their accounts and informed when new accounts are created, and old accounts deleted.

6.1.6. Where technically feasible, UCT Social Media Accounts must be branded appropriately and in line with the UCT Brand Guidelines: Social Media.

6.1.7. UCT Social Media Accounts have the sole authority to interact, comment or release statements on Social Media Platforms on behalf of the UCT Entity or role they represent.

6.1.8. UCT Social Media Accounts and Content must have specified Account Owners and assigned Account Managers as well as Practitioners (the latter where applicable)

6.1.8.1. All Social Media Accounts must have a specified Account Owner.

6.1.8.2. All Account Owners must assign an Account Manager as well as Practitioners (if required) to maintain the account and content.

6.1.8.3. The responsibilities of Content Owners, Social Media Account Managers and Social Media Practitioners must be written into their job descriptions; where this is not feasible, accountability and responsibility must be assigned to them in writing.

6.1.8.3.1. This accountability/responsibility must be detailed and followed up on in performance appraisals where applicable. Appropriate action must be taken should the responsible person not perform the task as required and agreed to.

6.1.8.4. All Account Managers and Practitioners must be UCT staff members, students or, where applicable, Registered Third Parties.

6.1.8.5. CMD must be kept informed of the identity of all Account Owners and Account Managers, for inclusion in the social media register.

6.1.8.5.1. Should any Account Owner or Manager no longer be available for the role, it must be reassigned immediately and CMD informed of the change.

6.1.8.6. UCT Social Media Accounts and their content are and remain the property of UCT and are not the property or Intellectual Property of the Account Owner or Content Manager, and/or UCT Entity, and/or any member of staff or any student.

6.1.9. Account Managers and Practitioners must securely maintain the usernames, passwords, and associated login details of their Social Media Accounts.

6.1.9.1. Usernames and passwords must not be shared.

6.1.9.2. Usernames and passwords must be changed when Account Managers and Practitioners are replaced or when an Account is suspected to be compromised.

6.1.9.3. A security breach of any UCT Social Media Account must be reported to the relevant platform as well as Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS) and CMD immediately.

6.1.9.4. Account Managers and Practitioners must take note that the UCT Account and Password Policy applies in principle.

6.1.10. Social Media Account Managers and Practitioners are required to undergo training where applicable.

6.1.10.1. In addition, Account Owners, Account Managers and Practitioners must ensure that they are familiar with and abide by the terms of use of the relevant Social Media Platform on which the UCT Social Media Account is established.

6.1.11. Social Media Content must be accurate and appropriate at all times.

6.1.11.1. Account Managers and Practitioners must be aware that inaccurate or inappropriate information appearing on a UCT Social Media Account exposes the Account Owner as well as UCT to the risk of liability.

6.1.11.2. Account Managers and Practitioners must correct errors in content they posted promptly and visibly.

6.1.12. Account Managers and Practitioners must moderate User posts published on UCT Social Media Accounts.

6.1.12.1. All Account Owners must ensure that procedures are in place to deal with inappropriate Content posted by Users, including keeping a record of it and reporting it to the relevant UCT and platform authorities.

6.1.12.2. Posts that breach South African Law, UCT policies, standards, codes of conduct, or UCT's statement of values must be removed immediately.

6.1.12.3. Account Managers and Practitioners must use the Platform's tools to report, ban or block Users responsible for such posts.

6.1.13. AI tools and AI-generated Digital Content must be used responsibly and lawfully.

6.1.13.1. Social Media Account and Digital Content Owners, Authors, and Managers must:

6.1.13.1.1. use AI technologies responsibly and in line with the stipulations of South African law for digital content creation, curation, and user interaction.

6.1.13.1.2. ensure that their actions align with UCT's values and ethical standards.

6.1.13.1.3. strive for transparency when using AI-powered tools for Digital Content.

6.1.13.1.4. avoid perpetuating bias in AI-generated Digital Content and interactions with Digital Content users.

6.1.13.1.5. ensure that AI-generated content, such as automated responses, personalised recommendations, and content served by tools such as chatbots, is and remains accurate, relevant, and reliable.

6.1.13.1.6. regularly monitor and review AI-generated content to maintain quality standards.

6.1.13.2. Any instances of AI bias, algorithmic errors, or AI-created ethical dilemmas must be reported to the relevant authorities for investigation and resolution.

6.1.13.3. CMD must be notified of all AI tools that generate Digital Content for UCT's Digital Presence for inclusion in the relevant registers.

6.1.14. Only officially sanctioned products, services or events may be advertised on UCT Social Media Accounts.

6.1.14.1. Advertising or marketing of products, services, or events that are for profit and/or unrelated to UCT must not be published on UCT Social Media Accounts unless:

6.1.14.1.1. it is offered by an official partner to UCT; or

6.1.14.1.2. it is part of a formal agreement entered into between UCT and a third party.

6.1.15. Obsolete Social Media Accounts must be deleted.

6.1.15.1. If there has been no new activity on a UCT Social Media Account for six months or more, it will be deemed obsolete and must be closed by the Account Manager.

6.1.15.2. CMD must be notified of obsolete UCT Social Media Accounts and/or their deletion.

6.1.16. UCT Social Media Accounts that were created before this Policy came into effect must be brought in line with its stipulations within in a year of its ratification.

6.2. Professional Accounts

6.2.1. The Owners of Professional Accounts, as well as Account Managers and Practitioners, are bound by the stipulations set out under All UCT Social Media Accounts above.

6.2.2. When the Owner of a Professional Account leaves UCT, the Account must be deleted or handed to the next person to fulfil the role as soon as possible.

6.2.2.1. The Owner or Content Manager of such an account is responsible for deleting the Account or handing it over to CMD to pass onto the next Owner before leaving the role.

6.2.3. Personal Accounts must not be used as Professional Accounts.

6.3. Personal Accounts

6.3.1. UCT is not responsible for, and does not hold any ownership of, any Content posted on Social Media, excluding UCT Social Media Accounts, by its students or staff in their personal capacity.

6.3.2. Nothing about having a presence on Social Media changes a staff member or a student's responsibilities or obligations to UCT.

6.3.2.1. All contractual obligations, as well as the obligations outlined in UCT policies and codes of conduct, apply equally to conduct on Social Media.

6.3.2.2. When posting to their Personal Accounts, staff and students must be cognisant that there may be circumstances in which they risk giving the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the university. If in doubt, they must add a disclaimer to make it clear that they are posting in a personal capacity.

6.3.2.3. Staff and students must be aware that Social Media platforms do not replace any existing university channels for raising or addressing any issue they may have and must use such official and established channels as per the relevant university processes.

6.3.3. As soon as a member of staff leaves the employ of UCT, they are required to change their personal details on their Social Media Accounts to no longer indicate that they are a UCT staff member.

6.3.4. As soon as a student leaves UCT they are required to change their personal details on their Social Media Accounts to no longer indicate that they are a registered UCT student.

7. Policy violations

7.1. UCT reserves the right in its sole and absolute discretion to:

7.1.1. request or effect the removal of any Content from a Social Media Account that is not compliant with this Policy

7.1.2. action (and to take all necessary steps to secure) the deletion of any Social Media Account falsely purporting to be a UCT Account or that incorporates the UCT brand identity without the requisite permission.

7.2. The Digital Presence Team (DPT) will proactively engage with parties found to be non-compliant with UCT Digital Presence policy. Parties that are unable to meet the requirements contained in the policy are required to apply for dispensation through the DPT.

7.3. All Social Media Account Managers and Practitioners are liable for how they conduct themselves on Social Media Platforms. Non-compliance with this Policy may lead to performance management or disciplinary steps in line with UCT rules and regulations governing such procedures.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
(Social Media) Account Owner	• Authorising and approving the creation of Social Media Accounts • Accountable for their content • Informing CMD of the creation or removal of Social Media Accounts
(Social Media) Content Owner	• Accountable for providing Content • Accountable for Content accuracy and currency
(Social Media) Account Manager	• Managing and operating a UCT social media account • Managing social media practitioners • Ensuring Content accuracy and currency • Moderating user posts • Reporting on statistics
(Social Media) Practitioners	• Maintaining Content on UCT Social Media platforms • Ensuring Content accuracy and currency • Moderating user posts

See the Digital Presence Governance Framework for the Digital Presence governance structure.

9. Related links

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Account and Password Policy
- Appropriate Use of Computing Facilities Policy
- Copyright Act of South Africa
- Digital Presence Governance Framework

- Digital Presence Policy
- Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)
- Social Media Standards and Guidelines
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Statement of Values for the University of Cape Town and its Members
- UCT Brand Guidelines: Social Media
- UCT Disability Policy
- UCT General Rules and Policies (Handbook 3: "Rules on Conduct for Students"; "Rules on Meetings" – on freedom of expression)
- UCT Information Security Policy
- UCT Intellectual Property Policy
- UCT Policy and Rules on Internet and Email Use
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)