Media - Social Media Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to:

a. guide the creation and maintenance of Victoria University (VU) social media accounts; and
b. clarify staff and student responsibilities when using social media, including in relation to personal use.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

a. all staff and students at VU (including VU agents and contractors who maintain VU social media accounts, such as advertising and creative agencies); and
b. official VU social media channels and other social media platforms or channels that have an official connection to VU.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(3) Media Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Chief Marketing Officer	In partnership with a representative from the Brand and Marketing team and Media and Corporate Communications, approves official VU social media accounts.
Director, Media and Corporate Communications	Arranges and approves official VU statements to be posted on social media in the case of an emergency or critical incident.
Social media team	Manages approved VU social media accounts, including community management responsibilities.

Part B - Official VU Social Media

(4) Social media is a communication platform that VU uses to connect with students, alumni, VU partners and other members of the broader VU and external community.

(5) VU has official social media accounts that are used to represent, market or communicate on behalf of the University as a whole, or a significant part of it. Official VU social media accounts are either managed by the social

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Victoria University's Policy Library for the latest version.

media team or by approved account owners. Approved accounts must comply with this Procedure and other relevant University policies and procedures.

Creating and Maintaining an Official VU Social Media Account

(6) All official VU social media accounts and online channels must be approved by the Chief Marketing and Experience Officer. This includes LinkedIn groups and YouTube channels.

(7) In order to create an official VU account, a request must first be discussed with a member of the University's social media team (Social.Media@vu.edu.au).

(8) Following those discussions, the Social Media Application Form must be completed and submitted to Social.Media@vu.edu.au.

(9) All requests for an official VU account must specify who the intended owner of the account will be.

(10) The Director, Media and Corporate Communications will consider the request , determine whether it is appropriate and a member of the Media and Corporate Communications team will respond to the application.

(11) Administrators of official VU accounts must:

a. grant administrative access to the social media team via Social.Media@vu.edu.au;
b. ensure University branding is evident and contact information is prominently displayed;
c. ensure published content is accurate and not misleading;
d. link to an official University response when instructed to do so by the Media and Corporate Communications team. This is primarily during crisis communications, marking days of significance and holiday periods and where an official University response is required;
e. monitor the social media account daily, and engage with the social media team immediately should damaging content or comments be posted;
f. respond to requests for information, questions or comments in a timely fashion;
g. ensure compliance with the University's Privacy Policy;
h. escalate concerns about content to the social media team via social.media@vu.edu.au and the Media and Corporate Communications team;
i. ensure potentially fake reviews are reported to the social media team via social.media@vu.edu.au.

Part C - Social Media in Learning and Teaching

(12) VU acknowledges the positive impact that social media in learning and teaching can have on student engagement and experience, active learning, digital literacy and citizenship. VU therefore encourages the use of social media as an effective complementary teaching strategy to practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills in collaborative environments.

(13) If a learning and teaching social media presence is deemed to be inappropriate or in conflict with the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy, Student Conduct Policy or Student Charter, the social media team has the authority to close or take over the presence.

Part D - Social Media Standards of Conduct

General Standards of Conduct

(14) VU expects students and staff to conform to generally accepted standards of behaviour when posting content and

communicating via social media in both their professional and personal capacities. The aim of establishing standards of behaviour and guidelines for use on social media is to protect the reputation of the university, support freedom of expression, ensure compliance with relevant Australian laws and policies, and promote respectful and responsible use of social media.

(15) Students and Staff should:

a. not represent or imply they are speaking on behalf of VU, unless they are an acknowledged administrator of an approved VU account, or an approved spokesperson for VU as per the Media Policy.
b. be respectful and considerate of others and their opinions and beliefs when posting on VU official social media accounts or about VU;
c. ensure content and commentary is respectful;
d. not post any information, including content or comments, that are racist, offensive, obscene, incite hatred, defamatory, false or misleading, or are otherwise contrary to any Australian laws or VU policies;
e. not disclose commercial in confidence, confidential, personal or sensitive information, or post identifiable images without permission;
f. consider the reputation of VU when they are posting, and ensure content about VU is accurate and honest;
g. not impersonate another student, staff member, or associate of the University online;
h. consider reporting (where they can) any cyberbullying or online harassment they have experienced in the workplace or in a study environment. If students are involved, staff and students should contact the Integrity Office. If staff are involved, People and Culture should be contacted.

(16) Students and staff are also encouraged to report any concerns they have about the University being misrepresented on social media, or any content they believe is damaging to the University's reputation. Where possible, students and staff are encouraged to take a screen shot of the concerning content and alert the social media team.

Personal Use

(17) As set out in the IT Appropriate Use Policy, staff may use the University's IT facilities for a limited amount of personal use. This includes the use of personal social media.

(18) Any use of personal social media via the University's information technology services or facilities must comply with this Procedure, clause (11) of the IT Appropriate Use Policy, as well as:

a. the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy, Student Conduct Policy and Student Charter; and,
b. the Bullying Prevention and Management Policy, Gender-based Violence Policy and the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy.

(19) VU wants its students and staff to be safe online. Students and staff should regularly check and update social media privacy settings and can seek out guidance on the eSafety Commissioner site.

(20) Staff are reminded to consider the implications of having social media connections with students and/or following their accounts.

(21) While students and staff are free to use social media in a personal capacity, they should remain mindful of the expectations in this policy. Offensive, defamatory, or otherwise inappropriate content (including comments) may be assumed to reflect on VU. It may also be perceived to represent VU even if it is not intended as such, potentially harming the University's reputation. This includes instances of bullying, harassment, or public criticism of the University.

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Victoria University's Policy Library for the latest version.

(22) Students and staff should exercise caution, respect and professionalism in online activity, recognising that personal posts and commentary can be subject to scrutiny and, if considered to breach VU values or policies, may lead to disciplinary action.

Professional Use

(23) VU understands staff and students may have social media accounts that they use to promote their work, studies or profile. Staff and students should add a disclaimer to their public social media accounts such as 'All opinions/views are my own'.

(24) Staff and students who wish to post content that speaks on behalf of VU as an institution should alert the Media and Corporate Communications team. Staff and students should clearly distinguish personal views from those of the University.

(25) Research and teaching staff should use academic freedom responsibly when online, respecting the rights and freedoms of others and in line with the VU Freedom of Expression Policy.

(26) Staff and students should clearly disclose any professional affiliations or qualifications when making public comments on their area of expertise.

Enforcement

(27) The University may act where it believes a post or website content breaches these policies and could be detrimental to the University or its members. Breaches will be dealt with through disciplinary procedures.

Part E - Monitoring and Review of Social Media Accounts

(28) VU reserves the right to restrict or remove any content on VU approved accounts that does not comply with requirements or other University policies and procedures as detailed.

(29) Where there is no intention to continue updating the content, the social media account owner should deactivate the account. Prior to deactivating an account, staff must check whether the content needs to be retained in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy.

(30) Inactive social media accounts should be reported to the social media team via social.media@vu.edu.au.

(31) The social media team reserves the right to delete inactive social media accounts and/or transfer the ownership to a relevant University spokesperson.

Part F - Record Keeping Requirements

(32) As detailed within VU's Records Management Policy, VU's records are public records of the State of Victoria and must be managed in accordance with standards issued under the Public Records Act 1973 (Vic). Social media posts are public records because they are created or received by staff in the course of duties and are evidence of the University's business.

(33) Social media content must be recorded and sent to the social media team for archiving centrally when it:

a. relates to a distressed user;
b. relates to a crisis on campus;
c. relates to a breach of the Media Policy, with potential legal liability stemming from the misuse of social media; and/or
d. is required to support a legal, compliance or regulatory matter.

(34) VU does not mandate any specific capture technology as this will depend on the social media used. A recommended social media record should contain:

a. the content (i.e. the information sent or received);
b. the format (text, visual, sound or video) of the original content metadata such as:
    i. who sent or posted the content;
    ii. the date and time it was posted;
    iii. the name of the staff member and community members exchanging messages;
    iv. the context of the exchange;
    v. the social media platform on which it was created;
    vi. the relationship between the record, the context in which the social media was used (e.g. a statement or a reply) and any other related documents that help make the social media usage understandable.

Deletion of Social Media Content

(35) Where a social media account is to be closed down and the content associated with the account does not have business or historical value, the social media content can be deleted without archiving.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(36) Higher Education Standards Framework: Standard 7.1 Representation.

(37) ESOS National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018: Standard 1 Marketing Information and Practices.

(38) Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: Standard 7 Marketing and Advertising; Sch 2 NRTL Conditions of Use Policy.

Section 6 - Definitions

(39) Social media: Broadly describes all internal and external online platforms used to share information, comments, opinions and media files. Examples include but are not limited to: Meta platforms, YouTube, LinkedIn, X, online comments in blogs and news articles; Microsoft and other collaboration platforms, Wikipedia; online forums, discussion boards and groups; podcasts; geo-spatial tagging and online multiplayer gaming platforms.

(40) Limited amount of personal use (staff use of ICT facilities): use of VU information technology facilities that does not interfere with an individual’s duties/responsibilities; is infrequent and brief; does not interfere with, or impact on, the operation of the University; or does not cause more than a nominal additional expense.

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Victoria University's Policy Library for the latest version.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	10th October 2025
Review Date	10th October 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	9th October 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Tara Schuurmans Chief of Staff +61 3 9919 4198
Responsible Officer	Gabrielle Crittenden Director, Public Affairs +613 9919 3533
Enquiries Contact	Somerville Cath Director, Media and Corporate Communications cath.somerville@vu.edu.au

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Victoria University's Policy Library for the latest version.