

POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 CPUT promotes the use of social media to support institutional goals and services. Since most of these tools reside outside the University's control, clear guidelines must be followed to ensure the Institution is recognised and protected. The intent of our Social Media Policy is to ensure that CPUT employees and students use official CPUT social media channels in a responsible, respectful, and professional manner that reflects positively on our university.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all staff and students who use official social media as part of their work, or in official communication that may be related to teaching and learning, research, social engagement for different purposes. All accounts that bear the CPUT name, an association to CPUT, or any CPUT corporate identity element will be regarded as official, and are governed by this Policy. The Policy does not cover staff and students' personal use of social media.

3. OBJECTIVE(S)

The objectives of the CPUT Social Media Policy are to:

- 3.1 Protect confidential and proprietary information related to the University, its employees, and its students;
- 3.2 Protect the University's brand value;
- 3.3 Maintain the privacy of individuals, and respect and protect their personal and sensitive information;
- 3.4 Comply with laws and regulations related to social media use, including those related to privacy, advertising, and intellectual property;
- 3.5 Promote the University's mission, values, and goals through social media platforms;
- 3.6 Provide accurate and up-to-date information about the University, its programmes, and activities;
- 3.7 Monitor and respond to social media activity related to the University and its constituents;
- 3.8 Promote transparency and accountability in the use of social media by the University and its constituents; and Provide guidance and support to individuals and groups using social media on behalf of the University.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLE

4.1 General Usage

- 4.1.1. Social media channels will be monitored in accordance with the schedule set out in 4.2.
- 4.1.2 Any violation of the above rules on Level 1, 2 and 3 pages must be reported to the Director: MCD.
- 4.1.3 Legal violations or misconduct on non-official channels should be taken up with the platform owner/page administrator and civil/criminal action by the affected party.
- 4.1.4. University social media efforts should encourage fans, followers, and friends to share their thoughts with one another by commenting on stories, videos, links, posts, etc., by providing guidelines for good and proper use.

4.2 Monitoring

- 4.2.1 Social Media accounts will be categorised as follows:

Level 1 – CPUT main page; student main page

Level 2 – Faculty pages

Level 3 – Departmental/course pages; student organisations/SRC pages

All Level 2 and 3 pages must carry a prominent disclaimer directing people to the Level 1 social media pages. The disclaimer must be pinned at the top of the page. The disclaimer must cover reason/s for the page's existence, and clearly state all non-related page communications should be directed to Level 1 pages.

- 4.2.2. Monitoring frequency by MCD designated staff member:

Level 1 pages – Daily

Level 2 pages – Monthly

Level 3 pages – Every six months, to check adherence to Policy and content regulations

MCD will delete any social media content that violates the guidelines, or any policy provision stated in this document.

4.3 Guidelines for Appropriate Use

Social media guidelines for universities are a set of rules and principles that outline how students, faculty, staff, and administrators should use social media in relation to the university. These guidelines help to ensure that social media is used in a responsible and professional manner that reflects positively on the university.

These guidelines should be clearly communicated to staff and students, and enforced consistently across the university to ensure that staff and students understand their responsibilities and the potential impact of their social media activity on the university (in this case, CPUT).

- 4.3.1 Representing the University: Users of social media should remember that they are representing the University, and should avoid posting anything that could be construed as offensive, discriminatory, or negative towards the University or its constituents.
- 4.3.2 Monitoring and reporting: The University may monitor social media activity related to the University and its constituents; and users of social media should report any concerns or issues related to social media use to the appropriate personnel.
- 4.3.3 Providing accurate and up-to-date information: Users of social media should provide accurate and up-to-date information about the University, its programmes and its activities.
- 4.3.4 Maintaining a professional image: Users of social media should maintain a professional image on social media, and avoid posting content that could reflect negatively on the University, in terms of its brand, name and reputation.
- 4.3.5 Respect for copyright and intellectual property: Users of social media should respect copyright and intellectual property laws, and avoid using or sharing copyrighted materials without permission.
- 4.3.6 Content should be posted with the understanding that it may be redistributed through the Internet and other media channels and may be viewed by the general public. If deleted or modified, older versions may continue to exist online.
- 4.3.7 Content should not be posted unless it furthers the University's education, teaching and learning, social engagement or research mission, goals and objectives.
- 4.3.8 Only information that is appropriate for the public should be posted.
- 4.3.9 In order to avoid discrepancies and minimise the need for updating, social media platforms should not be used to post detailed policy or procedural information, e.g., programme admission criteria, course notes, etc. Rather, users should be directed to official University websites, electronic resources, or publications for such information.
- 4.3.10 Content directed at individual fans or page users should be written in a respectful manner. Content should never be written in a manner that can be interpreted as combative, demeaning, or otherwise negative.
- 4.3.11 Generally speaking, content should not be posted if it depicts a dangerous activity, unless discussed with and approved by the Management Committee through the Marketing and Communication Department. A legal disclaimer may be required for such posts.
- 4.3.12 No content that depicts (or may be perceived to depict) person/s being hurt, attacked or humiliated; that might be considered racist, bigoted or demeaning to a particular group of individuals; that depicts activity that is (or may be perceived to be) illegal, such as drug use; or that could otherwise portray the account holder or the University in a negative light, should be posted.
- 4.3.13 If controversial content related to academic study is posted, appropriate context and disclaimers must be provided. The content must also be packaged in a manner that does not make it easy to reuse without the appropriate context. Content should not be posted unless it is clearly suitable for all ages.

- 4.3.14 Several social media applications and platforms are available to enhance the academic experience at a university. Not all colleagues, staff and students have equal access to social media, or the same level of computer and Internet literacy to use them effectively. The media and platform selected, therefore and as far as possible, should not disadvantage any students. Ideally, a variety of communication and collaboration channels between academics, students, and the wider CPUT community should be employed.
- 4.3.15 Messages posted online can be copied and shared by all users who have access to that platform or website, which means that even if deleted, a post or information shared only with a selected group could go out to the entire world. Therefore, careful thought must be given to the desired outcome and possible consequences of the message before posting online.
- 4.3.16 Possible damage to self/colleagues/staff/students or the image of CPUT as a direct or indirect result of a post should be considered. Participants/users should be as mindful of protecting their online identity, as they would their physical identity.
- 4.3.17 Posting messages that incite heated discussions around issues that are not central to CPUT, such as religious or political commentary, is not considered constructive. In the case where this is an integral part of an academic teaching paradigm, it should be managed by the lecturer, who acts as administrator and facilitator for that particular academic teaching paradigm. In this case, information about the desired outcome must be posted to explain the rules of this communication.

4.4 Policy and Procedures

4.4.1 Account Creation

- 4.4.1.1 An official social media account may only be created by a CPUT staff member after the process below has been followed.
- 4.4.1.2 In order to comply with the terms and conditions of platforms used, and to enable the University to assess accounts and platforms, anyone wishing to create an account on a social media platform must complete the Social Media Account Creation form and submit the completed form and any requested supporting documentation to the MCD designated staff member.
- 4.4.1.3 Accounts created on behalf of an official university academic department or unit must be created by an authorised representative of the department/unit. This authorisation must be in writing from the Faculty Dean and/or Executive Line Manager.
- 4.4.1.4 MCD reserves the right to reject the establishment of any social media page/account should it be deemed that social media is not the correct channel to achieve the communication objectives stated in the application.
- 4.4.1.5 In the case of student organisations wishing to open official accounts, such organisation must be affiliated with the Department of Student Affairs. The organisation's responsible Student Development Officer must apply for the account, using the same process stipulated above for staff members; must take responsibility

for the account; and must notify MCD should the account need to be deleted or the student administrator change. The operation and administration of the account can be undertaken by a designated representative of the relevant student organisation.

- 4.4.1.6 Where the page/account or space will be used for one event only, care must be taken that it is terminated, and all information removed after the event.
- 4.4.1.7 The MCD designated staff member must be made co-administrator on all official social media pages.
- 4.4.1.8 All pages/accounts must be added to the MCD social media monitoring platform.
- 4.4.1.9 Any page/account not adhering to the above requirements is not considered official, and thus the use of the CPUT logo/name would be prohibited, and administrators would be subject to internal disciplinary action, or civil/criminal action, as deemed appropriate.

4.5 Protection of Confidential and Proprietary Information

- 4.5.1 Confidential or proprietary information about the University or its students, employees, or alumni may not be posted on social media. The requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) must be followed with regard to the protection of personal information; and it must be ensured that personal information added on behalf of any individual can be removed on their request. Where participants are invited to join social media platforms on a voluntary basis, the University will not be responsible for removing personal information, as the invitee can leave the platform voluntarily.
- 4.5.2 For reasons of security and authentication, marks for assessments must be collected through an institutional Learning Management System (LMS), or captured on marks administration systems, except when students' social media artifacts are to be marked as assignments. In cases where the social media interaction itself is assessed, these grades may not be displayed on the same platform, but must be entered onto the LMS or institutional marks administration systems. Where possible, the social media activity for grading should be integrated into the LMS.
- 4.5.3 Posting, transmitting, sharing, storing, or otherwise making publicly available, any personal/private information of any affiliated or unaffiliated third party platform, including addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, ID numbers, or banking details, etc., is not allowed.
- 4.5.4 No platforms that aim to collect the personal information of participants may be used, unless for research purposes, and in such instances, only when appropriate ethics clearance had been obtained through the appropriate University channels.
- 4.5.5 No content should be posted that might create a security risk for the account holder or the University. Examples include, but are not limited to, images of restricted access research areas, and personal access, accommodation, or similar areas.

- 4.5.6 The University must receive permission in writing from a student in order to release any information from a student's records. Personally identifiable information that can be used to locate any individual without that person's written consent should not be posted or used on any platform.
- 4.5.7 Employees who share confidential information without appropriate authorisation do so at the risk of disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal. This may also lead to legal action under the POPI Act.

4.6 Use of University Marks and Branding

- 4.6.1 Accounts and pages should, where possible, feature the department or unit's official name. Departments or units are encouraged to use photographs to display campus and university life, and look to market the University. Such photographs should only be displayed with proper model release authority, where necessary, and all copyrights should be observed. When a social media platform allows changes in layout or design, official University colours and branding should be used, as far as possible.
- 4.6.2 Where uncertainties regarding branding requirements exist, MCD will provide such information, guidelines, and templates, where applicable, on request.
- 4.6.3 The MCD Marketing and Branding Specialist needs to approve the application of the CPUT name and corporate identity before any page or account bearing these is made active.

4.7 Use of Copyright or Proprietary Materials

- 4.7.1. Rights and permissions must be secured before posting, sharing or distributing materials subject to copyright, including, but not limited to: music, art, copyrighted photographs or texts, portions of copyrighted video, or information considered proprietary by a university partner, vendor, affiliate, or contractor.
- 4.7.2. Written permission must be obtained to use/incorporate any copyrighted or proprietary materials, except when such material is covered under Fair Use provisions.

4.8 Use of Identifiable Images

- 4.8.1. In most cases, prior permission (i.e. model release) must be obtained in order to post, share or distribute images of individuals whose images are identifiable.
- 4.8.2 Content that might have cause to embarrass an individual, or that could be construed as placing an individual in a negative or false light, may not be used. Content that may cause someone to believe that their name, image, likeness or

other identifying aspect of their identity is being used without permission for commercial purposes may not be used.

- 4.8.3. Stringent ethical and special care must always be taken when dealing with images of minors, healthcare patients, or research subjects.

4.9 Commercial Use, e.g., Sales of merchandise

Endorsing commercial products or services is not permitted. The provision of online services, or the sale of University publications, products or paraphernalia, is permitted only under control and oversight of the Marketing and Communication Department, in accordance with University policies and procedures.

4.10 Political Campaigning

No support may be given to political parties or individuals for any political campaign.

4.11 Moderation of Posts and Comments

The MCD designated staff member reserves the right to review all comments and posted materials, and to remove any such materials found unfit for any reason.

- 4.11.1 Posts with links that are determined to be spam, or that refer to sales and advertising, will be removed immediately.
- 4.11.2 Any post that could bring or does bring the University into disrepute will be deleted.
- 4.11.3 Comments on Level 1 pages that are off-topic, abusive, contain profanity, are threatening in tone; or devolve into personal attack, or call to action that could harm the University, will be deleted immediately.
- 4.11.3 This right is not all encompassing, and the right to review/delete comments and posted materials should be balanced with an individual's right to free speech.

4.12 Professionalism

- 4.12.1 No posting of messages of a personal nature is allowed. The opinions of others should be respected.
- 4.12.2 The owner or administrator of a social media platform is responsible for any disrespectful comments or material, or bullying that may occur on the site, and must act immediately to remove offensive posts.
- 4.12.3 If the administrator fails to remove such offensive post within a 12-hour period, MCD will remove the post. Repeated failure to remove offensive posts will result in the department being requested to appoint another administrator for the site.
- 4.12.4 Only those questions that form part of a staff member/lecturer's or researcher's portfolio at CPUT should be answered, and other questions should be ignored, or

referred to the relevant individual/s or department/s at CPUT, where important or applicable.

- 4.12.5 Staff member/s administering pages are bound by the CPUT Staff Code of Conduct with regard to content and conduct on the social media pages.

4.13 Currency of Content

- 4.13.1 Current messages should be posted, and the site kept up to date.
- 4.13.2 Sharing information with users about topical matters happening in the world that relate to one's field is beneficial in remaining relevant.
- 4.13.3 Social media applications are transient, and trends are fast moving. New platforms should therefore be investigated and adopted (in lieu of old, outdated platforms) when found to be more appropriate, or on request of the users.

4.14 Timely Response

- 4.14.1 Responses to questions and comments on a social media site should be timely. MCD staff will endeavour to keep the response times on Level 1 pages as short as possible.
- 4.14.2. Should a page administrator not post or respond to queries for a period longer than 6 months, the page will be deleted entirely.

5. COMMON TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 **Blog** – A discussion forum that may allow for replies, and is usually created to express the opinions of a person or group
- 5.2 **Fair use** – Allows for the use of copyrighted material if it meets some or all of the following requirements: It is a work that is mostly factual; it is used to serve a significantly different purpose than its original intended purpose; and it has been changed significantly from its original appearance
- 5.3 **Forum** – Organised discussions on online discussion sites further defined in topics that may allow for threaded responses or additions to these discussions
- 5.4 **MCD** – Marketing and Communication Department at CPUT
- 5.5 **MCD designated staff member** – An MCD staff member tasked with the management of social media
- 5.6 **Model release** – An agreement authorising the use of personal information or photographs, formally signed by an individual or owner – usually required to obtain permission to use a photograph of a private person, building or structure for commercial or other publications use
- 5.7 **Official CPUT account** – All accounts that bear the CPUT name, an association to CPUT, or any CPUT corporate identity element will be regarded as official, and are governed by this Policy

- 5.8 Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons** – Teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain, or have been released under an intellectual property license, that permits their free use and re-purposing by others
- 5.9 Platform** – An online forum, mechanism, or tool through which users participate. Facebook is an example of a social networking platform; and YouTube is an example of a video-sharing platform. Many platforms are owned by independent companies that regulate their use. These platforms may operate within a different legal system that regulates use and contractual rights and obligations and may prohibit users from changing those conditions to fulfil their own legal obligations. Under national laws, users may be held liable for external environments and conditions over which have no control.
- 5.10 POPI Act – Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013 (POPI)** – The main purpose of this Act is the protection of personal information against illegal, unlawful processing (processing encompasses everything, i.e., collecting, receiving, use, distribution, etc., in respect of the Act)
- 5.11 RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed** – If a site offers an RSS feed, you get notified whenever a post goes up, and you can read a summary or the whole post
- 5.12 Social media** – Media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Through social media, users can communicate, and collaborate with other users; and produce, publish, and share information. This includes, but is not limited to, social networks that are accessible to internal and external audiences, such as Facebook, Instagram, blogsites, Twitter; media sharing websites, such as YouTube, Soundcloud and Flickr; mobile phone instant messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, ChatOn and Messenger; and online collaborative information and publishing audiences, such as Wikis and Google Docs. Social media may also include RSS feeds and interactive geo-location to push information or capture current location and associated environments.
- 5.13 SRC** – Student Representative Council, as defined in the CPUT statute
- 5.14 Trolling** – Internet 'trolling' is the anti-social act of causing interpersonal conflict and shock-value controversy online

6. RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability and Authority:	
Implementation:	Marketing and Communication Department
Compliance:	Staff, students, Recipient faculties, departments and units at the CPUT
Monitoring and Evaluation:	MCD Branding and Marketing Specialist
Development/Review:	Ad Hoc Social Media Policy Committee
Approval Authority:	Council
Interpretation and Advice:	Legal Department Finance Department Office of the Vice-Chancellor

Policy Development Framework				
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Type:	Policy	x	Guideline	Manual
Tick document category	Procedure	x	Regulation	Plan
CPUT Statute and/or Regulation Reference no. and date:	Cape Peninsula University of Technology Statute			

Relevant Legislation and/or Policy, Codes of practice, Professional authorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 • Fund-raising Act 107 of 1978 • Income Tax Act 58 of 1962 • Tax Administration Act 28 of 2011 • Basic Guide to Section 18A Approval • Tax Exemption Guide for Public Benefit Organisations in South Africa • Basic Guide to Tax-Deductible Donations • Companies Act 71 of 2008 • Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 • Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004 • Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 • Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 • Funding Framework (NFF) for Public Higher Education in South Africa • Southern African Institute of Fundraisers – Code of Professional Practice • Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) 				
Relevant Institutional Policies/ documents/manuals/ handbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Statute of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology • CPUT Vision 2030 • CPUT Ethics Framework • CPUT Naming Framework 				
Policy Reference and Version no.:	2/5/P				
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Policy Owner/Sponsor	Executive Director: Office of the Vice Chancellor				
Compliance Officers	Marketing and Communication Department (MCD)				
Certification of Due process: To be verified and signed once approved by the relevant authority	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Vice Chancellor </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> 29.01.2025 Date </div> </div>				
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