

Social Media Guidelines



JOHNSON & WALES
UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES



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I. Scope and Application

A. To assist in the execution of the Social Media Policy and Procedures (Policy) applicable to all Johnson & Wales University (JWU) employees and persons acting within the university's control or acting on the university's behalf (collectively, Covered Persons), the university has developed these Social Media Guidelines (Guidelines). All terms defined in the Policy have the same definitions here, and these Guidelines should be consulted in connection with all University Social Media.

II. General Tips to Consider in Using Social Media

A. **Always be accurate/transparent and professional.** Always be 100 percent accurate/transparent and professional in tone and words. That does not mean sharing confidential, non-public, or otherwise protected information, which is not allowed. But, when you share, you must never be misleading in what you say/do and must never conceal your identity/agenda. Never post or re-post unless you have verified that the content is accurate and not misleading and the source on which you are relying is an appropriate source (e.g., reliable, reputable, etc.). Always ensure your posts are professional—which means using appropriate language and proper grammar/spelling. If you make an error, acknowledge and correct it.

B. **Work with University Communications & Media Relations on a Social Media strategy.** Following the Policy requirements, you should develop a strategy to help ensure your Social Media usage is effective. That should include (1) allocating sufficient resources to use Social Media effectively, (2) identifying specific goals/objectives and tracking whether you are meeting those specific goals/objectives, (3) assessing your audience and tailoring messaging/themes, content, and cadence accordingly, (4) selecting appropriate platforms, (5) engaging with your audience, and (6) maintaining and overseeing accounts consistently and intentionally.

1. Allocate appropriate resources to your Social Media. Social Media management requires dedicated commitment, talent, and time, without which a Social Media campaign may flounder. Many Social Media campaigns fail because there is a lack of commitment to the channel.

2. Identify specific goals/objectives. Within the broad goals/objectives identified in the Policy, you should develop more specific goals/objectives that will advance the university's interests.

3. Track whether you are meeting your goals/objectives. You need to assess whether your Social Media strategy is effective. To do that, you need to consider how to measure success or lack thereof. When posting links on any social media site, consider using a link tracking service such as bit.ly, or create UTM codes. Many platforms

give you access to data in the form of follower count, engagements (comments, likes, saves), impressions, and reach. Such data points might be one metric of success or lack thereof and help you to refine your approach and better understand your audience's behaviors and preferences. You could also consider whether your Social Media strategy is affecting enrollment and retention, although that might be more difficult to measure. Determine which numbers to track and benchmark your progress. Consult about all such matters, particularly technical issues outside of your expertise, with University Communications & Media Relations. Consider reviewing the data monthly, quarterly, and annually and update your strategy accordingly.

4. Assess your audience. Consider with whom you are seeking to communicate. Different messages/themes, content, and cadence may be appropriate for different audiences. Students and prospective students, alumni, families, faculty and staff, community partners, industry leaders, and government officials may not be receptive and responsive to the same types of communications.

5. Select appropriate platforms. Certain Social Media platforms are better-suited for certain audiences. By way of example, consider the following three platforms and audiences best-suited to them:

	Facebook	Instagram	X (Formally known as Twitter)
Audience	Parents & Families Alumni Community Partners Faculty & Staff	Current Students Prospective Students Recent Alumni (Age 15-35)	Parents & Families Alumni Community Partners Government Officials Faculty & Staff Industry Leaders
Best For	Alumni profiles, success stories, academic research, magazine features, high-quality photo, videos (all types)	<i>Feed:</i> Student photos, campus photos, video (4:5 or 5:4, < 60 sec) <i>Stories:</i> Student takeovers, event coverage, behind-the- scenes, video (9:16, < 30 secs)	News & announcements, trending topics, success stories, academic research, high-quality photo, video (16:9 or 5:4, < 120 secs)

6. Engage with your audience. Social Media platforms are meant for discourse and participation—including comments, direct messages, likes, and shares. Discussions may build community and credibility. Posting content with no such discourse or participation may make an account less engaging. Be sure to view and respond to comments and answer questions as is appropriate. To maintain some control over

comments, you may consider (1) posting a “comment policy” to let the audience know what is and is not appropriate (with advance consultation with University Communications & Media Relations) and (2) if possible, setting up your account so you can review and approve comments before they appear, which will allow you to delete inappropriate comments and to block those who repeatedly post inappropriate comments. At the same time, be thoughtful in considering who to allow into your University Social Media account, “follow,” “friend,” and link to; we may not want to affirmatively associate with certain causes and people.

7. Maintain and oversee accounts consistently and intentionally. To be effective, Social Media accounts must be maintained and overseen consistently and intentionally. To build effective connections to people—a key purpose of Social Media—you should be communicating with your audience regularly. In turn, this requires collaboration across University Social Media accounts to ensure consistency and intentionality. If you need assistance to help ensure consistency and intentionality, contact University Communications & Media Relations. You should also consider promoting the University Social Media account across other university-owned avenues, such as e-mail, newsletters, etc. Help the university community stay connected by linking back to the university homepage and other university Social Media accounts. When possible, link to a university source instead of an outside source. If you are unable to maintain and oversee your University Social Media account consistently and intentionally, you may want to reconsider the creation or continuation of your Social Media account in accordance with the Policy.

III. Visual Standards for Social Media

A. Text: Text should be kept to a minimum on social graphics; visuals with less text perform better. Social Media platforms (particularly Facebook and Instagram) can calculate the text to space ratio and will demote visuals that are text heavy. The recommended amount of text is less than 20 percent of the total size. For example, if the graphic’s purpose is to promote an event, include event name, date, time, and location; put all other details in the post caption. Please contact University Communications & Media Relations for specific illustrations of “good” versus “bad” uses of text and visuals.

B. Dimensions: Across channels, graphics and photographs should be properly sized to the optimal dimensions to ensure content performs optimally. To keep your image from being cropped in the feed and causing potential confusion, you will want to create visuals to the recommended sizes and ratios according to social platform. These dimensions vary across platforms and can change regularly. Use Sprout Social’s Always Up-to-Date Guide to Social Media Image Sizes for the most current recommendations.

C. Colors: Use of brand colors helps increase brand awareness. Our community of Wildcats knows blue, white, and gold. In a digital world where people scroll quickly past posts, it is important to stand out. We also have a palette of secondary colors you may

incorporate into the design. Visit JWU Graphic Standards for the RGB color codes for digital artwork.

D. QR Codes: QR codes are most effectively used on print mediums so a user can scan the code using their smartphone. As Social Media is mainly consumed on smartphones, it does not make sense to include QR codes on graphics developed for Social Media. On platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, or X (formally known as Twitter), use a direct link. On Instagram, use the Link Sticker feature in Stories or the link in the account profile description.

E. Videos: Video content is king on Social Media. It is the preferred medium for both platforms and consumers. However, on average, viewers will decide in the first 8-10 seconds of a video whether to keep watching or to scroll past the video. Whenever possible, videos should be limited to 60 seconds or less. Shorter format videos (e.g., Reels, TikTok, YouTube Shorts, etc.) are the most popular. Narrow the focus of the video, incorporate B-roll to limit “talking head” videos, and use license-free upbeat music to keep your viewers engaged. As with graphics, each platform has its preferred size and aspect ratios of videos. Use Sprout Social’s Always Up-to-Date Guide to Social Media Video Specs for the most current recommendations.

F. Voice and Tone: The JWU brand is communicated to different audiences across numerous channels, including advertisements, e-mails, printed pieces, the university’s websites, etc. No matter the channels with which a viewer engages, the viewer should feel the brand is speaking to the viewer in a consistent way. When creating content for Social Media or otherwise, try to ensure the content is:

1. Authentic and Engaging - Viewers can tell the difference between produced content and “raw” content.
2. Clear and Goal-Oriented - Communications should be targeted to its audience and delivered with a clear message or, if appropriate, call-to-action.
3. Conversational and Friendly - Social media is seen as a more casual platform than other modes of official university communications. To be accessible, avoid insider lingo and acronyms. Different perspectives should feel welcome on all channels. Communication should be compassionate and considerate.
4. Helpful and Thoughtful - All content should positively inform and serve. Answer questions with what can be done instead of what cannot be done, while always maintaining 100 percent accuracy.
5. Informative - Share accurate and purposeful content with no grammatical or spelling mistakes. Those who communicate on the university’s behalf should be seen as experts in their fields.
6. Professional - Reign in excessive exuberance while still being enthusiastic. Stay calm. Do not use too many exclamation points.

IV. Personal Social Media

A. Social Media and privacy do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. Search engines index public posts, and private posts can be copied or screenshotted and forwarded, including posts on Social Media that are supposedly temporary, like Snapchat or Instagram Stories. What you post personally may have professional repercussions.

B. Even if you are not communicating on behalf of the university and have (as the Policy requires) posted a disclaimer, your views may still be associated with the university. You should consider that whenever you are communicating in any online forum.

V. Crisis Management

A. In connection with Social Media, there may be issues of particular concern that require crisis management. What qualifies as an issue of particular concern is a judgment call. You should err on the side of bringing any potential concern to the attention of University Communications & Media Relations, because crisis management is most effective when the crisis in question is identified and addressed early. Delay may impede the university's ability to respond effectively and mitigate damage or loss.

B. Keep in mind when addressing particularly concerning content:

1. Before taking any action, such as deleting or responding to content, contact University Communications & Media Relations.
2. Capture screenshots or recordings as applicable. E-mail the material at issue to University Communications & Media Relations.
3. University Communications & Media Relations will work with you to address the concerning content.