Social media at uOttawa is for communicating administrative and operational activities and must be treated as a business communication tool. When you post to social media you are posting on behalf of the University of Ottawa.

These guidelines are intended to provide the University community with basic guidance about how to effectively and safely use social media on behalf of the University. The best practices outlined here encourage transparency, effective communication, protection of privacy and confidentiality, and adherence to University policies.

Please consult with the Communications Directorate at socialmedia@uottawa.ca for guidance on how to start a new official uOttawa social media account, or how to manage an existing account.

Guidelines

Be accurate: Use reliable sources. Cite sources. Check and double check your facts. If you are not sure something is correct, don't post it. If you make an error correct it quickly and make sure others know you have corrected it.

Be respectful: Allow for meaningful engagement. Uphold all University standards of respect, diversity and inclusion. Be courteous and respectful of those using the space.

Be transparent: Be open and honest. If you are posting on behalf of a unit, say so. Designate a primary contact to field questions or comments. Make it clear whose views you are expressing when posting or commenting.

Add value: Information should be engaging, timely, and relevant. Do not spam others with irrelevant information. Clearly separate opinions from facts.

Maintain privacy and confidentiality: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the University. Do not share personal information over social media unless the person to whom the information relates has consented to such disclosure. See the What is personal information tip sheet or the AIPO website for more information.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) applies to social media and employees must search all information under their custody or control, including social media platforms used. Contact aipo@uOttawa.ca if you have any questions.
Legal considerations: Make sure you have proper copyright permission to post images, photos, or video content. Comments, posts, and links must abide by Canadian laws as well as University policies and procedures.

Dedicate resources: Make sure you have the resources to respond to comments, questions, or concerns in a timely manner. Establishing, monitoring, and maintaining a current and relevant social networking presence requires time and resources. Do not start the process if you do not have the resources to maintain a reliable social media presence.

Stay protected: Use unique passwords and regularly review terms and conditions. Follow Information Technology’s tips on how to protect yourself when using social media.

Information Management Considerations

- Social media is transitory. Read the “What Can I Delete?” best practice to learn more.
- Social media is a way to share and communicate information only. If, for any reason, information of operational and strategic value is created or captured by social media, it is the unit’s responsibility to make sure that this is documented and stored in an official repository and does not live in social media alone.

Example: Your unit posts an official report to social media and requests feedback from the community. Feedback sent through the social media platform should be captured in another format and saved in an official repository such as DocuShare, or shared network drives. Read the “What to Keep?” best practice for more information.

See the Information Management Handbook and other IM best practices for more on how to manage your information.