SOCIAL MEDIA 101

Getting Started With Social Media at UH
Social Media 101

- Social Media Policy
- Content Best Practices
- Tools and Resources
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Do not delete comments, filter comments or block accounts.

Per our social media policy (and as a state institution) deleting or filtering comments poses a freedom of speech issue. If you suspect that someone’s comment is not protected by the First Amendment, you must consult with the Office of General Counsel to get permission to remove it.
At least two employees must have access to login information for all official University social media profiles.

For accounts that use passwords to log in, like Instagram and X, at least two employees must know the password.

For pages that use an admin system, like Facebook and LinkedIn, at least two employees must have admin access.
The email address associated with UH social media profiles should be a department email.

For social media profiles that require an email address, use an official UH department email that multiple people can access. Do not use your personal or work email.

For example, the Student Centers should use an email like studentcenters@central.uh.edu rather than janedoe93@gmail.com or jdoe@central.uh.edu.

If your department does not already have its own email address, click here to create one.
Use a logo that is current, easy to see and specific to your profile.

Any color combination that is defined as acceptable by the UH brand guide may be used. The first two options below are templates that are available to UH staff. A shorter version of your department’s name should be used to maintain readability at small sizes. For example, Student Housing and Residential Life could use Housing.
Do not use an outdated UH logo or the interlocking UH logo without supplemental text.

When by itself, the Interlocking UH logo represents the University of Houston in its entirety. Only the main University of Houston social media profiles are permitted to use it as a profile picture without additional text.
Avoid adding a birthday to your bio.

Though many departments or colleges may want to use the date they were founded as their birthday, if that date would make the account appear to belong to someone underage, the social network may automatically ban the profile.
Social profiles must be accessible and usable by people with the widest range of capabilities possible.

- Add alt text to describe images for people who are blind or low vision
- Add video captioning (subtitles)
- Capitalize the first letter of each word in hashtags (#GoCoogs)

- Don’t delete comments
- At least two employees
- Department email
- Profile guidelines
- Accessibility
- Photo release guidelines
Photo releases are typically required if the individual:

- Is recognizable; the primary focus of the photograph/video shot
- Is identifiable in a small group setting, such as a small group of students studying in the library or congregating by the fountains. In these cases, a release should be obtained from each subject
- Has been recruited to serve as a model
- Is a minor (under 18 years of age); a parental release is required

Photo releases are typically not required if:

- Photographed in large group shots in a public space or at public events with little expectation of privacy, such as sporting events and concerts
- It is a large group setting, such as wide shots of classrooms or campus scenic shots with no single subject
- The subject is not recognizable, such as silhouettes, posterior view or out of focus
- The photos/video are not being taken or distributed by UH. When news media is covering a story on campus or a production company is shooting content it plans to distribute, a UH photo release is not required. In many cases they will have their own releases. The “Filming at UH” guidelines outline protocols for filming on campus.
If a student is identifiable or the primary focus in a photo or video, they will have to sign two forms to be posted on social media:

1. Individual Photo Release Form
2. FERPA Authorization Form

These forms are available at uh.edu/marcom/guidelines-policies/photo-release/
CONTENT BEST PRACTICES
How do social networks decide what they show people in their feeds?

The details are mostly a mystery.
Here’s what we know...
How Does “the Algorithm” Work?

- Social networks make the majority of their money by selling ads on their platforms.
- The more time a user spend on their platform, the more ads they see... the more money the platform makes.
- Because of this, the social networks want to show users content that is highly engaging so that they will spend more time on the platform.
How Does “the Algorithm” Work?

When you make a post, it will initially appear in a select number of people’s feeds.

- **Engaging Post:** If those people engage with the post, the social network will see that it is a high quality post and will continue to serve it to more people.

- **Low-Engaging Post:** If most of the people in that initial grouping don’t engage with the post, the number of people the social network continues to serve it to will quickly flatten out.
While planning content, consider the following:

- Who is your target audience?
- Why should someone follow you?
- What’s the purpose of your content?
- How will your content provide value?
Think about the most successful social posts that you’ve seen.

- How are they formatted?
  - Are they using photos? Videos? Graphics?

- What made them eye-catching?
  - Was the first image particularly strong? Was it the caption? Did the video start off with an interesting clip? Was the content something that felt especially relevant to you?

- Did they use a tactic that you could also use?
  - They probably did!
Your posts are competing with the other content on people’s feeds.

If someone is scrolling their social media feed and seeing photos of friends, interesting videos from an award show or buzz-worthy news stories, they are likely to scroll right past your post if it isn’t interesting, relevant or looks too much like an ad.
Don’t use QR codes in social media posts.

QR codes are great for signage, but since most social media posts are viewed on a person’s mobile device, scanning the code is not intuitive. If needed, include the link in the post instead.

*Instagram posts do not support links. If you need to include a link on Instagram, do it in a Story.*
Avoid using stock imagery and graphics that are text-heavy.

Both of these provide very little value to your audience and may cause them to scroll past your posts. When possible, try to find an alternate way to share this information.
Use the platform the way your audience does.

Matching the usage and tone of your audience will help you fit in, get engagement and grow your following.
When should you post?

The best time to post will differ for everyone depending on many factors, including their audience. If your post is based on an event that happened recently, making the most very soon after is important to ensure it is still timely.

If it’s not based on an event, the quality of the post will have a greater effect on its success than the timing.
How often should you post?

Unfortunately, there is no single “right” answer. Though it’s good to be relatively consistent, posting just for the sake of posting is not best practice. Always make sure your posts are adding value of some kind of the user — frequent low-engagement posts could negatively impact your profile’s future reach.

As a general guideline, unless there is a noteworthy event happening, you probably shouldn’t post more than once a day on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn.
Focus on quality over quantity.

Your profile will perform better if you choose to be selective about what is worth being posted. Continue to consider what brings your audience the most value.

Ask yourself if the content you’re creating is content that you would interact with yourself or if it’s something you might mindlessly scroll past.
Don’t focus on hashtags.

Hashtags don’t hold the same value that they once did. They were originally a way for people to easily search for the content they were interested in and for algorithms to easily understand what a post was about and how to group it in with other relevant posts.

However, now that the algorithms have become more advanced, hashtags usually aren’t necessary.
Engage with your audience!

Interacting with people in the comments of your posts is a great way to spark engagement and make your profile seem more friendly and attentive.
TOOLS AND RESOURCES
University Marketing and Communications uses Hive as its project management tool. All social media projects/posts are initially planned out in Hive, such as the post below.

- Hive
- Sprout Social
- UH Resources
University Marketing and Communications uses Sprout Social as its social media management tool. Sprout allows us to schedule posts, monitor and respond to messages and comments, view data on profile and post performance, and much more.
Social networks like Facebook, Instagram and X play a major role in how we communicate. These platforms provide the University with a unique way to keep our community informed about the latest news and announcements, while also fostering a sense of pride. Here you'll find the policies, guidelines and best practices for UH profiles to maintain an effective presence on social media.

Visit our Social Media Directory for a comprehensive list of all the University of Houston's official social media profiles.

Social Media Guidelines Website | uh.edu/social

- Hive
- Sprout Social
- UH Resources
Links to UH Resources

- Social Media Guidelines (includes the full policy)
- Social Media Directory
- Social Media Campuswide Teams Group
- Editorial Style Guide
- Photo Release Guidelines
- New Social Media Profile Setup

Email us at social@uh.edu if you have any questions.