

**Policy Title: Social Media**

**Policy Owner: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)**

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**1. INTENT**

This policy provides a framework for participation in social media by ECU staff, students and members of Council. The Social Media Policy encourages and supports responsible use of social media when communicating on one of ECU's official social media channels or commenting on University matters on external social media sites.

**2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE**

ECU Staff, Students, Council Members and Contractors.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

TERM	DEFINITION
Social Media	The use of online applications to facilitate networking and communication between individuals, or individuals and groups/organisations. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Yammer, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr. This also includes private social media platforms implemented at ECU for the purposes of supporting teaching and research.
University	Edith Cowan University
University Information	Information in any form about the University or an identified or identifiable individual at the University that is not available in the public domain; Including information that is marked or declared 'Confidential' or that, by its nature, ought to reasonably be considered confidential.

Platform	A social media platform, e.g. Facebook, Twitter.
Channel	A specific social media presence on a social media platform, e.g. twitter.com/edithcowanuni is a student channel on Twitter.
Official Social Media Channel	Social media channels officially used by ECU, on platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and RSS.
Expert Comment	A comment made by a staff member in their professional area of expertise.
Work-related	An activity carried out by a staff member during the course of their work.

## 4. POLICY CONTENT

### 4.1 General Principles

- 4.1.1 Social media tools and platforms are an important mechanism through which the University may communicate with its students, staff, communities and other stakeholders.
- 4.1.2 ECU acknowledges that staff may be engaged in social media in a work-related or private capacity.
- 4.1.3 Social media tools and platforms may be used to achieve ECU's priorities in engagement, teaching and research.
- 4.1.4 No student or staff member can be compelled or required to join a publically available social media platform for the purposes of their work or study at ECU. Students and staff will utilise private ECU social media platforms for teaching, learning or research activities required for their work or study at ECU.
- 4.1.5 Staff posting content on social media channels should be aware that they may be held accountable for any content that is found to be:
- Defamatory or harassing in nature
  - Infringing the copyright or intellectual property rights of a third party
  - In breach of confidentiality agreements, privacy legislation or the [ECU Privacy Policy](#).
- If staff have any concerns about the information they plan to provide, they should contact their immediate line supervisor/manager, for guidance.
- 4.1.6 The [Critical Incident Management Policy](#) and the [Media Policy](#) will guide the response in situations where social media interaction has the potential to damage the reputation of the University or threaten the security and safety of staff, students or facilities.

## **4.2 Work-related social media usage**

- 4.2.1 The work-related use of social media by staff, students and University communities generally falls into one of the following categories:
- A staff member providing expert comment in their field of expertise;
  - A staff member using a social media platform for teaching, research or, engagement;
  - A staff member using social media for student communications and/or marketing;
  - A student using a social media platform in the course of their study at ECU.

## **4.3 Use of social media for expert comment**

- 4.3.1 The University expects its staff only to offer advice, support or comment on topics that fall within an individual's area of responsibility or expertise at the University.
- 4.3.2 When making expert comment through a social media channel, a staff member should disclose their University affiliation and position.
- 4.3.3 Staff making expert comment must indicate that their opinions should not be regarded as representing the views of the University.

## **4.4 Use of social media as a staff member**

- 4.4.1 At all times while engaged in social media, a University staff member will act in accordance with [ECU's Code of Conduct Policy](#). The University explicitly prohibits social media being used to harass, vilify, bully or discriminate against another person.
- 4.4.2 University staff or work areas considering social media strategies and/or implementation of an Official Social Media Channel must contact the Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre for advice and guidance on the required approach that should be followed.
- 4.4.3 Staff engaged in social media on an Official Social Media Channel must have approval to interact on behalf of the area they are representing (i.e. the relevant Dean or Centre head, whichever is applicable, and the Vice-Chancellor if representing ECU more widely).
- 4.4.4 Where an ECU-related conversation is occurring on a social media channel requiring staff contributions, only authorised staff can represent the University.
- 4.4.5 Staff engaged in social media will comply with the Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Social Media (Appendix A).
- 4.4.6 Staff involved with the management of an Official Social Media Channel must comply with the Guidelines for the Management of Official Social Media Channels (Appendix B).

- 4.4.7 Staff may only provide publicly available information in accordance with [ECU's Privacy Policy](#), and not comment on or disclose any confidential University information.

#### **4.5 Private and professional use of social media**

- 4.5.1 When engaging in non-work-related social media contributions that may identify their relationship with ECU, staff should comply with the Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Social Media (Appendix A).

#### **4.6 Use of social media as a student**

- 4.6.1 At all times while engaged in social media, all ECU students should act in accordance with ECU's Rules and Statutes.

### **5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In relation to this policy, the following positions are responsible for:

- The Policy Owner, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation at ECU.
- The Director of the Marketing and Communications Services Centre has operational responsibility. For advice and guidance in the appropriate use of social media contact the Digital Marketing Manager.
- Staff/Students/Council Members/Contractors are required to comply with the content of this policy and to seek guidance from the Director of the Marketing and Communications Services Centre in the event of uncertainty as to its application.

### **6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

6.1 The policy is supported by the following Guidelines, Toolkit and Guide:

- Appendix A: Responsible Use of Social Media
- Appendix B: Management of Social Media Channels
- [Management of Social Media Channels Toolkit](#)
- [Social Media Platform-Specific Guide](#)

6.2 Policies which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Conduct of Ethical Human Research Policy](#)
- [Conduct of Ethical Research and Teaching Involving Animals Policy](#)
- [Curriculum Planning and Development Policy](#)
- [Course and Unit Delivery and Assessment Policy](#)
- [Critical Incident Management Policy](#)
- [Fundraising at ECU Policy](#)
- [Grievance Resolution Policy](#)
- [Information Technology Policy](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [Media Policy](#)

- [Prevention of Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [ECU Branding and Logo Policy](#)
- [Public Complaints Policy](#)
- [Records Management Policy](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [Responsible Research Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Complaints Policy](#)

6.3 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- [ECU Academic and Professional Staff Union Collective Agreement 2013](#)
- [General Misconduct Rules \(Students\)](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Image Guidelines](#)
- [Media Policy Guidelines](#)

## 7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Policy Contact	Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre
All Enquiries Contact:	6304 2091
Email address:	<a href="mailto:j.turner@ecu.edu.au">j.turner@ecu.edu.au</a>

## 8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Policy Approved by:	Acting Vice-Chancellor
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## **Responsible Use of Social Media Guidelines**

### **Aims**

The aim of these Guidelines is to ensure that:

- the views and rights of individuals are respected;
- ECU's reputation and that of its community members is not compromised through the use of social media; and
- the use of social media is consistent with ECU's legislation, policies and procedures.

The University respects intellectual freedom and the use of social media for creative expression, communication, teaching, research or any other use. These guidelines outline good-practice principles to assist ECU staff, students and community members in their responsible use of social media.

### **General Principles**

ECU supports the use of social media and has a number of official Social Media Channels which it uses to promote the University online. The University recognises that social media is used for a wide range of purposes from purely personal and social, to engaging with students, academic peers, colleagues and the wider community.

Staff using social media within teaching and learning activities should access resources provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching. Staff using social media within research activities should access resources provided by the Office of Research and Innovation. It is also important to be aware that no student can be compelled or required to join a publicly available social media platform for the purposes of their study at ECU.

Risks resulting from the inappropriate use of social media arise from the extensive reach of social media platforms, the speed at which information can be disseminated and the un-moderated nature of the language and content used.

Before engaging with or contributing content to a social media platform, ECU staff, students and community members should consider the following:

- Will the content be considered commercial-in-confidence or be subject to privacy, data ownership and other confidentiality obligations by the University or a third party, such as a host employer organisation?
- Is the content subject to the professional conduct requirements of an employer, or an industry based professional body?
- Could the information you post be considered defamatory, libellous, or slanderous?
- Does the information breach Intellectual Property, Copyright Law or any other legislation?
- Does the metadata attached to content reveal location and other personal information about you and other third parties, well beyond your intended audience?

### **Good-Practice Principles**

ECU recommends the following good-practice principles be adopted to mitigate the risks of social media use and to protect the user, the University and third parties to the extent that it is practicable to do so:

### **1. Be aware of your association (either express or implied) with the University**

- When contributing to work-related online discussions or correspondence, disclose your association and/or position at ECU.
- Whilst “hidden” or “locked” accounts or pseudonyms may give the illusion of privacy, you should assume that everything you put online has the potential to be shared, duplicated or distributed to unknown third parties.
- ECU, its partners and competitors monitor keywords, search terms, discussion and other web content. If something is said about the University, it is very likely that it will be seen and/or shared with the University.

### **2. Distinguish clearly between your personal opinion and that of the University**

- Either state clearly that you are a representative of ECU; or
- Where possible, state clearly that your opinions are personal and do not reflect those of the University or those of a third party with whom you are associated with as a result of your ECU connection.

### **3. Conduct yourself in the same manner online as you would in any other medium**

- Conduct yourself in the same manner on social media as you would in person by:
  - Being aware that any social media posts can be widely shared;
  - Being truthful, ethical and respectful, and behave in a fashion that does not bring the University into disrepute;
  - Recognising that on-line content is permanent and indelible; and
  - Ensuring that social media content is accurate and not misleading.
- Recognise that online content can and will live forever. Be aware that the internet is not anonymous and acts as a permanent record.

### **4. Protect confidential or personal information. If in doubt, do not post the material.**

- Do not post any information that is not already in the public domain.
- Do not share confidential University information.
- In accordance with the University’s [Privacy Policy](#), do not disclose any individual’s personal information without their written consent.

### **5. Respect Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright laws**

- When contributing to social media, be mindful of the intellectual property rights of others and of the University, particularly intellectual property protected under copyright and trademark legislation.
- Ensure that appropriate credit is given, and that you have the rights and/or written approval for any content that you share.

### **6. Be mindful of adverse consequences that may affect the University, or the ECU brand or reputation**

- Strive for accuracy in your communications, including correct spelling and grammar.
- Be mindful of the potential for damage to your own and/or the University’s reputation or brand and the likelihood of possible legal action (under legislation related to defamation, copyright infringement, harassment).

### **7. Protect your privacy**

- Social media platforms allow you to broadcast real-time information about who you are, what you are doing and your exact location. Check your privacy settings and consider your own privacy and safety before broadcasting these details.



- Before accepting requests to join a social media platform, consider potential or actual conflicts of interest and violations of University policies.



## Appendix B

### Management of Social Media Channel Guidelines

#### Aims

The aim of these guidelines is to provide guidance for staff with the responsibility of establishing and managing Official Social Media Channels. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the corporate [Management of Social Media Channels Toolkit](#), including the [Social Media Platform-Specific Guides](#). The guidelines and additional resources provide advice to staff on effective practices for channel management, including requirements for opening, accessing, controlling, monitoring, reviewing and retiring social media channels.

#### General Principles for Official Social Media Channels

Official Social Media Channels can be used as an engagement tool for teaching and learning activities and/or research activities. When determining if a new social media channel is required the following criteria should be considered:

- Who are you trying to engage and what is the most appropriate platform?
- What would you like to accomplish and can your objectives be achieved using an existing official social media channel?
- What is your message? Can your social media message be conveyed in an existing official social media channel?

All Official Social Media Channels require regular monitoring and staff establishing these presences will be expected to monitor the channel(s) and respond to queries outside of teaching periods.

New Official Social Media Channels or Platforms will be supported at ECU where:

- the channel aligns and supports the achievement of ECU's strategic priorities;
- there is an unique audience not already targeted through existing University social media channels;
- the platform provides an effective and sustainable way of reaching the audience; and
- it is appropriate for ECU to encourage the audience to connect with the University on a public-facing external platform.

#### 1. Using social media in teaching and learning

Use of social media for teaching generally falls into two scenarios:

- I. To fulfil teaching and learning outcomes for specific units. In this case social media is used as a teaching tool; and/or as a site where teaching and learning activities take place.
- II. Where teaching and learning activities result in output that is ongoing and engages with the wider community beyond a given unit and/or teaching period.

##### 1.1 Using social media within teaching and learning activities

Staff keen to use social media for teaching and learning activities should ensure their activities are developed with reference to resources provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT).

##### 1.2 Using social media within engagement focused activities relating to teaching and learning

Where teaching and learning activities result in output and an ongoing profile or identity, that has the capacity to interest and engage with the community beyond a given unit or teaching period, there may be a case for a social media channel(s) to support these activities. An

example of an engagement focused channel is ECU Daily which is an online news site with content supplied by final year journalism students.

## **2. Using social media in research**

Use of social media channels generally falls into three scenarios:

- I. As a way of recruiting research participants;
- II. As a site for research; and/or
- III. As an engagement tool where the University, research centres and institutes, can:
  - disseminate research publications and findings to interested audiences
  - develop connections with people in industry as well as other researchers
  - build awareness of the research centre/institute as well as research conducted
  - potentially engage with communities who would most benefit from their research.

### **2.1 Recruitment of participants**

Ethics applications for research where participants may be recruited using social media are reviewed and approved by the University Ethics Review body, which adheres to the [Conduct of Ethical Human Research Policy](#) and [Conduct of Ethical Research and Teaching Involving Animals Policy](#).

### **2.2 Academic research using a social media platform**

Ethics applications for research where a social media platform is and where research will take place or be conducted, must be reviewed and approved by the University Ethics Committee in accordance with ECU's research ethics policies.

### **2.3 Using social media within engagement-focused activities relating to academic research**

Where University research centres and institutes are considering a permanent presence on an external platform (e.g. a LinkedIn group, a ResearchGate project, a Facebook page or Twitter profile); these are considered Official Social Media Channels.

Establishment of social media channel(s) for a research centre or institute will be considered where a University designated research centre or institute demonstrates a business case for the requested channel. It is expected that research units not yet University designated, will focus on enabling researchers to build their professional profiles and connections and utilise the existing ECU research social media channels rather than establishing specific channels themselves.

## **3. Establishing a new Official Social Media Channel**

When establishing a new social media presence a [Business Case Template](#) will be completed and submitted to the Digital Marketing Manager, Marketing and Communications Services Centre, addressing the following criteria:

- Strategy behind the channel and platform choice;
- Objectives for the channel;
- Outline short, medium (+1 year) and longer term (+2 years) goals for the channel;
- Expected life-cycle of the channel and the review process;
- Target audience;
- Outline any funding available for content generation (for creating rich media etc)
- Intended content for the channel, and who will create the content;
- Intended posting schedule - daily, weekly, monthly?;
- Resourcing and monitoring (outline commitments to monitoring);

- Security and access control;
- Any specific requirements dependent on the nature of the channels (e.g. engagement, research or teaching and learning);
- Endorsement by relevant stakeholders; and
- Agreement that the channel will be managed in accordance with the [Management of Social Media Channels Toolkit](#).

After endorsement by the staff member's Dean or Centre Director, and then either Director, Office Research and Innovation (research focus), Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching (teaching focus), or the Director, Marketing and Communications Service Centre (engagement/community focus), the Business Case will be reviewed by the Digital Marketing Manager, with a recommendation to the Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre.

The Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre, will make a recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) regarding endorsement of the business case. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will grant final approval for the new Official Social Media Channel.

#### **4. Retiring social media channels**

Social media channels are required to be reviewed annually against the business case criteria. If a Social Media Channel no longer meets the objectives for establishment, is being used inappropriately, or not to a professional standard, it may be closed by the Digital Marketing Manager. Refer to the [Management of Social Media Channels Toolkit](#) for further details on retiring social media channels.