



University of California, Riverside Social Networking Policy

Success in social media depends on several factors:

- Understanding that social channels are conversations, not megaphones
- Being civil, honest, ethical and responsive
- Remembering that nothing is private on the web

Social media provides community members (including students, potential students, parents, alumni, and Riverside residents) with a closer, more personal look at UCR and its research, departments, organizations, clubs, and events. Use social media as an opportunity to build community, listen, and share stories about what life at UCR is like. Social media is our chance to interact on a one-to-one level using a medium that's trusted more implicitly than a marketing piece or website. Building that trust and sense of family provides us with an invaluable link to our stakeholders.

For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Tumblr, Vimeo, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that UCR employees must otherwise follow.

Similar to the UCR main website, the primary purpose of official social marketing tools is to communicate news and events and build community, which serve the secondary purposes of increasing admissions applicants, engaging alumni, assisting in fundraising efforts, and increasing affinity for the University as a whole. These guidelines are not meant to discourage use of innovative methods to improve academic quality and operational efficiencies.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies directly to members of the UCR community who post to social networking pages on behalf of the University or as representatives of the University.

If you are a faculty member who uses social media as a teaching tool, these guidelines may be helpful to you as well, and we urge you to keep privacy concerns and content propriety in mind as you use these tools.

Personal Use of Social Media While Employed at UCR

This policy does not aim to inhibit the usage of social media on a personal level by our faculty and staff. However, if a reasonable connection to UCR may be drawn from content and biographical information, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for UCR, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of the University. The intent of this is not to restrict employee expression but rather to protect the College from legal and public prosecution.

Before Opening a New Social Media Account

Prior to starting a new social media page on behalf of your organization, department, or event, consider the following:

- Who will manage and update the account? This includes monitoring and posting new content.
- Where will new content come from? What will it consist of? How will it engage users?
- Who is your audience and what is the message? Is this same message being communicated elsewhere already?
- Do you have all applicable permissions from your supervisor?

If a new account is appropriate, please contact the University and let us know what your intentions are for the account. The University's Social Media Specialist will help you create your accounts, answer any questions, and add you to our social media directory. Contact Kelly McGrail at kelly.mcgrail@ucr.edu or 951-827-4919. It is important to share your presence with UCR so that the social media communities can stay connected online.

Account Naming Guidelines

For any social media outlets related to the school, the accounts should be titled with the first words as "UCR or UC Riverside" to ensure consistency of brand and high rankings in search engines (example: UCR Alumni Association). Avoid using acronyms, though exceptions for Twitter and other accounts susceptible to character limits should be made.

Always include a statement that acknowledges your affiliation with UCR in the section describing your page.

Icon and Photo Usage

For icons and avatars, use only University approved logos and images. Choose a recognizable profile picture that will make it easy for users to identify your page and differentiate it from others on campus and make sure it fits for the correct social media asset. Use the same profile picture across your unit's social media accounts. Questions about photo sizing on each social platform? [This infographic](#) is a good resource to know what size each photo needs to be on each social channel.

Photos posted on any social media outlet should be done so with the utmost of care and in accordance to the official UCR photography policy. Posting photos online is not private, and photos should be treated as such. Avoid posting recognizable photos of children without the express written consent of their guardians.

USING STANDARDIZED HASHTAGS

When writing posts for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Pinterest, consider using a hashtag. Hashtags are used as keywords, so anyone doing a search for that hashtag may find your post. If possible, work your hashtag into your sentence (Welcome to the #UCRiversideFamily! Avoid using more than three hashtags in a post.

Suggested hashtags:

#UCRiverside #UCR #GoHighlanders #ThisIsRHouse #Rside

Management and monitoring

Multiple site administrators are recommended; at least two administrators are necessary so that there is always a backup and alternative means of accessing the site. For student organizations, there should be a smooth leadership transition from semester to semester. There must always be a faculty member with access if students are involved in page management.

Page managers should check their account daily, or be signed up to receive email updates when comments are made to ensure prompt addressing of any questions or issues. Quickly address any inappropriate messages or misuse. Such inappropriate content includes spam, advertising, offensive statements, inaccurate information, foul language, or personal attacks.

Be judicious in decisions to delete comments made on your page - unless it is undeniably inflammatory or crude, consider leaving it up. Nothing brings criticism more speedily than community members who feel censored. **Do not delete comments simply because they are negative** - instead address these directly and publicly. This will help build trust and transparency. As a general guideline, if you have any question as to whether something should be removed, please contact Kelly McGrail at kelly.mcgrail@ucr.edu.

Consider posting these rules somewhere on your page (the 'about' section is usually a good place or in a Facebook Policy Tab), which will give you a charter to back up any deletion decisions. You may also use or modify for your use, the official University of California, Riverside Facebook policy:

UCR Facebook Policy

The University of California, Riverside (UCR) encourages and promotes the free expression and exchange of ideas.

The content of the UCR Facebook Page Wall, Discussion boards and other areas open to public comment are the responsibility of individual Facebook members, including UCR students, faculty and staff, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the University of California.

- *UCR does not prescreen any comments.*
- *UCR reserves the right to remove any content that violates campus policies, including but not limited to the use of abusive language or hate speech that creates an intimidating environment.*
- *UCR reserves the right to ban any individual who violates these policies, without prior warning.*
- *The UC Regents have the right to remove the content from UCR's Facebook page at any time and without prior notice for any reason deemed to be in the Regents' best interest.*

All content and posts are bound by the following: [Facebook's Terms of Use](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).

You may also refer to the [University of California's Electronic Communications Policy](#).

Professionalism and Tone

All accounts should remain current with respect to all information. Any person or group utilizing the UCR name should be aware that they are reflecting the image and reputation of the school, and should make every attempt to be guided by the guidelines in this document.

The public in general, and UCR's employees and students, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the UCR website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment or discuss questions with your supervisor or the Social Media Specialist prior to posting.

Remember, social media channels are conversations and engagement platforms, not megaphones. Be ready to engage with your students, alumni, staff, faculty, and community members. Keep the tone of postings conversational but professional.

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, deal with it quickly.

Use correct grammar and write in complete sentences when possible. Never write with all the letters capitalized. Avoid jargon and institutional language. Abbreviations are sometimes necessary to meet word limits, but don't overdo it. Do not use unprofessional abbreviations, such as "u/you," "2/to" or "r/are."

Before retweeting, sharing, or posting a link, check that link or account (and watch the video or read the article, if applicable) before posting to ensure it is appropriate content to be sharing under the UCR name.

At all times, be transparent; use your real name or post under a department/organization name. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing confidential details.

Content should be kept short and sweet, with an ideal post of 1-2 sentences and a link or photo. Always check links to ensure they are shortened (we recommend using bitly.com) and change any pre-loaded text if needed to avoid cluttered posts. Write in a manner that represents your whole unit - use "we," "our" and other inclusive words. Readers and followers want to know what is happening with you or your group; be sure to keep them updated **at least** once a week. But, also be aware that you can post too much. The University's best practice is quality is better than quantity. Keep the outlet in mind - for example, posting several times a day may be acceptable on Twitter, but less so on Facebook.

Creating Content to Post

Content should at all times be relevant to the audience of your page, however, it should not only be news and announcements. Put a personal spin on your communications by asking for feedback, posing questions, posting photos or offering congratulations on personal achievements. Content may be tangentially relevant to your audience, such as the Environmental Club posting a nature video or the Medical School posting a comic about the profession. However, always keep in mind that we are speaking on behalf of the University and all content should be appropriate for all audiences.

Some ways to help produce content:

- Reuse content developed for other outlets. Newsletter excerpts can be divided up into separate posts on Facebook, for example. Videos and photos taken for other purposes can be shared online.
- Develop content calendars – sketch out a month or two of updates in one sitting, perhaps in a staff meeting, which will reduce how often you'll need to brainstorm new topics. Remain flexible if anything comes up and planned updates need to be moved.
- Schedule updates using tools like Hootsuite so they will go out at predetermined times. This can work for up to several months in advance, so you can keep your page updated even if you're unable to put active time into upkeep (however, management of any comments received will still need to be addressed in a timely manner).
- Think outside the usual news/events posts for content:
 - Staff updates (photo from a recent vacation or office birthday celebration? Congrats on a recent achievement? Think casual, fun, getting-to-know-us type posts)
 - Regular features – think of something you can offer that's relevant to your office. Something like a book recommendation of the week, photo of the week, trivia question of the week, job-hunting tip of the week, etc. This gives you an excuse to post something, say, every Wednesday.
 - Share links – relevant news or advice articles, videos, etc
 - Inspiration – share your favorite quotes
 - Ask Questions – poll questions are great for drumming up discussion. These can be professional or something as simple as 'what did you all do for the 4th of July?' Just be sure to word it carefully to avoid any off-color responses (and be prepared to delete them if needed) - this is not usually a problem but should be kept in mind.
- Take advantage of these campus resources in order to share relevant information on your social media pages. Here are some ideas for gathering content:
 - [UCR Today](#)
 - UCR In the News
 - [UCR Daily Digest](#)
 - [Inside UCR](#)

All account managers are encouraged to share high-level announcements or other broad-based content with the Social Media Specialist for posting on the primary University accounts.

Inactive social media accounts reflect negatively on the university. The Social Media Specialist may request inactive accounts be taken down. If you are finding it difficult to create content for your social media account, please consult with the Social Media Specialist to discuss ideas and other options. Similarly, misused accounts may be flagged by the University and are subject to management changes or discontinuation.

Promoting your Account and Fostering Growth

The best way to grow your new account is to keep it active! New followers will need to see what you provide when they visit your page before they hit the 'follow' button, so don't wait for your audience to grow before you start posting content.

Don't ask for new followers or likes (once may be acceptable, though don't make it a habit or you will risk alienating your followers). However, you can ask administrators of other accounts on campus to promote your account to their new followers. Collaborate with other accounts on campus when applicable to support other UCR departments/groups and encourage a sense of community – make sure to tag their page in your post using the @ sign.

Establish custom URLs as applicable for ease of promotion. Add your account (with links, when possible) to all documents, web pages, email signatures, and other communications to help spread the word.

Above all, remember that the most effective and reliable social media growth is organic and steady - be patient and update regularly.

Social Media in a Crisis Situation

Depending on the situation, we may find it necessary to post or respond on main campus social media channels regarding a tragedy or criminal investigation. Our practice -- whether it's with traditional or social media sources -- is to connect people with accurate, reliable information. Please remember that situations will often be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and we will always be sensitive to the wishes of the immediate family members affected. **See the complete guidelines for social media in a crisis/tragedy situation.**

Follow Site Rules and Copyright Laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and **always** attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

You are responsible for reading and following the Terms of Use on any outside social media site.

Campus Policy Violation

Freedom of expression, the right to agree and disagree, the spirit of inquiry, and free exchange of thought are essential in an open society. As part of society, each institution of higher education must help maintain these rights for all who are a part of its concern. UCR presumes that all students and staff members who exercise their rights in these areas will do so with full responsibility.

Ensure that all content and 'about' section text adheres to any relevant Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) regulations.

Updated: March 1, 2017

