

UNISA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES¹

1. OVERVIEW

Unisa recognize that social media tools are increasingly accessible to and used by staff and students as a means of connecting with the public, other higher education institutions, colleagues and peers. The university recognizes and protects the concept and practice of academic freedom as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and scholarship within Unisa. Digital media delivered via an ever increasing variety of platforms are being integrated into the everyday lives of students and staff.

This document was developed to provide a set of guidelines in the use of social media applications for and between Unisa staff and students.

2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

These guidelines distinguish between private and business use scenarios for both students and staff. Business use refers to all instances where a staff member, in the course of his/her employment with Unisa, contributes content to or prepares information related to his/her work or the primary business of the University for use in social media.

The term "social media technology" encompasses a variety of services delivered via Internet and mobile, including video, photo or podcasts hosts, instant messaging sites or chat rooms, wikis, blogs, online discussion forums, etc.

We encourage communication among our employees, students, partners, and others - and Web logs (blogs), social networks, discussion forums, wikis, video, and other social media - such as Twitter - can be a great way to stimulate conversation and discussion.

These guidelines apply to:

- All blogs, wikis, forums, and social networks hosted or sponsored by Unisa
- Your personal blogs that contain postings about Unisa's business, products, employees, students or partners
- Your postings about Unisa's business, products, employees, students or partners on external blogs, wikis, discussion forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter
- Your participation in any video related to Unisa's business, products, employees, students, or partners whether you create a video to post or link to on your blog, you contribute content for a video, or you appear in a video created either by another Unisa employee or by a third party.

¹In drafting these guidelines the team have used principles found in other company and higher education institution sources such as Oracle, the University of Michigan, the University of Southern California, and a range of other lesser sources.

Even if your social media activities take place completely outside of work, as your personal activities should, what you say can have an influence on your ability to conduct your job responsibilities, your colleagues' abilities to do their jobs, and Unisa's interests.

The decision to establish a social media presence and initiate public conversations must be carefully considered. Participation in social media carries a commitment towards making regular contributions and monitoring comments and activity on your profiles. The success of social media relies on constant communication.

2.1 *Personal Responsibility*

Unisa staff and students are personally responsible for the private content they publish on blogs, wikis, image and video hosts or any other form of user-generated content. Be mindful that the content you publish will be available for a long time— protect your privacy.

2.2 *University Policies and Guidelines*

The following Unisa policies and guidelines, amongst others, may inform behavior towards the use of and access to social media:

- Internet, Electronic Communication and Web Management Policy and Guidelines
- Unisa Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism Policy
- Student Disciplinary Code

3. PRIVATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (POSTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL)

Students and staff of the university are encouraged to participate in social and other electronic media. The guidelines listed below apply only to those instances where there is the potential for confusion about your role as a Unisa staff member versus personal opinion or conflict with the interest of Unisa.

3.1 *Identification of association with Unisa*

In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Unisa staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal representative of Unisa. If you identify yourself as a staff member of Unisa, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with University policies and guidelines.

3.2 *Disclaimer*

If you publish Unisa-related content to any system or website outside of Unisa, and it is not an official Unisa site, but it is related to your position at the university, or the courses offered by the university, use the disclaimer below to indicate that you are expressing your personal opinion or operating in your personal capacity.

Keep in mind that if you are posting with an identifiable university username, e.g. an email address, other users do not necessarily know you personally. They view what you post as coming from the university.

Proposed disclaimer: The contents, including all opinions and views expressed, in my profile [or on my page] are entirely personal and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of anyone else, including other employees in my department or at the University of South Africa. My department and the University of South Africa have not approved and are not responsible for the material contained in this profile [or on this page].

3.3 Unisa Logo and other Branding elements

You may not use the Unisa logo or any other official representations or images on your personal or non-official online sites. Consult the Policy on the Use of the University Coat of Arms and Other Brand Images for more details.

3.4 Respect University Time and Property

You should participate in personal social media conversations and content creation on your own time and equipment. Also consult the Internet, Electronic Communication and Web Management Policy and Unisa Code of Ethics and Conduct for guidelines on the appropriate access and use of Unisa's equipment and communication facilities.

4. BUSINESS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (WHEN POSTING ON BEHALF OF UNISA)

The Unisa policies and guidelines regarding conduct, ethical behaviour, internet use, sharing information and the right to privacy of information remains applicable for social media environments. In addition to the general guidelines the following should be considered when participating in a social media site on behalf of Unisa:

4.1 Notification obligation

Unisa staff members should seek departmental or directorate permission before creating an online presence that represents Unisa business, including teaching, discipline or research orientated initiatives. Departments, and thus staff members, are obligated to provide a secondary member of staff with the department or directorate with full access to the service, to ensure continuity.

The university accepts that its students have the right to participate in and collaborate with each other based on their association with Unisa. These sites are not considered to be official Unisa social media sites, but are for personal use by Unisa students. The Unisa Student Disciplinary Code will apply.

4.2 Identification of/ or association with Unisa

In keeping with university policy, a student or staff member may post on a social network profile: the university's name, a university email address or University telephone number for contact purposes, or post official departmental contact information.

Any official announcements that represents or impact on the wider student audience should only be posted in conjunction with the Corporate Communication and Marketing or the University Registrar.

4.3 Branding and Use of the Unisa Logo

Official Unisa sites should comply with Unisa branding requirements. Staff should confer with CCM for assistance on branding requirements or consult the Visual Standards Manual.

4.4 Transparency and Responsibility

If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the university, clearly state your role and goals.

Responsibility for personal posts and opinion remains with the individual. Take cognizance of Unisa policies and guidelines regarding acceptable conduct, copyright issues and accountability. If the use of your official university title might imply endorsement, support or opposition of the University with regard to any personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, an explicit disclaimer must appear close to the material.

4.5 Reporting Complaints

The Unisa Contact Centre e-mail address must be provided in all official social media sites for the registration of complaints.

4.6 Monitoring

The University of South Africa does not routinely monitor social networking sites, however, as with other electronic resources; Unisa ICT may perform activities necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality and security of the University's systems. (Unisa Internet, Electronic Communication and Web Management Policy, Section 7: Right to Monitor) Note that other employers, organizations, and individuals do monitor and share information they find on social networking Web sites. Posted information is public information.