

12. Social Media

Background

GSA recognises that social media offers a major opportunity to communicate and promote our activities to graduates, stakeholders and the wider public. To enable GSA to take advantage of this opportunity, a number of social media platforms have been established which are used to positively promote our mission.

To enable employees to take advantage of the business value of these sites and to promote an open, trusting, collaborative workplace, this policy outlines the expectations of the organisation and the process to be followed when posting material on social media platforms.

This policy should be read in conjunction with GSA Media and Email policies in order to maximise our social media reach while protecting our public reputation.

Authorisation

Chief Executive Officer to authorise policy

Managers and Communication Team to implement procedures

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the parameters of the organisation's engagement with its stakeholders and the broader community through the use of social media.

GSA may choose to engage in social media such as:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Google+
- WordPress/Blogger
- YouTube/Vimeo
- iTunes/Podcasting
- Instagram/Tumblr

Under this policy GSA has a restrictive list of people authorised to post social media content on behalf of the organisation.

At the same time GSA seeks to encourage information and link-sharing amongst its graduates, staff, board/council members, volunteers, stakeholders and the community by, for example sharing, liking and retweeting social media content generated by the organisation. GSA also seeks to utilise the expertise of the graduates, board/council members, its employees and volunteers in generating ideas for appropriate social media content.

All digital content must keep with the image that GSA wishes to present to the public and posts must not damage the organisation's reputation. GSA social media presence must not conflict with contractual and mutual obligations of its partnerships with University of Melbourne, funders and private sponsorships.

Members delegated to post to social media platforms on behalf of GSA are:

- GSA Board members as authorised.
- Representative Council Members as authorised.
- Chief Executive Officer or delegate.
- in limited instances, Managers and their delegates.

The fast-moving nature of social media and constant development of new platforms requires that this policy and associated procedures be reviewed regularly.

Breach of this policy or failure to comply with a request to remove content that is prohibited by this policy may result in disciplinary action, including the termination of employment.

Core Policy

GSA social media use shall be consistent with the following core values:

- **Integrity:** GSA staff will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals. GSA staff will abide by all relevant legislation including those relating to privacy, copyright, defamation, or discrimination. In addition, posts will be in accordance with the organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct and Privacy policies.
- **Professionalism:** GSA social media platforms represent the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Staff may, from time to time and as appropriate, post on behalf of GSA. However, the impression should remain of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals.
- **Information Sharing:** Staff, Board/Council members and volunteers are encouraged to share and repost information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to the graduates, stakeholders and relevant communities.
- **Mission and Values:** GSA staff, Board/Council members and volunteers must ensure that any posts reflect the organisational mission and values through the promotion of *facilitation, inclusion, development, provision and leadership* of and within the community it serves.

This policy aims to encourage a social media culture of:

- open exchange of information, knowledge and views;
- collaboration to overcome workplaces challenges and issues; and
- respectful, honest and constructive debate.

Rude or disrespectful behaviour, personal attacks, bullying, harassment or offensive behaviour must not be engaged in.

As with all other forms of communication at GSA, content posted to social media should be:

- polite;
- concise;
- appropriate;
- free from objectionable language; and
- professional and careful.

GSA should seek to grow its social media base to engage with existing and potential supporters, donors and stakeholders, striking a professional balance to avoid placing the organisation's reputation at risk.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer shall nominate the *Communication team* to co-ordinate GSA social media management.

They will oversee expansion of social media and develop a Social Media Strategy. They are ultimately responsible for:

- Ensuring all posts are in keeping with GSA Social Media policy;
- Ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken to correct or remove inappropriate posts (including defamatory and/or illegal content) and in minimising the risk of a repeat incident; and
- Moderating and monitoring public response to social media to ensure trolling and spamming does not occur, removing offensive or inappropriate replies or cautioning offensive posters, and replying to any further requests for information generated by the post topic.

It is important to maintain the balance between encouraging discussion and information sharing and maintaining a professional and appropriate online presence.

Personal Use of Social Media

When using personal social media channels, all GSA staff, Board/Council members and volunteers must:

- Ensure personal views are not represented as those of GSA;
- Not disclose privileged or confidential work information;
- Abide by the other policies that govern the behaviour of GSA staff, Board/Council members and volunteers; and
- Quickly correct errors made in previous posts.

As private individuals, staff, Board/Council members and volunteers are entitled to comment on and enter into debate on social media platforms. However, staff,

Board/Council members and volunteers are responsible for ensuring it is clear to others that comments are not made on behalf of GSA.

GSA may require staff, Board/Council members and volunteers to remove content prohibited by this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in termination or other action deemed appropriate by GSA.

Processes

Planning Social Media

Managers are encouraged to work with the Communication team to use social media to promote their work, build relationships and communicate with stakeholders. Social media campaigns must be planned and scheduled to ensure maximum impact and do not coincide with other GSA promotional activities.

Manager Student Engagement & Communications must develop a social media plan as part of their communications and stakeholder engagement planning. All plans and delivery schedules must be approved by the CEO.

Social media is immediate and responsive, and Managers should make arrangements to monitor and respond to platforms relevant to their program areas. Managers may delegate the task of monitoring social media to other staff members with the permission of the Manager Student Engagement & Communication. GSA aims to post to social media regularly across all platforms. Managers should work with the Communication Team to ensure sufficient materials are available for GSA to raise and maintain its online profile.

Posting to Social Media

Staff, Board/Council members and volunteers should ask the following questions before posting to social media:

- Is the information I am posting, or reposting, likely to be of interest to GSA members and stakeholders?
- Is the information in keeping with the interests of the organisation and its constituted aims?
- Could the post be construed as an attack on another individual, organisation or project?
- Would GSA funders/partners be happy to read the post?
- When linking, does the link work, have I read the information it links to and judged it to be an appropriate source?
- If reposting, is the original poster an individual or organisation that GSA would be happy to associate itself with?
- Is the tone and content of the post in keeping with other posts made by GSA? Does it maintain the overall organisational tone?
- Does posting/reposting suggest GSA endorses the post/report content?

No content should be posted if staff, Board/Council members and volunteers are uncertain about suitability. All posts must be discussed and approved by the Managers

Damage Limitation

In the event of a damaging or misleading post, the Managers should be notified as soon as possible, and the following actions occur:

- Offending post is removed;
- Where necessary an apology issued, either publicly or to the individual/organisation involved; and
- Origin of the post explored, and steps taken to prevent similar incidents occurring.

Moderating Social Media

The positive reputation of GSA must be first and foremost in the use of social media and involves the maintenance of a safe and friendly environment for stakeholders and community members.

All social media posts will be moderated to ensure GSA positive reputation.

Freedom of speech is encouraged, however posts containing one or more of the following will be removed:

- Excessive or inappropriate use of swearing;
- Defamatory, slanderous or aggressive attacks on GSA employees, board/council members, volunteers other individuals, organisations, projects or public figures;
- Breach of copyrighted material not within reasonable use, in the public domain, or available under Creative Commons license;
- Breach of data protection or privacy laws;
- Repetitive advertisements; or
- Topics which fall outside the realms of interest to members and stakeholders, and which do not appear to be within the context of a legitimate discussion or enquiry.

Procedure for individual posts:

- Remove the post as soon as possible; and
- If possible/appropriate, contact the poster privately to explain why it was removed.

Procedure for ongoing/spam posts:

- Remove the post as soon as possible; and
- Ban or block poster.

Banning and blocking should only be used as a last resort, and only when it is clear the poster intends to continue to contribute inappropriate content. In this case action must be taken swiftly to maintain the welfare of other social media users.

The decision to block, ban and remove posts lies with the Manager, but may, at their discretion, be delegated to responsible staff.

******All Social Media posts and publications must also adhere to the GSA Media Policy, Privacy Policy and the Email Policy.******

Related Documents

- Media Policy
- Email Policy
- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Resolving Issues and Complaint Management Policy