Social Media Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('CDU', 'the University') recognises the benefits and importance of social media as a tool to engage with employees, students, researchers, parents, alumni, donors, media, business partners and the University community.

(2) Social media allows the University to interact and connect with online audiences through the dissemination of information, news, research findings, marketing and promotional messages.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines how official CDU social media can be used by University employees, students, contractors, authorised visitors and volunteers in connection with University activities. The policy aims to protect the CDU brand and reputation, meet its compliance obligations and clarify the roles regarding social media content creation and engagement.

(4) The use of social media when representing the University is governed by the Media Policy, the Marketing Policy, Information and Communication Technologies Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Conduct - Employees and Code of Conduct - Students.

(5) This policy does not restrict the right of any individual, member or representative of any professional, community or representative body to freely express their opinions. This policy is not to detract from the University's commitment to intellectual and academic freedom as outlined in Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy.

Section 3 - Scope

(6) This policy applies to all University employees, students, contractors, authorised visitors and volunteers.

(7) Social media is considered as being connected to the University in the following circumstances:

a. the social media account is established or used as an official University social media channel; or
b. there is an express or implied reference indicating an affiliation between a student or employee and the University on the site or associated sites.

(8) The policy does not apply to personal social media use. Employees and students who use social media in their private lives are responsible for the content of comments and posts on these sites. However, due to the public nature of social media and its potential to damage the reputation of the University and/or the individual, employees and students should ensure that any public comments made on social media clearly indicate that they are being made as a private individual and do not represent the University. Users must be aware that association with CDU may be recognised due to the public nature of such networks, and should take account of the privacy and security settings of the platforms they choose to use.

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(9) If social media activity could be interpreted as official, then the individual must have the appropriate authority to represent the University, in accordance with this policy.

Section 4 - Policy

(10) The University supports participation in social media technologies for individuals in accordance with the Online Safety Act 2021, recognising they are:

a. used for both work and private use by employees;
b. an effective way to communicate with the University community;
c. a vehicle for direct engagement among employees, students and community supporters; and
d. widely used to build and maintain external professional networks.

Official University accounts

(11) An official University social media account is an account that represents the opinions of the University. It must be authorised by the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer and relevant member of the Senior Executive Team.

(12) Official University accounts, groups, pages or networks must:

a. Indicate that the University manages the account.
b. Clearly display University contact and compliance information.
c. Comply with the voice, style and tone as set out in the University's Brand toolkit;
d. Be pre-approved by the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer. Any accounts, groups, pages or networks that exist without prior authorisation are subject to review and may be amended or removed, or where necessary reported to the relevant social media company (e.g. Meta) for removal. The University reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to breach this policy, the Media policy, the Code of Conduct - Employees and Code of Conduct - Students.
e. Be actively maintained with regular posts, unique content and a sufficient level of engagement and monitoring. Non-compliance may result in the account being removed or where necessary reported to the relevant social media company (e.g. Meta) for removal.
f. Be managed only by the approved administrators who have access to the account at all times. When an employee who is an administrator of a social media account leaves the University, an alternative administrator must be assigned. The social.media@cdu.edu.au account must also be provided administrative access.
g. Be monitored regularly for comments, mentions, and messages. Inappropriate or harmful content posted by the public as comments (e.g., spam, harassment, misinformation) should be removed or reported in line with the moderation guidelines.
h. Be respectful, non-partisan, and consistent with the organisation's public communication policies.

(13) Account administrators are responsible for privacy settings, monitoring and maintaining content and comments, and are required to respond immediately to any take-down requirement issued by the relevant member of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee.

Content on official University social media accounts

(14) University account administrators should only post material related to their area of expertise, in alignment with this policy and the Media Policy's guidelines on expert comment.

(15) Attendees at official CDU events may be filmed or photographed by authorised CDU employees or contracted service professionals. Admission to the event serves as permission for use of these images by the University, which

may be shared on social media. The Marketing Policy provides more information on the use of images for official purposes, promotional materials or publications.

(16) All content posted on official Charles Darwin University accounts is the intellectual property of Charles Darwin University. Content created by employees, contractors, or partners as part of their role or engagement with the organisation becomes the property of Charles Darwin University, unless otherwise contractually specified. Original creators (e.g., designers, photographers, writers) will be credited when appropriate and agreed upon in advance.

(17) Content on the CDU wide corporate University social media accounts should be approved by a relevant member of the Senior Executive Team, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, or the Marketing Manager - Marketing, Media and Communications.

Expectations of University spokespersons

(18) Posting on official University social media is considered as providing public comment on the University. Any communication on social media on behalf of the University, in a manner that officially represents or appears to represent the University and/or its interests must be led and coordinated by the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer.

(19) Using social media in any capacity on behalf of the University is considered to be commenting on behalf of the University. Employee obligations for commenting on behalf of the University are set out in the Media Policy.

Expert comment

(20) Academic employees of the University can post on social media to provide 'expert comment' on their areas of expertise. Employee guidelines around expert comment are set out in the Media Policy and Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech policy.

(21) Where an academic employee comments on a matter which is directly related to their area of expertise, the individual academic employee can establish their credentials by using their title and link to their employee or research profile. Academic employees providing expert comment should include a disclaimer which states that the opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of Charles Darwin University.

Unofficial University social media accounts

(22) Unofficial University social media accounts (e.g. student clubs and interest groups) must not carry the University name or logo as they are not endorsed by the University.

Unacceptable use

(23) Where a University employee or student could be construed as representing the University, through a clear or intended connection with the University such as identifying the University as a current employer, or identifying as a current student of the University, users of social media are not permitted to:

a. use offensive language;
b. post content or objectionable material that:
    i. contradicts the University the Code of Conduct - Employees and Code of Conduct - Students;
    ii. promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
    iii. is sexually explicit or pornographic, or links to sexually explicit or pornographic content;
    iv. is used to intimidate, menace, bully or harass (including, but not limited to, cyber bullying and stalking)

an employee, contractor, student or other person;

v. impersonates another student, employee or associate of the University;

vi. might be construed as creating a risk to the health and safety of employees or students including material that amounts to unacceptable behaviour such as psychological or emotional violence and abuse, coercion, harassment and/or discrimination, aggressive or abusive comments or behaviour, and/or unreasonable demands or undue pressure; and/or

vii. brings the University into disrepute;

c. post information that compromises the safety or security of the public or public institutions;

d. post information that violates privacy through the release of confidential or personal information obtained in a person's capacity as an employee/authorised visitor of the University that would reasonably be expected, to be kept private.

   i. Personal photos taken at the University during teaching and learning activities where students are present, are not to be posted to personal social media accounts. Only official CDU social medial posts and news articles may be shared on personal social media accounts to promote University activities.

   ii. Social media users must protect all University information that is considered to be non-public in nature unless authorised by the relevant member of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee and the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer;

e. post content or material that is or is likely to be defamatory, inaccurate, false, misleading or may affect the reputation of the University. All dealings with social media must be honest and all reasonable efforts must be made to provide accessible references to claims of a factual nature;

f. use the University’s name or logo without prior approval from Marketing, Media and Communications;

g. use the University’s name or logo to engage in solicitations of commerce, including intent to create personal monetary or financial gain from social media channels;

h. engage in or encourage conduct that constitutes a criminal offence or illegal activity; and/or

i. post content or material that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, including breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, which includes the intellectual property rights of the University, as per the Intellectual Property Policy.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(24) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(25) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(26) All employees have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Shannon Holborn Vice-President Global and External Relations
Implementation Officer	Kimberley Pickens Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
Enquiries Contact	Kimberley Pickens Chief Marketing and Communications Officer

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