UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

SOCIAL MEDIA 101

Getting Started With Social Media at UH

Social Media 101

▶ Social Media Policy

▶ Content Best Practices

▶ Understanding Analytics

▶ Tools and Resources

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
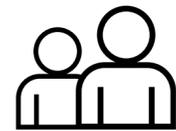
Social Media Policy

- **Don't delete comments**

- At least two employees

- Department email

- Profile guidelines

- Accessibility

- Photo release guidelines

Do not delete comments, filter comments or block accounts.

Per our social media policy (and as a state institution) deleting or filtering comments poses a freedom of speech issue. If you suspect that someone's comment is not protected by the First Amendment, you must consult with the Office of General Counsel to get permission to remove it.

Social Media Policy

- ▶ Don't delete comments
- ▶ **At least two employees**
- ▶ Department email
- ▶ Profile guidelines
- ▶ Accessibility
- ▶ Photo release guidelines

At least two employees must have access to login information for all official University social media profiles.

For accounts that use passwords to log in, like Instagram and X, at least two employees must know the password.

For pages that use an admin system, like Facebook and LinkedIn, at least two employees must have admin access.

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The email address associated with UH social media profiles should be a department email.

For social media profiles that require an email address, use an official UH department email that multiple people can access. Do not use your personal or work email.

For example, the Student Centers should use an email like studentcenters@central.uh.edu rather than janedoe93@gmail.com or jdoe@central.uh.edu.

If your department does not already have its own email address, click here to create one.
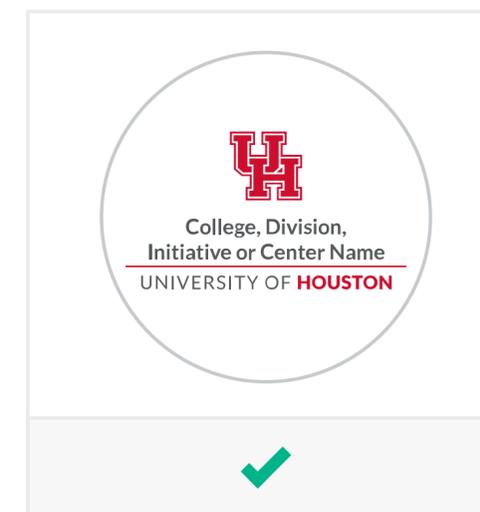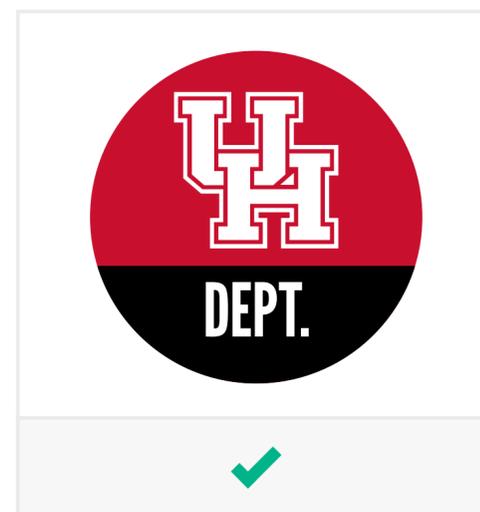
Social Media Policy
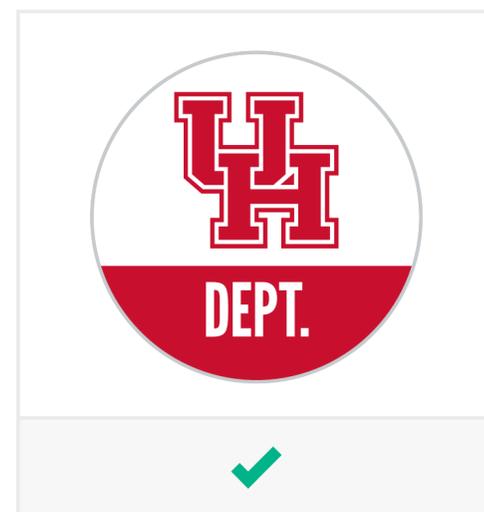
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Use a logo that is current, easy to see and specific to your profile.

Any color combination that is defined as acceptable by the UH brand guide may be used. The first two options below are templates that are available to UH staff. A shorter version of your department's name should be used to maintain readability at small sizes. For example, **Student Housing and Residential Life** could use **Housing**.
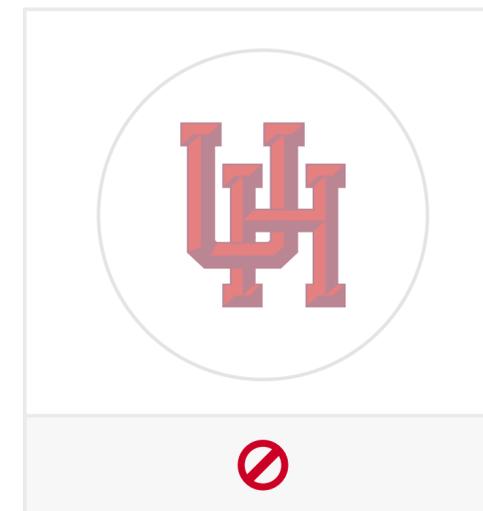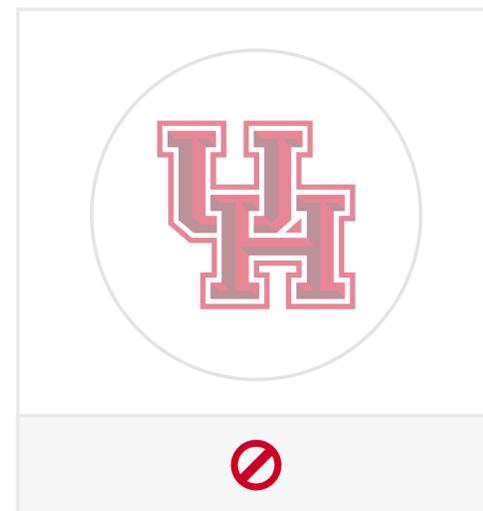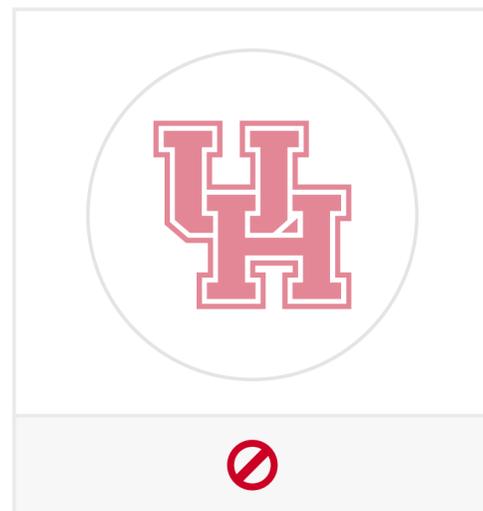
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Do not use an outdated UH logo or the interlocking UH logo without supplemental text.

When by itself, the Interlocking UH logo represents the University of Houston in its entirety. **Only the main University of Houston social media profiles** are permitted to use it as a profile picture without additional text.

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Avoid adding a birthday to your bio.

Though many departments or colleges may want to use the date they were founded as their birthday, if that date would make the account appear to belong to someone underage, the social network may automatically ban the profile.

Social Media Policy

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- Photo release guidelines

Social profiles must be accessible and usable by people with the widest range of capabilities possible.

- Add alt text to describe images for people who are blind or low vision

- Add video captioning (subtitles)

- Capitalize the first letter of each word in hashtags (#GoCoogs)

Social Media Policy

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- **Photo release guidelines**

Photo releases are typically required if the individual:

- Is recognizable; the primary focus of the photograph/video shot

- Is identifiable in a small group setting, such as a small group of students studying in the library or congregating by the fountains. In these cases, a release should be obtained from each subject

- Has been recruited to serve as a model

- Is a minor (under 18 years of age); a parental release is required

Photo releases are typically not required if:

- Photographed in large group shots in a public space or at public events with little expectation of privacy, such as sporting events and concerts

- It is a large group setting, such as wide shots of classrooms or campus scenic shots with no single subject

- The subject is not recognizable, such as silhouettes, posterior view or out of focus

- The photos/video are not being taken or distributed by UH. When news media is covering a story on campus or a production company is shooting content it plans to distribute, a UH photo release is not required. In many cases they will have their own releases. The "Filming at UH" guidelines outline protocols for filming on campus.

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- ▶ Accessibility

- ▶ **Photo release guidelines**

If a student is identifiable or the primary focus in a photo or video, they will have to sign two forms to be posted on social media:

1. Individual Photo Release Form

2. FERPA Authorization Form

These forms are available at uh.edu/marcom/guidelines-policies/photo-release/

CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

How Does "the Algorithm" Work?

How do social networks decide what they show people in their feeds?

The details are mostly a mystery.
Here's what we know...

How Does "the Algorithm" Work?

▸ Social networks make the majority of their money by selling ads on their platforms.

▸ The more time a user spend on their platform, the more ads they see... the more money the platform makes.

▸ Because of this, the social networks want to show users content that is highly engaging so that they will spend more time on the platform.

How Does "the Algorithm" Work?

When you make a post, it will initially appear in a select number of people's feeds.

▶ **Engaging Post:** If those people engage with the post, the social network will see that it is a high quality post and will continue to serve it to more people.

▶ **Low-Engaging Post:** If most of the people in that initial grouping don't engage with the post, the number of people the social network continues to serve it to will quickly flatten out.

Content Best Practices

- **Planning**
- Producing
- Posting
- Engaging

While planning content, consider the following:

- Who is your target audience?
- Why should someone follow you?
- What's the purpose of your content?
- How will your content provide value?

Content Best Practices

- **Planning**

- Producing

- Posting

- Engaging

Think about the most successful social posts that you've seen.

▶ How are they formatted?

- Are they using photos? Videos? Graphics?

▶ What made them eye-catching?

- Was the first image particularly strong? Was it the caption? Did the video start off with an interesting clip? Was the content something that felt especially relevant to you?

▶ Did they use a tactic that you could also use?

- They probably did!

Content Best Practices

Planning

Producing

Posting

Engaging

Your posts are competing with the other content on people's feeds.

If someone is scrolling their social media feed and seeing photos of friends, interesting videos from an award show or buzz-worthy news stories, they are likely to scroll right past your post if it isn't interesting, relevant or looks too much like an ad.

Content Best Practices

- Planning
- **Producing**
- Posting
- Engaging

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Don't use QR codes in social media posts.

QR codes are great for signage, but since most social media posts are viewed on a person's mobile device, scanning the code is not intuitive. If needed, include the link in the post instead.

Instagram posts do not support links. If you need to include a link on Instagram, do it in a Story.

Content Best Practices

- Planning
- **Producing**
- Posting
- Engaging

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Avoid using stock imagery and graphics that are text-heavy.

Both of these provide very little value to your audience and may cause them to scroll past your posts. When possible, try to find an alternate way to share this information.

Content Best Practices

▶ Planning

▶ Producing

▶ **Posting**

▶ Engaging

Use the platform the way your audience does.

Matching the usage and tone of your audience will help you fit in, get engagement and grow your following.

Content Best Practices

- ▶ Planning

- ▶ Producing

- ▶ **Posting**

- ▶ Engaging

When should you post?

The best time to post will differ for everyone depending on many factors, including their audience. If your post is based on an event that happened recently, making the most very soon after is important to ensure it is still timely.

If it's not based on an event, the quality of the post will have a greater effect on its success than the timing.

Content Best Practices

- Planning
- Producing
- **Posting**
- Engaging

How often should you post?

Unfortunately, there is no single "right" answer. Though it's good to be relatively consistent, posting just for the sake of posting is not best practice. Always make sure your posts are adding value of some kind of the user — frequent low-engagement posts could negatively impact your profile's future reach.

As a general guideline, unless there is a noteworthy event happening, you probably shouldn't post more than once a day on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn.

Content Best Practices

- Planning
- Producing
- **Posting**
- Engaging

Focus on quality over quantity.

Your profile will perform better if you choose to be selective about what is worth being posted. Continue to consider what brings your audience the most value.

Ask yourself if the content you're creating is content that you would interact with yourself or if it's something you might mindlessly scroll past.

Content Best Practices

- Planning

- Producing

- **Posting**

- Engaging

Don't focus on hashtags.

Hashtags don't hold the same value that they once did. They were originally a way for people to easily search for the content they were interested in and for algorithms to easily understand what a post was about and how to group it in with other relevant posts.

However, now that the algorithms have become more advanced, hashtags usually aren't necessary.

Learn more about hashtags at UH >

Content Best Practices

▶ Planning

▶ Producing

▶ Posting

▶ **Engaging**

Engage with your audience!

Interacting with people in the comments of your posts is a great way to spark engagement and make your profile seem more friendly and attentive.

UNDERSTANDING ANALYTICS

Understanding Analytics

It's important to collect and analyze data from social media platforms to understand and improve your social media performance.

Why?

▶ **Informed Decision-Making:** Make data-driven decisions.

▶ **Audience Insights:** Understand your audience's behavior and preferences.

▶ **Performance Measurement:** Track the success of campaigns and overall strategy.

Key Metrics and Terms

▶ **Reach:** The number of unique users who saw your content.

▶ **Impressions:** The total number of times your content was displayed.

▶ **Engagement:** Interactions with your content, including reactions (likes), comments and shares.

▶ **Engagement Rate:** The percentage of people who engaged with your content out of either the total number who saw it or the total number of followers.

▶ **Follower Count:** The total number of users who follow your profile.

▶ **Growth Rate:** The rate at which your follower count is increasing over a specific period.

▶ **Click-Through Rate (CTR):** The percentage of users who clicked on a link in your post out of the total who saw it.

▶ **Conversion Rate:** The percentage of users who took a desired action, such as signing up for a newsletter or registering for a seminar.

Ways to Calculate Engagement Rate

Engagement Rate per Impressions

(*Total engagements* / *Number of impressions*) x 100 = *Engagement rate per impressions*

((6,931 likes + 67 comments + 225 shares) / 45,074 impressions) x 100 = **16.07%**

This method should be used to determine how good your engagement is based on the number of times your post was seen.

Engagement Rate per Followers

(*Total engagements* / *Number of followers*) x 100 = *Engagement rate per followers*

((6,931 likes + 67 comments + 225 shares) / 159,301 followers) x 100 = **4.53%**

This method should be used to determine how good your engagement is based on the number of followers you have. It also is a way for you to benchmark your performance against competitors, because all data needed is public.
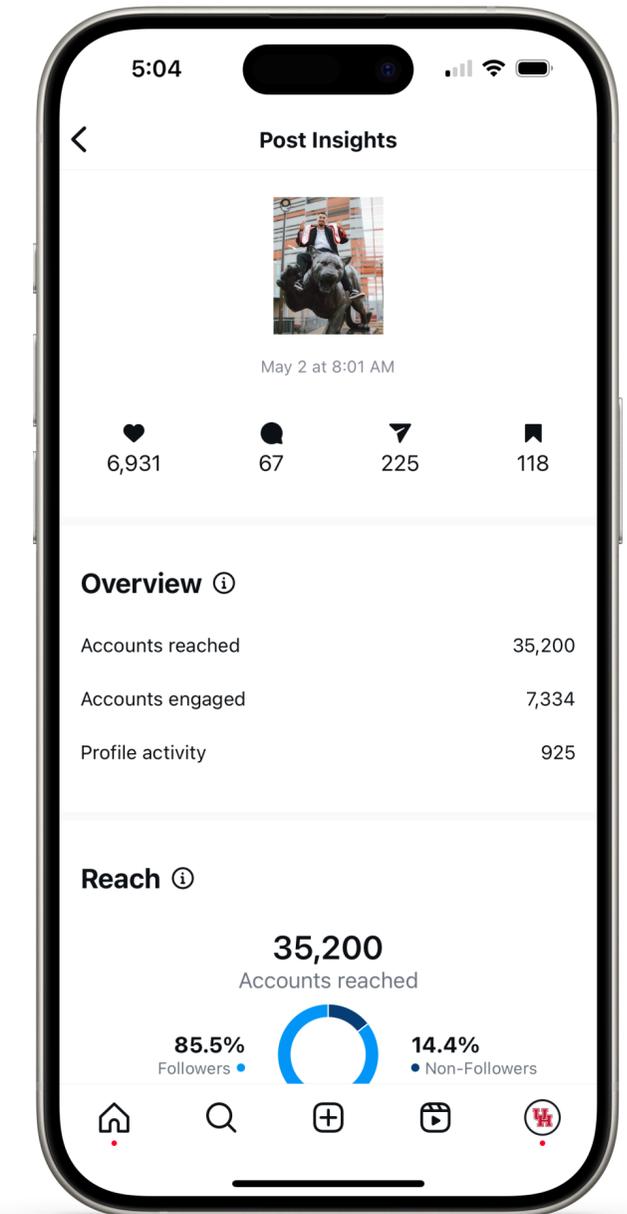
Setting Goals and KPIs

Awareness

Impressions:

▸ Measures how often your content is displayed.

▸ Important for understanding the potential reach of your posts.

Reach:

▸ The number of unique users who saw your content.

▸ Helps gauge the size of your audience.

Engagement

Engagement Rate:

▸ The percentage of people who engaged with your content out of the total who saw it.

▸ Indicates how well your content resonates with your audience.

Reactions, Comments, Shares:

▸ Measures how users interact with your content.

▸ Higher engagement typically means more visibility and interaction.

Conversion

Click-Through Rate (CTR):

▸ The percentage of users who clicked on a link in your post.

▸ Important for driving traffic to your website or landing pages.

Conversion Rate:

▸ The percentage of users who took a desired action, such as making a purchase or signing up for a newsletter.

▸ Critical for measuring the effectiveness of your calls to action.

Best Practices for Analyzing Data

Regular Reporting:

▸ Perform monthly analysis to track progress and identify trends.

▸ Use a template for consistent reporting.

Focus on Key Metrics:

▸ Track metrics relevant to your goals (e.g., engagement rate, reach, CTR).

▸ Compare metrics over time to understand performance patterns.

Understand Context:

▸ Consider external factors like events or seasonal trends affecting your data.

▸ Benchmark against industry standards or competitors.

Qualitative Insights:

▸ Analyze audience sentiment through comments and messages for deeper understanding.

Interpreting and Acting on Data

▶ **Drawing Actionable Insights**

▶ Examples of Data-Driven Decisions

▶ Adapting Strategy Based on Analytics

Identify Trends:

▶ Look for patterns and trends in your data over time.

▶ Determine what types of content perform best.

Analyze Successes and Failures:

▶ Examine high-performing posts to understand what worked.

▶ Review less successful content to identify areas for improvement.

Interpreting and Acting on Data

▸ Drawing Actionable Insights

▸ **Examples of Data-Driven Decisions**

▸ Adapting Strategy Based on Analytics

Content Adjustments:

▸ If videos get more engagement, consider incorporating more video content.

▸ If posts with questions generate more comments, include more interactive content.

▸ If posts with graphics get lower engagement, consider posting fewer graphics.

Timing and Frequency:

▸ Adjust posting times based on when your audience is most active.

▸ Increase or decrease posting frequency based on engagement levels.

Interpreting and Acting on Data

▸ Drawing Actionable Insights

▸ Examples of Data-Driven Decisions

▸ **Adapting Strategy Based on Analytics**

Iterative Improvement:

▸ Continuously refine your social media strategy based on data insights.

▸ Test new approaches and measure their impact.

Audience Feedback:

▸ Use data to understand audience preferences and tailor content accordingly.

▸ Engage with your audience to build stronger connections and loyalty.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Tools and Resources

Hive

University Marketing and Communications uses Hive as its project management tool. All social media projects/posts are initially planned out in Hive, such as the post below.

Hive

Sprout Social

UH Resources

Tools and Resources

sproutsocial

University Marketing and Communications uses Sprout Social as its social media management tool. Sprout allows us to schedule posts, monitor and respond to messages and comments, view data on profile and post performance, and much more.

▶ Hive

▶ **Sprout Social**

▶ UH Resources

Tools and Resources

- Hive
- Sprout Social
- **UH Resources**

UH's Social Media Guidelines Website (uh.edu/social)

Tools and Resources

▸ Hive

▸ Sprout Social

▸ **UH Resources**

Links to UH Resources

▸ Social Media Guidelines (includes the full policy)

▸ Social Media Directory

▸ Social Media Campuswide Teams Group

▸ Editorial Style Guide

▸ Photo Release Guidelines

▸ New Social Media Profile Setup

Email us at social@uh.edu if you have any questions.