

# Coastal Carolina University

## Social Media Procedures and Guidelines

### University-Recognized Social Media Account Creation

The University social media policy states, University-recognized accounts must be approved through the University Marketing and Communication (MarComm) prior to creation.

Before contacting MarComm, please research and develop a social media strategy. You should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why are you creating this account?
- Who is the intended target audience?
- What kind of content will be posted on these accounts?
- What are your counterparts at peer institutions doing on social media?
- Do you have enough engaging content to post regularly? Do you have the capacity to post regularly? If the answer to one or both of these questions is no, are there already University established accounts that you can coordinate social media efforts with?
- Who will be creating and approving the content?
- Who will be the two full-time faculty/staff members in charge of managing and monitoring the account daily? See *“Social Media Account Administrators”* for more information.

### **Requesting a University-Recognized Account**

- Step 1. Fill out a social media account request ticket through [KACE](#), choosing the social media queue under “2-University Marketing and Communication.”
- Step 2. MarComm will review the application and respond in the ticket.

### **University-Recognized Account Approval**

If a new social media account is approved, the social media manager in MarComm will create the account, and it will be added to the University social media directory.

All new accounts will follow the naming convention of @CCU or @Coastal followed by the unit's name.

Upon the completion of account set up, MarComm will give you administrator access and provide you with a social media brand package.

Please note that all approved University-recognized accounts must use a profile image provided by MarComm.

## **Social Media Account Administrators**

### **Responsibilities**

As the social media policy states, all University-recognized accounts are required to have two full-time faculty and/or staff administrators who will oversee the following:

- Managing social media account information.
- Developing social media strategies.
- Creating social media content.
- Approving and posting social media content.
- Responding to direct messages and comments.
- Engaging and collaborating with accounts across campus.
- Monitoring social media activity.

It will be the social media account administrator's responsibility to notify MarComm of any account changes. This includes username and password updates, social media account administrator transfers, and contact information changes.

Social media account administrators must also remove any content that may violate any University policy.

### **Identifying Social Media Account Administrators**

Taking on the responsibility of managing and monitoring a social media account is a large commitment.

It is recommended that you select two administrators who can complete the above tasks daily so that your account remains current and adheres with the University policy. Please note that students cannot create University-recognized accounts, or be account administrators, but they may contribute to content strategy and management.

## **Annual Account Renewal Requirements**

As the social media policy states, all University-recognized accounts and student organization accounts must renew their approved account status annually.

At the end of each calendar year, MarComm will initiate the account renewal process for University-recognized accounts by sending an email to all current registered account administrators. This email will include a link to the account renewal form and a deadline for response. If a response is not given within the provided timeframe, accounts are subject to deactivation.

## **Collaborating with University Flagship Accounts**

MarComm is always open to collaboration with accounts across campus. Follow the steps below to collaborate or share information with the University Flagship accounts.

- Step 1. Submit a [KACE](#) ticket within the social media queue using the category “Social Media Post Request.” Please fill out all required fields and include as much information as possible when submitting a post request.
- Step 2. Once a [KACE](#) ticket is submitted, MarComm will contact the submitter with further information.

## **Paid Social Media Advertising**

All paid social media advertising must be conducted in collaboration with MarComm.

- Step 1. Before contacting MarComm, please define the goal for the paid social media campaign. We recommend you come prepared with the content you want to promote, and an approved budget amount.
- Step 2. Submit a [KACE](#) ticket within the social media queue using the category “Social Media Ad Request.”
- Step 3. Once a [KACE](#) ticket is submitted, MarComm will contact you regarding the paid social media advertising process.

## **Student Organization and Club Social Media Account Creation**

All student organizations and clubs must be registered with the University in order to create and maintain an official social media account. Please follow the steps below:

- Step 1: Student organizations and clubs must [apply](#) for an officially registered social media account and [re-register](#) the account annually at the beginning of the spring semester through [Coastal Connections](#).
- Step 2: During the registration process, all student organizations must review the student code of conduct and Student Organization Handbook and identify the organizations' social media accounts under the "Organization Profile" section. They must also provide the name, phone number and email of the social media manager under the "Roster" section.
- Step 3: Upon completion of the registration process, Student Involvement and Leadership will provide a list of the registered student organizations, the social media accounts affiliated with those organizations, and contact information for account managers, to MarComm.
- Step 4: MarComm will review the registered organization accounts and inform student organizations of any recommendations to make to social media accounts related to branding, marketing, and strategy development.

Please note that no entity other than Coastal Carolina University may profit from official University accounts, University-recognized accounts, or student organization accounts.

## **Unaffiliated Accounts and Prohibited Content**

### **Unaffiliated Accounts**

Unaffiliated accounts as defined in the University's social media policy are social media accounts that represent groups of users that may have a common interests and identification with the University, such as students, parents, alumni, and fan groups.

Please note that unaffiliated accounts must publicly establish their non-affiliation and must receive permission from MarComm to use the University brand.

If you discover an unaffiliated account, please notify MarComm by emailing [socialmedia@coastal.edu](mailto:socialmedia@coastal.edu).

### **Prohibited Content**

The University reserves the right to remove or require removal of content deemed prohibited in accordance with its social media policy.

Prohibited content is defined as:

- Non-University related content.
- Content promoting individual opinions, products, causes, or political candidates.
- Content that is a representation of individual opinions as being endorsed by the University or any of its organizations
- Content incompatible with the policies, mission, values, or practices of the University.

If you come across prohibited content, we encourage you to notify MarComm immediately by emailing [socialmedia@coastal.edu](mailto:socialmedia@coastal.edu).

## **Social Media Content Best Practices**

An important part of social media is establishing relationships with your followers, whether they are students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, or fans of the University. One of the best ways to do this is through engagement.

### **Direct Messages**

Direct messaging is a feature within social media platforms that facilitates individualized interactions with users and followers. This functionality serves as a crucial customer service tool allowing us to directly engage with users through our social media accounts

Consider the following best practices for managing and responding to direct messages from a University-recognized or student organization account:

- Check direct messages daily. It is important to respond in a timely manner.
  - If the message is relevant to your area, please always respond to users.
  - If messages are not relevant to your area, a response may not always be necessary, but please pass the user along to the appropriate staff member or area on campus for further assistance.
  - You may receive negative direct messages from time to time. Although a response is not always necessary, we do typically recommend sending a response and/or taking further action. Please share negative direct messages with MarComm by emailing [socialmedia@coastal.edu](mailto:socialmedia@coastal.edu). Below are some examples of when further action is required:

- Campus safety concerns.
  - Potential harm to the University’s brand reputation.
  - Threat of self-harm or to the campus community.
  - Reports of illegal or discriminatory behavior.
- Please set up automated responses on applicable social media platforms so users always receive a response. It is advised that you include an email and/or phone number so users can contact you through other means if it is urgent.

### Comments, Tagged Content, and Mentions

These social media features are essential for facilitating interaction amongst users. Users can actively engage with your brand by leaving comments on your posts, mentioning you in their content, and tagging you in their photos or videos. In addition, you can also interact with users to develop a sense of connection.

Consider the following best practices for interacting with users through comments, tagged content, and mentions:

- It is highly encouraged for you to “like” or “love” positive comments on your accounts.
  - It is also recommended to reply to comments to help further the content engagement and show recognition.
- Make sure you check all notifications on your accounts for mentions and tagged content. You can also check your profile to see images you have been tagged in.
  - If appropriate, it is recommended that you give a “like” or “love” reaction to the content. You are also more than welcome to leave a comment from the account if you feel inclined.
- If a user makes negative or inappropriate comments, mentions, or tagged content, do not immediately engage or delete. Further action may be necessary in particular instances.
  - If the comment is damaging or threatening, please notify your supervisor first, then contact MarComm by emailing [socialmedia@coastal.edu](mailto:socialmedia@coastal.edu).
- When mentioning and tagging others in your content, please make sure:
  - The accounts you are tagging are relevant to the content being shared
  - The accounts you are tagging are active on the corresponding social media platform
  - You are tagging the minimum number accounts necessary

### Hashtags

Hashtags on social media are words or phrases preceded by the "#" symbol, used to categorize content, and make it discoverable to users interested in a specific topic. They are essential for increasing visibility, enhancing reach, and fostering engagement with posts, allowing users to easily find and participate in relevant conversations.

### University Official Hashtags

- #CCU
- #CoastalCarolinaUniversity
- #TealNation
- #CCUSoon
- #TealTuesday
- #CCUAcademics
- #CCUAlumni
- #CCUGrad
- #ChantsUp

Consider the following best practices for incorporating hashtags in your content:

- Do not overuse hashtags.
  - Be strategic about the hashtags that you choose and the posts that you use them in.
- Use as a discovery method.
  - Hashtags help platform algorithms to recognize and categorize the content being shared to assist in optimizing your post. Think about discovery when using hashtags.
- Only tag what matters.
  - When utilizing hashtags, only tag what is most important or most relevant to the content being shared.
- Create and track initiatives.
  - Only create new hashtags if you are planning to launch and track campaigns and/or new initiatives. If you do not plan to utilize the hashtag for all posts related to an initiative or on an ongoing basis, a new hashtag may not be appropriate.
- Remember accessibility parameters.
  - Please capitalize the first letter of each word within a hashtag for accessibility purposes. *See ADA Compliance for more information.*

## Content Strategy

It is vital to create engaging and interactive content that resonates with your target audience. Here are some tips on how to improve your social media presence and ensure you meet your goals.

### Keep Up with the Trends

Social media trends, topics, and even platforms change daily. We encourage you to do your research and stay on top of popular trends and new features. Continue to ask yourself how these concepts may improve our brand and reach our desired audiences.

### Develop a Calendar and Schedule Posts

Developing a social media calendar and scheduling posts is crucial for maintaining a consistent and strategic online presence. By planning ahead and scheduling content, you can ensure that you consistently engage with your audience, maintain brand visibility, and deliver relevant and timely content. This approach allows for better organization of content themes, promotions, and events, maximizing the impact of each post.

### Think About Your Target Audience

Social media has changed rapidly in the past decade that each platform now consists of different users and content styles. When creating and sharing content, it is important to keep your target audience in mind. Ask yourself:

- What is my goal?
- Who is my target audience for this goal?
- Where/how can I best reach my audience?
- Is this content relevant or important to my audience?

### Diversify Your Content Across Platforms

Social media goes beyond Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube have all made an enormous impact. If you have a presence on multiple platforms, think about the content creation and distribution on each of these platforms separately. You want followers on all your accounts, not just one, so post different messaging, graphics, and photos to ensure each of your platforms is unique.

### Utilize Your Resources



The best part about working at a University is that there are multiple resources to help you plan, create, and distribute your social media content. Please reach out. MarComm is here to help tell the CCU story.

### Proofread to Prevent Errors

As a University, it is imperative that we continue to brand and display our institution with the highest standards. When making posts on social media, please ensure that all language, spelling, and grammar is correct before publishing or scheduling.

### Utilize the Stories Feature to Reach Audiences Quickly

A feature that has become widely popular for Instagram and Facebook users is Stories. Stories feature photos or videos posted to your platform that will expire after 24 hours. Stories have now made their way to the top of both the Facebook and Instagram platforms, with the intent to capture user attention first. Therefore, Stories are the best strategy to reach your audience quickly. Stories are an excellent feature to take advantage of if the content you are pushing is something that will expire, such as a one-time event. This is the best route for immediate action from your audience.

### Create Interactive Content

The best content is content to which your audience can relate and respond. Interaction is a way to increase engagement across all platforms. Among the best ways to do this include asking questions and creating polls.

## ADA Compliance on Social Media

To ensure all users have a positive experience on social media, it is important to utilize accessibility and disability tools that are integrated on each social media platform.

By following these best practices, you can help ensure that their social media content is accessible to a diverse audience, in compliance with ADA guidelines.

- Use descriptive alt text for images.
  - Add alternative text (alt text) to images to ensure accessibility for visually impaired users who rely on screen readers.

- Alt text example: Smiling group of friends studying on outside at a picnic table.
- Provide closed captions for videos.
  - Include closed captions in videos to make content accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - Example: Upload videos with embedded closed captions or use a tool like Facebook's automatic caption generator.
- Use CamelCase hashtags.
  - When using multi-word hashtags, capitalize the first letter of each word to improve readability for screen readers.
  - For example: #TealNation or #CoastalCarolinaUniversity.
- Use emojis properly and sparingly.
  - When using emojis in captioning, they will be described by a screen reader, so please be considerate of screen reader users by using emojis sparingly and by placing spaces between them.
  - Example: The 🙌 emoji will be read aloud as "clapping hands," and the emoji 😊 will be read a loud as "smiling face with open mouth and smiling eyes."
- Ensure proper color contrast.
  - Maintain sufficient contrast between text and background colors to enhance readability for users with visual impairments.
  - Example: Use a color contrast checker tool to verify that text meets accessibility standards.
- Create accessible links.
  - Use descriptive link text that accurately conveys the destination of the link, avoiding generic phrases like "click here."
  - Example: Instead of "Click here for more information," use "For more information, visit our accessibility resources page."
- Optimize readability and simplicity.
  - Keep content clear, concise, and easy to understand, benefiting users with cognitive or learning disabilities.
  - Example: Use plain language and avoid jargon or complex terminology, making content more accessible and inclusive.

#### Accessibility Documentation by Platform:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

- [YouTube \(Google Products\)](#)