Social Media Guidelines

The purpose of the VCU School of Education social media guidelines is to ensure proper portrayal, promotion and protection of the school in the social media realm. These guidelines are based on the VCU Social Media Guidelines that apply to all VCU affiliated social media accounts.

Members of the VCU community using social media are subject to the VCU Code of Conduct and/or the VCU Student Code of Conduct. Employees are also subject to the Commonwealth of Virginia state employee policy 1.75: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media, Commonwealth of Virginia state employee policy 1.6: Standards of Conduct, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Account Creation and Approval

Any VCU-affiliated social media account has to be authorized through VCU University Relations. Accounts affiliated with VCU are required to:

- Obtain authorization through VCU University Relations by submitting a VCU social media account approval form. *If you already are managing a social media account that has not been authorized, please submit this form noting that the account is already in existence.*
- If the social media account belongs to a VCU SOE department or office, please add the Director of Communications and Enrollment Management as administrator. Each social media account should have at least two administrators who are full time staff/faculty members of the school.
- If any social media account administrator leaves the University, re-submit the form and remove the person from the account.
- Completely fill out the descriptions on all channels and including links back to website.
- Use an official VCU email account when creating the account. This can be an email for an employee, department, division or program recognized by the university.
- In the About section of your social media account, provide this link to the VCU Social Media Disclaimer, which reads:

This is a page designed to promote Virginia Commonwealth University. VCU encourages users to post comments, photos, videos and links that are respectful and meaningful on the VCU wall and within the comment threads of VCU content. Postings and comments that include sensitive data, confidential information, profanity, personal attacks or other inappropriate material are not appropriate and, in extreme situations, may be removed from this page.

You are fully responsible for the content that you share. Postings or comments made by individuals on this page do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of VCU or any of the university's divisions. This page is not to be used for solicitation of sales and/or the promotion of any goods and/or services. We will take steps to block users who violate these posting standards.

Branding Requirements
All VCU School of Education social media channels should adhere to the [VCU's brand standards](). This ensures that university-related accounts represent VCU appropriately on third-party social platforms and also facilitates your audience's immediate connection of you to the university.

VCU's social media branding requirements are:
- All policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding university trademarks, names and symbols are followed for the social networking sites
- Logo usage must be approved by VCU University Relations; additional requirements are listed on the [VCU's brand standards website]()
- Review and follow the [social media section]() in the VCU brand standards guidelines

Social Media Profile Pictures
The VCU brand mark is restricted to primary university accounts; **do not use** the VCU brand mark as a graphical representation on school, office, department, division, etc., social media pages, unless it appears in a photo.

When possible, use images unique and relevant to your audience within these templates. Photos are preferred over text inside the templates because of sizing

limitations in a small format. A bank of pre-formatted general VCU photos also are available for download on the VCU Identity site for any social media use, such as cover photos, profile pictures, etc. To access the downloads, visit identity.vcu.edu/downloads.

School of Education Social Media Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- When using an officially-recognized social media channel, assume at all times that you are representing VCU and the School of Education.
- Social media channel administrators are responsible for maintaining an accurate, active and up-to-date social media presence. This includes:
    - Facebook: post at least twice a week (either original content, articles, or sharing of other SOE/VCU Facebook posts).
    - Twitter: post at least three times a week (either original content, articles, or re-tweeting of other SOE/VCU tweets); use hashtags such as #vcusoe and #education and include @VCUSOE in your tweets to connect your tweets to the School of Education.
    - Instagram: post at least twice a week.
    - Pinterest: post at least once a week.
    - YouTube: upload all SOE-related videos to the SOE YouTube channel (send to Director of Communications and Enrollment Management).
    - Flickr: upload all SOE photos to the official Flickr account (see Photography Guidelines for more information)
- Community administrators are responsible for using good judgment when posting shared material and content. If it is not clearly obvious that the material was intended for public sharing on social media sites, it is the responsibility of the administrator to gain the expressed consent of all involved parties for the right to distribute or publish recordings, photos, images, video, text slideshow presentations, artwork and advertisements whether those rights are purchased or obtained without compensation. VCU and VCU Education subjects photographed or videotaped for promotional purposes must complete a model release or permission to record. Releases are also required for any photographs or videos taken of

anyone under the age of 18. Links to releases can be found at http://identity.vcu.edu.

- Administrators are responsible for consistently monitoring postings and comments to social media sites for concerning posts. If something concerning is posted, please contact University Relations as soon as possible for further assistance.
- Keep in mind that information posted is public and perpetual. Maintain an objective, professional, and respectful tone.
- Be mindful of which account you are using (e.g., your personal vs. SOE) before posting content.
- Follow other groups that are related to the School of Education or your content topic and share/like in order to build a mutually-beneficial relationship. The more you like/share their content, the more they are

  likely to do the same to yours, which means more viewership for your content.
- Administrators are responsible for using good judgment when posting shared material and content. If it is not clearly obvious that the material was intended for public sharing on social media sites, it is the responsibility of the administrator to gain the expressed consent of all involved parties for the right to distribute or publish recordings, photos, images, video, text slideshow presentations, artwork and advertisements whether those rights are purchased or obtained without compensation.
- Upon discovery of any threats, harassment or personal information trolling, please report it quickly to a page admin and the Director of Communications and Enrollment Management, who will decide appropriate next steps.

Don'ts

- A healthy dialog with constructive criticism can be useful but refrain from engaging in dialogue that could disparage colleagues, competitors, or critics.
- Do not share or retweet unsubstantiated rumors or content from other sources about university personnel, events or internal business. Those announcements will come from the university.

- Do not share any personal or confidential information, your own or a student's.
- It is strongly recommended that you do not personally friend current students on social media channels, as it blurs the line between private and professional.
- Proprietary financial, intellectual property, patient care or similar sensitive or private content may not be revealed.
- Obscene language, threats, hate speech, unauthorized solicitation, and dissemination of private or confidential information is strictly prohibited.

Social Media Best Practices

Twitter

Nomenclature Guidelines
When creating a new Twitter account, use VCU in the @username and your official department, school or organization name, if possible, in the 20-character limit, as your "name" (personal identifier). Don't use VCU alone. Try to avoid using an acronym both for the name and the personal identifier.

For example:
- @VCUSOE (name) — VCU Education (identifier)
- @VCUTMLibrary — VCU Tomkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences
- @StudyAbroadVCU — VCU Education Abroad

Recommendations
- Be concise, know and interact with your audience.
- Outline what your goal is when using Twitter and ensure that the information you share is helping you achieve that goal.
- Tweet about topics of interest to your core audiences (e.g., prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, and alumni).
- Tweet at least three times a week or daily to stay top of mind for followers.
- Live tweet frequently when attending SOE or VCU events, using the hashtag of the event.
- Look for and follow counterparts at other colleges and universities, bloggers, and news media who report on information relevant to your

campus unit.
- Research tweet-worthy topics by looking at the tweets of your counterparts.
- Follow Twitter feeds that post information relevant to your campus unit.
- Use short links (bit.ly) to free up character space. Sites that will shorten your URL include tinyurl.com, bitly.com and hootsuite.com.
- Use appropriate hashtags (#). For example, #soe and #soe50 will bring up other posts about the School of Education that use the same tag. Note that there is no space between the hashtag and the term.
- Include @VCUSOE and @VCU when appropriate in your tweets to connect your tweets to the School of Education and VCU.
- Ask permission before snapping and posting a photo of an individual or small group. You don't have to ask large groups for permission.
- Check tweets containing links before retweeting

Facebook

Facebook Nomenclature Guidelines
When creating a new Facebook account, use VCU with the official name of your college, school, department or organization. Make sure to use the "company, organization or institution" category when creating your Facebook page. The right category will help with your search engine optimization (SEO). Use your profile name to create a custom URL for your Facebook page to use in communications and on marketing materials.

Recommendations

- Post information and updates about your department and topics of interest to your followers.
- Monitor what's posted on your page on a daily basis.
- Build your audience by looking for counterparts on campus and at other colleges and universities. Also, look for bloggers and news media relevant to the interests of your audience.
- Research topics by looking at what your peers are posting.
- Check out your fans' profiles and visit their websites.

- Post at least twice a week or ideally daily to help build a following and keep it engaged.

- Review photos for appropriateness and perception.
- Use hashtags when applicable.

YouTube Recommendations

- Upload all SOE-related videos to the SOE YouTube channel (send to Director of Communications).
- Be aware of running time. Generally, shorter videos are more effective and should not exceed 10 minutes (ideally, a video should be 3-4 min long).
- Title and tag your videos. Be sure to title your video, include a 2–4 sentence summary of what the footage is about, and a list of keywords to label or tag your video so it will be easy to find. Always include *VCU School of Education* as one of your tags.
- Promote new videos by posting a link to your Twitter feed and Facebook page.

Instagram Recommendations

- Review photos for appropriateness and perception.
- Tweet your photo to reach an even wider audience. Use @ to reach a specific person or group. For example, using @vcu will direct the photo to the person or group using that handle.
- Use appropriate hashtags (#). For example, #soe50 will bring up other posts using the same tag. Note that there is no space between the hashtag and the term.
- Use geotagging

All social media channels need to abide by accessibility rules as follows:
- Twitter: Image Descriptions
- Facebook: Useful information from infographics, flyers must be included in the caption
- Youtube: Caption all videos with spoken word - auto-captions are not acceptable but can be used as a jumping off point.
- Instagram: Image descriptions