SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

BIKSHU UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

Policy Title	Social Media Policy
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Approval Authority	The Council of the Bhiksu University Sri Lanka.
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Date of Effect	
Enforcement Authority	The Vice-Chancellor of the Bhiksu University Sri Lanka.
Operational Responsibility	The Chairman of the University Website Management Committee of the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka.
Description in Brief	This policy aims to guide the community of Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka (BUSL) in the effective and responsible use of social media, aligning with the objectives, values, and educational goals of the University.

Contents

THE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY OF THE BHIKSU UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose: This policy aims to guide the community of Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka (BUSL) in the effective and responsible use of social media, aligning with the objectives, values, and educational goals of the University.

1.2. Scope: Applicable to all University-affiliated social media activities.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

2.1. Information Dissemination: To equip both the staff and the students with comprehensive guidelines detailing the University's expectations and requirements concerning social media usage.

2.2. Uniformity in Application: To guarantee a uniform and standardised approach towards the utilisation of social media within the institutional framework.

2.3. Reputational Risk Management: To proactively minimise any potential adverse impacts on the reputation of both individual social media users and the University, stemming from social media engagement.

2.4. Risk Mitigation: To implement strategies to mitigate the inherent risks associated with social media usage, thereby safeguarding both the users and the institutional entity.

2.5. Security Assurance: To ensure that the use of social media by the staff and the students does not jeopardise their security or compromise the integrity of the informational assets of the University.

2.6. Accountability in Usage: To delineate the responsibilities incumbent upon users managing or operating University-affiliated social media accounts.

2.7. Professional and Personal Conduct: To clarify the expectations placed upon staff and students when engaging with social media, be it in a professional or personal capacity.

2.8. Enhancement of Online Presence: To support and encourage the staff and the students in augmenting their individual and collective presence of the University on various social media platforms.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

3.1. Platform Inclusion: The policy is applicable to all social media platforms that are under the auspices of the University, encompassing those hosted or officially sanctioned by the institution.

3.2. Community Coverage: It is pertinent to every member of the University community, inclusive of all staff and students, irrespective of their role or level within the academic hierarchy.

3.3. Representational Communications: The policy governs all forms of communication on social media platforms that are made in the capacity of representing or being associated with the University.

3.4. Comprehensive Usage Context: The policy extends to all manners of social media usage that have the potential to influence or impact the University. This includes, but is not limited to:

3.4.1. Professional and Personal Interactions: Both work-related and personal engagements on social media platforms.

3.4.2. Temporal Considerations: The policy is relevant regardless of whether social media interactions occur during official working hours or outside of them.

3.4.3. Technological Access Points: It applies irrespective of the medium through which social media is accessed, encompassing IT infrastructure of the University as well as personal or third-party devices utilised by the staff and the students.

4. CONTENT MANAGEMENT ON UNIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

4.1. Guidelines for Content Posting

The content disseminated through the social media channels of the University is a direct representation of the institution. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that all communications are meticulously crafted, align with the ethos of the University, and do not in any way tarnish the reputation of the University or bring it into disrepute. Implementing measures to mitigate communication errors on social media is essential.

4.1.1. Alignment with University Values: All posts must resonate with the core values and ethical standards upheld by the University, adhering to all relevant University policies.

4.1.2. Prohibited Content: Individuals responsible for managing University social media pages must refrain from:

a) engaging in or promoting harassment, bullying, or intimidation in any form.

b) inciting, endorsing, or contributing to violence or hatred.

c) posting or endorsing abusive content targeting an individual's age, disability, gender, race, religion, or belief.

4.1.3. Respect and Courtesy: Content must be respectful and courteous towards others. Official University platforms should not be used for criticism or disputes with staff, students, or external parties.

4.1.4. Public Information and Legal Considerations: Only information that is public should be shared on official University social media pages. Legal considerations, including but not limited to confidentiality, defamation, and copyright compliance, must be observed. Specifically, social media communications must not:

a) facilitate business transactions.

b) disclose confidential or proprietary information.

c) discuss internal University matters or unreleased future plans.

d) infringe upon intellectual property rights.

e) violate the University's standards of professionalism and confidentiality.

f) utilise copyrighted images or written content without proper authorisation or acknowledgement.

4.1.5. Logo and Branding Guidelines: The University logo should be prominently and appropriately displayed in accordance with the established guidelines for logo and name usage.

4.1.6. Accuracy and Accountability: It is crucial that content is accurate and does not make commitments on behalf of the University that are not intended to be fulfilled. In the event of an error, transparency is key; corrections should be promptly made and communicated.

4.2. Management of Social Media Platforms at Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka
4.2.1. Administrative Rights and Responsibilities

4.2.1.1. Assignment of Administrative Rights: Primary administrative rights for official University social media pages are exclusively granted to University employees. Each official page must have at least two administrators to guarantee continuous and consistent management. In cases where one administrator is unavailable, the

second administrator assumes full responsibility. At least, one administrator must be a permanent staff member of the University.

4.2.1.2. Page Naming and Branding: The naming of the page should reflect its affiliation with the University (e.g., "Department of Languages, Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka"). The username should incorporate an abbreviation or identifier unique to the University.

4.2.1.3. Central Administration: Under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor, The Chairman of the University Website Management Committee holds the primary administrative role for the main University social media page. This central oversight ensures uniformity and compliance across all platforms.

4.2.1.4. Approval and Oversight: The creation or publication of any social media page requires prior approval from the Chairman of the University Website Management Committee. This involves submitting details such as the page's name, purpose, and administrator information. The Head of the respective administrative unit (e.g. Dean, Department Head) or a designated staff member assumes the role of page administrator, bearing responsibility for the page's content.

4.2.1.5. Student Associations: For student association pages, the Senior Treasurer (Senior Lecturer or above position) or a nominated staff member serves as the administrator, with the Senior Treasurer accountable for the content.

4.2.1.6. Student Access: Students may be granted access to official pages in an editorial capacity under supervision.

4.2.1.7. Content Guidelines: Posting of news items on University social media must align with the guidelines established for University website publications.

4.2.2. Security and Compliance

4.2.2.1. Content Moderation: Administrators, in consultation with relevant University authorities, reserve the right to hide, delete, or block content or users that violate the policy.

4.2.2.2. Account Security: Personal accounts used for managing social media pages must have robust, unique passwords, distinct from those used for University IT services. Two-factor authentication is strongly recommended for enhanced security.

4.2.2.3. Temporary Access Protocols: In events like social media takeovers, secure, temporary passwords should be employed and altered post-event to maintain security.

4.2.2.4. Use of University Logo: Unauthorised use of the official logo of the University by individuals or groups on social media is prohibited without explicit permission from the Vice Chancellor of the University.

4.2.2.5. Device Security: For desktop access to social media accounts, auto-population of login credentials should be disabled. Mobile device access must be secured with appropriate screen locks and, ideally, two-factor authentication.

4.2.2.6. Professional Conduct: Administrators must refrain from engaging in personal activities under the guise of official University social media platforms.

4.2.2.7. Linking to Source Material: To mitigate the spread of misinformation and enhance informational credibility, administrators are encouraged to link directly to source materials.

4.3. Addressing Concerns and Incidents on Social Media at Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka

4.3.1. Protocol for Handling Social Media Incidents

4.3.1.1. Incident Reporting: In instances where a University-affiliated social media account is compromised (e.g.   hacked) or a post on an official University page elicits significant negative feedback, creating uncertainty about the appropriate response, the involved staff members are required to promptly notify the Head of their respective administrative unit. Additionally, they should seek guidance from the Chairman of the University Website Management Committee, as deemed necessary.

4.3.1.2. Guidance and Support: The primary objective in such scenarios is to seek expert advice and support to address the issue effectively, ensuring that the response aligns with the values and policies of the University.

4.3.2. Monitoring and Welfare Concerns

4.3.2.1. Monitoring Policy: Staff members at the University are not expected to actively monitor the personal social media activities of other staff or students. The University respects the privacy and autonomy of its community members in their personal social media engagements.

4.3.2.2. Reporting Concerns: However, if a staff member becomes aware of social media activities on a staff or student account that raise concerns regarding welfare or potential misconduct, it is their responsibility to report these concerns. Such reports should be directed to the Head of the relevant administrative unit and/or the Chairman of the University Website Management Committee.

4.3.2.3. Welfare and Conduct: The focus of this reporting is not to polish personal social media use but to ensure the well-being of the University community and uphold the standards of conduct expected within the University environment.

4.3.3. Ensuring a Supportive Environment

4.3.3.1. Supportive Approach: In addressing these concerns, the approach should be supportive and constructive, aiming to resolve issues in a manner that is in the best interest of all involved parties and upholds the commitment of the University to fostering a respectful and safe community.

4.3.3.2. Confidentiality and Sensitivity: All reports and concerns should be handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity, recognising the potential impact on individuals' privacy and well-being.

4.4. Utilisation of Social Media During Emergencies at the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka

4.4.1. Centralized Communication in Emergencies

4.4.1.1. Primary Information Source: During emergencies, social media serves as a crucial channel for disseminating information to staff, students, and the broader University community. It is imperative that all emergency-related communications issued by the University are centralised through the official social media platforms of the University.

4.4.1.2. Consistency and Accuracy: The information provided through these channels must be timely, consistent, and accurate. The primary objective is to ensure that all stakeholders receive reliable and up-to-date information during critical situations.

4.4.2. Protocol for Social Media Use in Emergencies

4.4.2.1. Restriction on Other Accounts: To prevent the dissemination of conflicting or incorrect information, it is essential that during emergencies, no other social media accounts associated with the University (e.g. Department, Faculty, or student organisations) publish any updates or information related to the incident.

4.4.2.2. Unified Messaging: All emergency communications should be unified and, originate exclusively from the main social media accounts of the University. This approach is critical to maintain clarity and prevent misinformation.

4.4.2.3. Guidance for Non-Official Accounts: Departments and Units within the University should refrain from issuing independent statements or updates during emergencies, instead directing followers to the official University social media channels for information.

4.4.3. Ensuring Effective Communication

4.4.3.1. Preparedness and Training: Staff responsible for managing the social media accounts of the University should be adequately trained in emergency communication protocols to ensure swift and effective dissemination of information.

4.4.3.2. Review and Update Procedures: Regular reviews of emergency communication strategies, including social media protocols, should be conducted to ensure preparedness for various types of emergencies.

4.5. Guidelines for Personal and Professional Social Media Use by Staff of the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka

4.5.1. Distinction Between Personal and Professional Use

4.5.1.1. Separate Accounts for Different Purposes: Staff members are encouraged to maintain distinct social media accounts for their professional and personal activities. This separation acknowledges the different audiences and objectives associated with each type of use.

4.5.1.2. Professional Use of Social Media: When utilizing social media for professional purposes or when representing the University in any capacity on these platforms, staff members must adhere to the policies of the University governing employee conduct and the acceptable use of electronic and information resources.

4.5.2. Branding and Representation

4.5.2.1. Use of University Branding: Personal and professional accounts of individual staff members should not use the branding of the University. This distinction helps to avoid any confusion regarding the capacity in which the staff member is operating.

4.5.2.2. Expression of Personal Views: If staff members discuss their work or University-related matters on their personal social media accounts, it should be explicitly stated in their profile or in the content that the views expressed are personal and do not necessarily reflect the official stance of the University.

4.6. Content Consideration and University Response

4.6.1. Content Responsibility: All employees should exercise discretion and thoughtfulness in what they post on their individual social media accounts, considering the potential impact and perception of their content.

4.6.2. University's Stance on Monitoring: The University does not actively monitor the personal social media accounts of its staff. However, the University maintains the

right to address concerns raised regarding content that may be deemed as misconduct.

4.6.3. Procedure for Addressing Concerns: In cases where a staff member's social media activity is reported and considered misconduct, the University may request the removal of the contentious content. Such matters may be escalated to the Head of the respective administrative unit and/or the Chairman of the University Website Management Committee and may be subject to the disciplinary processes of the University.

5. PRIVACY AND MONITORING POLICY FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

5.1. Respect for Privacy

5.1.1. Adherence to Privacy Laws: The University operates its electronic communication systems, including social media, with a high regard for individual privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with applicable laws and University policies.

5.2. Conditions for Monitoring

5.2.1. Law Enforcement Requests: In situations where law enforcement authorities officially request information, or as part of an internal investigation conducted by the University, The University reserves the right to monitor and log the activities of users on its systems. This includes, but is not limited to, files, data, programs, and electronic communication records.

5.2.2. University Council Approval: Any decision to initiate such monitoring activities requires the prior approval of the University Council.

5.2.3. User Notification: Where feasible, users will be informed in writing before such monitoring actions are taken. This notification aims to maintain transparency in the actions of the University.

5.2.4. Exceptions to Prior Notification: In cases where the Senior Assistant Registrar/Legal & Documentation deems that prior notification might be detrimental to the investigations, the University may proceed with accessing and monitoring user records and activities without prior notification. Such actions require the written approval of the Vice-Chancellor of the University.

5.3. Right to Information

5.3.1. Access under the Right to Information Act: It is important to note that information stored, created, sent, or received via the IT systems of the University

may be accessible under the Right to Information Act, No. 12 of 2016. This act provides a legal framework for the public's right to access information held by public authorities, which can include universities.

6. ENFORCEMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

6.1. Reporting Mechanism

6.1.1. Channel for Reporting Issues: Members of the University community, including staff, students, and other stakeholders, are encouraged to report any problems or violations related to the social media policy of the University. Such reports should be directed to the Chairman of the University Website Management Committee

6.1.2. Contact Method: Reports can be made via email, with the University providing a specific email address for this purpose (web@busl.ac.lk).

6.2. Consequences of Violations

6.2.1. Disciplinary Measures: Violations of the social media policy of the University may lead to disciplinary actions. These measures will be taken in accordance with the laws of Sri Lanka and the internal regulations and policies of the University.

6.2.2. Legal and Regulatory Compliance: The enforcement of this policy will be aligned with the legal framework of the country, ensuring that any actions taken are legally sound and justifiable.

6.2.3. University Regulations: In addition to legal compliance, the University regulations and policies will guide the response to any violations, ensuring that actions are consistent with the values and standards of the University.

6.3. Ensuring Fair and Transparent Enforcement

6.3.1. Transparent Process: The University is committed to ensuring that the enforcement process is transparent and fair, providing clarity and understanding to all parties involved.

6.3.2. Respect for Rights: In enforcing this policy, the University will respect the rights of individuals while also upholding the integrity and security of its social media platforms.

7. DISCLAIMER POLICY FOR NON-UNIVERSITY MANAGED SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

7.1. Scope of Responsibility

7.1.1. Limitation of Liability: The University explicitly states that it is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, the information and material that resides on social media pages not managed or controlled by the University.

7.1.2. Non-Reflective of University Stance: Content found on these external social media pages should not be interpreted as reflecting the attitudes, opinions, or values of the University, its staff, or its student body.

7.2. Clarification of the University's Stance

7.2.1. Distinction of Content: The University makes a clear distinction between content on its official social media pages, which represent its views and values, and content on external pages, which are independent of the University's oversight.

7.2.2. Independence of External Pages: Social media pages that are not managed by the University operate independently, and their content is subject to the discretion of their respective administrators or creators.

7.3. Communication of Disclaimer

7.3.1. Awareness among Stakeholders: The University aims to ensure that its staff, students, and the wider community are aware of this disclaimer, emphasizing the importance of discerning the source of social media content.

7.3.2. Promotion of Critical Engagement: The University encourages its community to critically engage with social media content and to recognise the distinction between official University communications and external social media content.

8. TERMINOLOGICAL CLARIFICATIONS (DEFINITIONS)

8.1. The University: This term as referred to within the context of this Social Media Policy and all associated digital assets, denotes the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka. This designation is based on the legislative provisions outlined in the Buddhasravaka Bhiksu University Act, No. 26 of 1996, and further amended by the Buddhasravaka Bhiksu University (Amendment) Act, No. 15 of 2012, whereby the original name "Buddhasravaka Bhiksu University" has been officially replaced with "Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka."

8.2. Social Media: This term refers to a diverse array of online platforms, channels, and websites that are specifically designed to foster community-oriented interaction, collaboration, and content sharing. Social media platforms facilitate virtual social interaction, networking, and information exchange among users. Notable examples of

such platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

8.3. University Social Media Account: This refers to any social media account that is officially recognised by the University through the use of the logo and/or name of the University. Such accounts are representative of the ethos of the University and are typically managed by various University entities, including but not limited to, the University administration, specific faculties, departments, or officially sanctioned student associations.

8.4. Copyright: This is a legal concept, enshrined within the domain of Intellectual Property Law, which provides protection to original works of authorship. The spectrum of works protected under Copyright Law encompasses a variety of forms, including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works. Copyright Law is instrumental in safeguarding the creative expressions of individuals, thereby ensuring that original works are not used without proper authorisation or attribution.

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