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INTRODUCTION

This guide for managing social media accounts has been developed as part of a larger project undertaken by the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) Marketing and Communications Department in consultation with Doyle, Dane, Bernbach (DDB), Canadian Equality Consulting, and Queen's community members to develop a social media strategy and playbook that include industry standard best practices that have been adopted specifically for FAS channels.

We have developed this guide for units and departments within the FAS who are currently managing social media accounts and/or who are assisting faculty with managing their own channels while promoting the work being done in their departments, units, and/or university. The guide also provides information on topics to consider when developing your social media strategy. We hope you find it helpful and if you have any questions, or require assistance, please reach out to FAS Marketing and Communications. We are happy to assist in any way.

The FAS Social Media Playbook acts as a guide for social media moderation and interaction and how to handle specific issues that may arise based on a social media audit of our channels and of Post Secondary Education institutions (PSE) social media as well. Through this project FAS has built out a comprehensive document that provides a roadmap for moderating conversations as well as over 70 potential scenarios that may arise and how best to respond to them. These scenarios are not included here in this best practice document; however, FAS stands ready to assist you with social media issues and responses and will employ the Playbook scenario as appropriate for the situation.

BEST PRACTICES

What follows in the Guide below are best practices for developing a strategy for social media management that is tailored to specific audiences, for content creation and posting, platform-specific best practices, and moderation and issues management that includes considerations related to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization.

It is also recommended when creating a new social media account, please consult the Brand Central Social Media webpage for information on account naming conventions and profile pictures before setting up your account.
STRATEGY

Social media is one of the primary touchpoints between the university, its community, and other audiences. It is important to evaluate and analyze the use of a particular platform. Having a concrete and stated understanding of why the particular platform is being utilized and whether the approach is engaging the intended audience will help to identify if the platform being used is the right one to reach your objectives.

To help develop this strategy, consider the following questions:

• Why are you using an existing platform? Are you using it just because you have been using it for a certain amount of time already? Do you have other avenues of distribution that are equally or more effective (e.g., a newsletter)?
• What are the goals of having the account(s)? Are you trying to attract students? Provide information? Highlight accomplishments? How are you measuring your success in these goals?
• How much time are you investing in a particular platform? Is it too much or too little?
• What do you know about your audience on the platform? Is the audience that you are trying to reach on the platform actually your audience on that platform?
• How much reach/engagement are you receiving on your posts? Is it improving? Is it decreasing?
• What types of content do you often post? Is your usual type of content best suited for this platform?

AUDIENCES

Social media content can only be effective if it is tailored to your audience. Even if you have excellent creative and compelling copy, if it doesn’t speak to your audience(s), they won’t engage with it. Distinguishing between the audience that you want to speak to and who is hearing your message on a given platform is important. It is also important to ensure your posts are appropriate for the different platforms.

Start by attempting to define who your audience is or should be. Review the content that you have been putting out on your social media account. Who is the main intended audience for the content that you have been putting out? Is it current students? Staff? Faculty? Prospective students? Or is it community members? From amongst those audiences, is there one that is quantifiably the main audience?

PLATFORMS

Assess if the platform used matches the main intended audience. A formal audit of your platform audience is difficult, but there are some general assumptions that you can make about individual platforms and the audience that typically uses them to see if your intended and realized audience are the same.

FACEBOOK
Alumni, Undergraduate and Graduate Students, Staff and Faculty

INSTAGRAM
Undergraduate Students, Graduate Students

TWITTER
Alumni, Staff and Faculty, Graduate Students

LINKEDIN
Alumni, Graduate Students, Staff and Faculty

Keep in mind that these are not set in stone and are based on a general understanding of trends within post-secondary education. Social media is ever evolving and platforms and their audiences are shifting. For example, with platforms such as Snapchat and TikTok and their popularity amongst the next generation, your audience on Facebook likely includes fewer and fewer current undergraduate students and more alumni.
CONTENT

Social media content refers to copy (text), and creative (visuals, such as images and video). Your content must also be accessible and meet Queen's Visual Identity Standards. The Queen's University Brand Team provides templates and a Visual Identity Guide for your use.

TEMPLATES

Queen's University Brand Central has made creating social media content easy. Using Canva, a free design tool, they have created customizable social media creative templates for Instagram and Facebook (Facebook sizing also works for Twitter and LinkedIn) posts and Instagram Stories. All of these templates are formatted to the correct size for the platform in question and include the correct colours and typography. You can then edit these templates as needed to include your required messaging. To access these templates, please visit the Social Media Resources section of their website.

VISUAL IDENTITY GUIDE

When creating any type of communications on behalf of Queen's University it is essential to consult and adhere to the new Queen's Visual Identity Guide. The Visual Identity Guide created by Brand Central provides a thorough overview of everything that you need to build your communications. In it you will find information on:

- Queen's Logo
- Faculty and Department Logo Lockups
- Colours
- Typography
- Photography
- Videography
- Social Media and Digital Advertising
- Presentations
- Virtual Backgrounds
- Stationary
- Signage
- Letterhead

Please consult the Visual Identity Guide whenever you are building communications materials.

COPY

The copy of your social media posts is critical in delivering the information that your audience needs. While your creative and imagery should capture the user's attention, the copy provides the details. The copy should be authentic, engaging, inclusive, and compelling.

When drafting copy for social media posts here are a few things to consider:

DO’S

- Keep it short and sweet - users typically have short attention spans, make sure you get the relevant information across.
- Keep it professional - your account is an extension of Queen's University and should reflect that.
- Tag partners - whenever you can, tag campus partners for increased reach and engagement.
- Use calls to action - these will give your users an action to complete and improve your engagement and reach.

DON’TS

- Use jargon or slang - not everyone reading your posts will know your shorthand.
- Use acronyms - while sometimes unavoidable, ask yourself if your audience will know what it means first.
- Use the same copy everywhere - ensure that the tone of your copy matches the audience on your platform.
- Be inconsistent - bouncing between extremes in length and tone can turn your audience off if they don’t know what to expect.

Depending on the platform that you are using, your copy may also be constrained by character limits (Twitter), or the ability to add links to your captions (Instagram), so keep these in mind.

As an exercise, attempt to distill the message that you want to convey down to its most integral point and lead with that idea. What information do users have to take away from your post? How efficiently can you pass that information along? By simplifying your copy, you can improve the effectiveness of your social media posts and improve your engagement by driving users to collect the rest of the information that they might need (via a webpage, sign-up form etc.).
CREATIVE

The imagery or creative that you use on social media is the focal point of your content. It is the first thing that catches a user’s eye and needs to be enticing enough for them to stop and collect the rest of your message in the post copy or engage with your call to action. As a result, it is recommended to use a high proportion of photographic content for social posts. Images that you use should showcase positive experiences featuring candid images of students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Smiling faces and campus photos typically lend well to engagement. For more information on the types of photography or videography recommended by Brand Central for social media, visit page 41 of the Visual Identity Guide.

The following do's and don'ts are excerpted from the Queen's Visual Identity Guide and FAS social media accounts and are useful considerations when developing social media creative:

- **DO NOT** include a logo or lockup in social post creative.
- **DO** consider each platforms grid or feed to ensure variety in colour and design. (This example grid from the Faculty of Arts and Science Instagram account leans heavily on red and blue)
- **DO NOT** include detailed information in social post creative.
- **DO** retain only the most high-level information in the creative and include the details in the post copy.
- **DO NOT** include QR codes or links in images being used on social media. Many people view social media on their cellphones and you can't use them to scan a code and view your feed at the same time.
ACCESSIBILITY

When creating social media posts, accessibility must always be at the forefront of the content design. Always take into consideration the entirety of the post. This includes your copy, creative and the channel you are posting on. You want to ensure that the content you are creating provides a smooth and inclusive experience for your users.

Make sure to:

- Use ALT text options for imagery on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- If you have video creative, use auto-captions and edit them when needed or provide your own closed captions.
- Ensure copy uses plain language, limits full caps and avoid acronyms where possible.
- Use emojis in moderation. If you are using them, place them at the end of your copy.
- Ensure text on your images has the proper colour contrast. Reference page 33 of the Queen’s Visual Identity Guide.
- Prioritize inclusivity in your imagery. Ensure that your audience is represented in your creative.

The Queen’s Accessibility Hub provides additional resources and detailed information on how to make your social media content more accessible by platform.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CALENDARS

Keeping up with social media content, what you need to be posting and when, can be a challenging and time-consuming task. To assist, consider creating a content calendar for the year to help plan and track your content. Build out your calendar with content that you know in advance you will want to create for particular occurrences throughout the year. For example, these may include academic sessional dates, events, and holidays. Review your calendar periodically throughout the year to keep an eye on what content may be upcoming so you don't miss anything. Also, add content to it that you create as the year goes along that you were not planning on. This will allow you in future years to review your content for specific events and maintain a record of what you did and build upon it going forward.

Regardless of which, or how many platforms you are using, it is important to ensure that you are posting consistently and a calendar can assist with that. Just remember that this doesn't mean that you should be posting just for the sake of posting. All the content that you are posting should be providing value to your audience.

If you have questions or would like to see the FAS Content Calendar and discuss what your content calendar could look like, please reach out to Alex Rose, FAS Digital Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

PLATFORM SPECIFIC BEST PRACTICES

Each social media channel is unique and has its own primary audiences and needs. While platforms like Facebook are ideal for advertisements due to their large user base, millennials prefer using Instagram and Gen Z are all about fast content found on platforms like Snapchat and TikTok. LinkedIn tends to lend itself more towards graduate students and working professionals.

Regardless of your platform, your audience will be looking for strong content tailored to that platform. This section will review some additional platform specific best practices for the social media platforms typically used by Queen’s Arts and Science: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

FACEBOOK

- Utilize the ‘Featured’ section on your Facebook page which allows you to ‘pin’ different types of content to the top of your page. This includes posts, stories, events, videos and more. This can help you increase the reach of your content over time and ensure that important content stays top of mind. You can pin up to 6 pieces of content in the Featured section.
- Whenever possible, try and use video creative. Facebook favours video content and will push it more organically. Video content also tends to be more engaging with users.
- If you are using hashtags in your post copy, limit it to 2-3 hashtags.
- Post copy can be edited after a post has been sent out. Images cannot be changed.
- In-feed post images (those that appear on your timeline) should be a size of 1200x630 pixels.
- The maximum file size for images is 10MB.
- The Faculty of Arts and Science aims to post on Facebook 4 times per week. This allows for a consistent flow of content, without oversaturation. This goal is always flexible depending on a number of factors, but it provides a framework for managing content. Depending on the size of your unit or department, its following and content availability, this will likely vary.

TYPES OF POSTS

- TEXT - no images, videos, or links, just text.
- PHOTO/VIDEO - a good option for capturing attention, can include text.
- STORIES - short image or video post that disappears in 24 hours.
- REELS - short video posts up to 90 seconds.
- LIVE VIDEO - live real-time video, great for Q&A’s, panels, and tours.
- LINK - sharing a URL, provides a preview of the link to users.
INSTAGRAM

• Instagram allows for 3 posts to be pinned to the top of your profile. These can be used to promote evergreen content and increase organic reach.
• If you are using hashtags in your post copy, limit it to 3-5 hashtags.
• Post copy can be edited after a post has been sent out. Images cannot be changed.
• Instagram does not allow for clickable links in your post copy unless you have more than 10,000 followers. Consider using a Link in Bio tool that allows you to list multiple links via your profile page. The Faculty of Arts and Science currently uses the free tool Linktree.
• In-feed post images should be a size of 1080 x 1080 pixels.
• Instagram Stories images are recommended to be 1080 x 1920 pixels.
• The maximum file size for images is 8MB.
• Instagram Carousels allow for you to post up to 10 images in a single post. However, it is recommended to not include more than 5 in your post.
• For Instagram Stories, images appear for 5 seconds and videos can be up to 20 seconds.
• You can reshare another users Instagram post to your Instagram stories, but in order to reshare another accounts Instagram Story, you must be tagged in their story.
• The Faculty of Arts and Science aims to post on Instagram 3 times per week. This allows for a consistent flow of content, without oversaturation. As with other platforms, this goal is flexible. Depending on the size of your unit or department, its following and content availability, this will likely vary.

TWITTER

• Similar to Facebook, Twitter allows you to ‘pin’ a tweet to the top of your profile. You can only ‘pin’ 1 tweet, but it can assist in keeping important content at the top of your feed.
• If you are using hashtags in your post copy, limit it to 1-2 hashtags.
• Twitter has a maximum character limit of 280, which includes text from your link (if you have one) and other accounts that you tag.
• You can tag other accounts in your images (if they allow for their account to be tagged), which can assist in cutting down on characters in your copy.
• Recommended sizes for images by type of tweet:
  - Single Image: 1200 x 630 pixels
  - Two Images: 700 x 800 pixels (both images)
  - Three Images: First Image 700 x 800 pixels, Second and Third Images 1200 x 630 pixels
  - Four Images: 1200 x 600 (per image)
• Four is the maximum number of images for one tweet
• The maximum file size for images is 5MB.
• Tweets cannot be edited once they have been sent (unless you are subscribed to Twitter Blue).
• The Faculty of Arts and Science aims to post on Twitter 10 times per week. This allows for a consistent flow of content, without oversaturation. As with Facebook, this goal is flexible. Depending on the size of your unit or department, its following and content availability, this will likely vary.

For additional information on platform specific best practices for image sizing, visit this Sprout Social webpage.
PROMOTION OR AMPLIFICATION BY FAS

The Faculty of Arts and Science may provide some assistance in amplifying or promoting your messaging via social media upon request, as long as it can be accommodated into the FAS Social Media Content Calendar and adheres to FAS strategy and best practices. Please note, we request one week’s notice for amplifying your social media messages. If you have content that you would like amplified or promoted on the Faculty of Arts and Science social media channels, please reach out to Alex Rose, FAS Digital Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

If your promotion is specifically related to an event (which we do not generally promote on our social media channels as there are far too many events across the faculty to be able to promote all of them), we recommend that you add your event to the Queen’s Event Calendar and tag it Arts and Science. Your event then will automatically be shown on the FAS Event Calendar. Please note that there may be a few minutes of lag time between the publication of the event on the Queen’s calendar to the time that it shows on the FAS calendar.

EXAMPLE OF PROMOTION OR AMPLIFICATION:

ISSUES MODERATION AND MANAGEMENT

COMMENT MODERATION

There are a few general best practices to keep in mind when moderating and interacting with comments on your social media accounts:

- **Acknowledge or respond to most comments** – share approved key messages to clarify a question or concern or set facts straight. A simple emoji can be an easy acknowledgement.
- **View from an bias awareness lens** – this helps you be aware of the stereotypes and assumptions you make and make simple steps to shift your thinking. Learn more about the bias awareness lens on page 18 of this guide.
- **Respond** to comments within 24 business hours.
- **Personalize when possible** – this shows that people are behind the handles, adds an approachable tone, and stops comments from seeming robotic.
- **Address tough conversations** – this allows you to understand someone’s perspective and provide clarity where needed.
- **Hide inappropriate comments** from trolls – if the troll is persistent, block the user.
- **Block users** who are threatening, abusive or have the potential to cause harm.
- **Document** all comments and post links for all comments that are being escalated in a private document for reference later.
- **Use Direct Messaging** to move conversations to a private, safe, space. Eventually, switch to email to contain private information and for official Queen's University correspondence.
- **Listen to your audience** – if your audience is mentioning the same topics, access the conversation and add value such as a response, social post or other forms of content.

Before engaging in moderation or management of comments posted online, it is also a best practice to consider the reasons why a user may have made the post or comment in the first place.

Consider these questions:

- Is there a legitimate question or concern that can be addressed?
- Is the comment positive?
- Is the complainant a “troll” that will not be satisfied regardless of the response?
- Is the complainant a repeat commenter?
- Does the complainant have a large online following?
- Has the complainant used hashtags or tagged additional users which may extend the reach of the complaint?
- Does the complainant have the potential to cause harm to any group of people?

Determining the reasons for posting can inform our decision-making and guide our response (or non-response) to properly address the issue in question.
SCENARIOS

The FAS Social Media Playbook contains more than 70 potential scenarios that could occur either online via social media or through various other digital channels such as email. These scenarios are based on issues that have happened in the past, a review of other post-secondary education institutions social media channels, as well as those that have been created in anticipation of issues that may arise in the future.

The scenarios in the Playbook are broken up into the following 11 categories:

- Academic programs
- Academic life and culture
- Achievements
- COVID-19 and future pandemics
- Current events
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI)
- Events and updates
- Queen’s Central
- SOLUS
- Support and services
- University innovation

This best practices document does not include all of the pre-planned scenarios from the Playbook, but there are a few examples included below. If you or your department needs assistance with social media issue management we strongly recommend that you reach out to Alex Rose, FAS Digital Marketing & Communications Coordinator, as we may have a scenario already built out for the issue you are facing. In the event that we have not already created a scenario for your particular situation, we can assist in advising on potential next steps and ensure that the scenario is added to the Playbook for future reference.

Below you will find three examples of scenarios from the Playbook for reference. Each of the scenarios includes the issue category, an overview of the issue, the recommended next steps, who should be consulted and notified about the issue, the probable issue level and links to contacts as well as a list of resources to which you can follow and direct users to.

EXAMPLE 1:

**General Inquiry - FAQs**

**Issue Category:** Any

**Issue Overview:**
- Asking a question or requesting general information about:
  - Online learning (ASO)
  - Admission
  - Fees and finance
  - Academics
  - Exams
  - Technology
  - When difficulties arise
  - Resources

**Recommended Next Steps:**
- Insert (insert student name). Thank you for contacting us. Insert answer to simple question or provide links to additional resources that will assist with the information the student is seeking.
- If the question cannot be answered easily, respond using the following: We can direct you to [insert info on well or student supports or you can reach out to [insert email address of department unit or individual in faculty office if appropriate].

**Probable Issue Level:**
- *Recommended issue level: 0*

**Quick Links:**
- Crisis Matrix
- Contact list
- Resources

**To Be Consulted:**
- Refer to contact list

**To Be Notified:**
- Refer to contact list for specific individual – if unsure check with Marcom team

EXAMPLE 2:

**Interest in Meeting Peers**

**Issue Category:** Academic Life & Culture

**Issue Overview:**
- Students interested in meeting peers with shared experiences
- Prospective students
- Current students

**Recommended Next Steps:**
- Hello (insert student name), there is more to the university experience than just grades. Successful students balance academics and extra-curricular activities, and students from diverse backgrounds will help you balance and contribute to your overall experience as a student.
- If you want to connect with current students to hear their experiences, talk to an academic advisor at [insert telephone number or email]. If you’re interested in learning more about life on campus, visit [insert website].

**Probable Issue Level:**
- *Recommended issue level: 0*

**Quick Links:**
- Crisis Matrix
- Contact List
- Resources

**To Be Consulted:**
- N/A

**To Be Notified:**
- N/A

EXAMPLE 3:

**Enrollment issues on SOLUS**

**Issue Category:** SOLUS

**Issue Overview:**
- Experiencing issues enrolling in a course

**Recommended Next Steps:**
- We’re sorry to hear you are having issues with SOLUS. You can contact our student services help service by visiting our website or by checking the SOLUS help website at [insert website].
- Your Technical Issues Resolving Tips:
  - We’re sorry to hear you are having issues with SOLUS and thank you for bringing this to our attention. We have put several things in place to ensure we can help.
  - If applicable, you can contact us about your specific issue.
  - N/A

**Probable Issue Level:**
- *Recommended issue level: 0*

**Quick Links:**
- Crisis Matrix
- Contact List
- Resources

**To Be Consulted:**
- Associate Director, Student Services

**To Be Notified:**
- Director, Student Services
CHANNEL CAPABILITIES

While deleting, hiding or reporting comments are not always the route to take when handling issues on social media platforms, it is important to know what capabilities you have as an administrator to do so on given platforms. Administrators can do the following on individual platforms:

**FACEBOOK**
- Hide Comments
- Delete Comments
- Report Comments
  - You can report comments or posts for:
    - Nudity
    - Spam
    - Hate Speech
    - Violence
    - Sale of Illegal Goods
    - Bullying or Harassment
    - Intellectual Property Violation
    - Suicide or Self-harm
    - Eating Disorders
    - Scam or Fraud
    - Misinformation
- Block Users

**INSTAGRAM**
- Delete Comments
- Report Comments/Users
  - You can report comments or posts for:
    - Nudity
    - Spam
    - Hate Speech
    - Violence
    - Sale of Illegal Goods
    - Bullying or Harassment
    - Intellectual Property Violation
    - Suicide or Self-harm
    - Eating Disorders
    - Scam or Fraud
    - Misinformation
- Block Users
- Restrict Users

**TWITTER**
- Hide Comments
- Flag/Report Tweets or Comments
  - You can report comments or tweets for:
    - Attacking someone due to their identity
    - Harassing or intimidating someone with violence
    - Spam
    - Impersonating someone's identity
    - Content related to or encouraging self-harm
    - Sensitive or disturbing content
- Mute Users
- Block Users

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

EDII

EDII is a consideration that is woven throughout all communications on social media. As a result, all of the scenarios in the FAS Social Media Playbook have been reviewed through an EDII lens. The following bias awareness lens is one example of a tool that can help you re-examine how you view and interact with issues that may arise from an EDII perspective.

**BIAS AWARENESS LENS**

The Bias Awareness Lens may be used to help you be aware of stereotypes and assumptions while you are crafting your messaging.

If you have questions or encounter issues on social media, please do not hesitate to reach out to Alex Rose, FAS Digital Marketing & Communications Coordinator. We will work with our EDII Director, Elliot Chapple, and with University Relations, to help you find communications solutions.
As with the FAS Social Media Strategy and Playbook, this is a living document that will be updated as required and posted on the FAS Communications webpage.

We encourage you to provide the Faculty of Arts and Science Marketing and Communications team with your feedback and to join the FAS Communicators Community of Practice, which is also described on our Communications webpage along with more information, resources and templates for digital communications.

To get in touch with the Faculty of Arts and Science Marketing and Communications team, please contact Alex Rose, FAS Digital Marketing & Communications Coordinator.