



UCA Social Media Account Guidelines

Purpose

The University of Central Arkansas's (UCA) [University Marketing and Communications](#) (UMAC) office provides this social media guide as a resource for how UCA's social media accounts should operate, look and sound. The following social media guidelines are to ensure consistency among social media postings representing UCA.

For specific questions not included in this guide, contact the [digital media specialist](#) in the UMAC office.

Who We Are

When operating an official university account, it is important to maintain the University of Central Arkansas's vision, mission and core values. UCA brings teaching, discovery and community partnership together to educate students, expand access to opportunity and serve the public. Students and learning remain at the center of the UCA experience, with expanded access and clear pathways that support progress, deepen knowledge and advance readiness for meaningful work, leadership and lifelong growth. Therefore, university-affiliated accounts should reflect learning, scholarship, creative activity and applied experience in their content and interactions with their online audience. By consistently embodying these values, the university's social media presence can contribute significantly to its mission.

Managing University Social Media Accounts

All social media accounts created to represent university functions are owned by UCA and should be operated as official university channels. These are not personal accounts and should not reflect personal opinions. Represent the university well: be conscious of all post content and tone, be respectful in responses to comments and messages, maintain a professional demeanor, and remember that all information shared on social media is (or can be) shared publicly and is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Social media is a tool that can create meaningful connections with students, potential students, parents, alumni and other members of the campus community. UCA social media accounts should tell our story while developing and maintaining these connections. Social media accounts related to campus departments should follow guidelines outlined here and in our Identity Guidelines located on [BearShare](#), our digital asset management tool.

Creating a New University Social Media Account

Establishing a social media presence demands a significant commitment of time, care and attention. Your audience anticipates regular updates and the opportunity to engage with you. Keeping messages on the main university or individual college accounts may be more beneficial than building a following from scratch by starting a new account.

Before starting a new social media account, departments are required to contact the [digital media specialist](#) in UMAC to discuss the process, guidelines and purpose of the account.

Do You Need to Start a New Social Media Account?

If you have a specific purpose for your account that other university social media channels cannot fulfill, if you are prepared to manage the new social media account actively and if you have already contacted University Marketing and Communications, then you may proceed with its creation.

- Assess your goals and objectives, recognizing that they may differ by platform and audience.
- Identify the audience(s) you aim to reach, and define the extent and content needs relevant to them.
- Evaluate if the available resources, personnel, and time allow for the consistent creation and upkeep of high-quality content.

All accounts affiliated with UCA should have at least two administrators who are full-time UCA faculty or staff members. Student workers, graduate assistants and part-time employees may be given permission to create and post content under the supervision of full-time faculty and staff members.

Ownership

All social posting is to be conducted with the approach explained above. We don't attach names or initials to posts to specify who is posting.

Privacy

Do not publish any information that is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or other applicable privacy laws.

Copyright

Follow all copyright and intellectual property laws when posting to any social network.

Comment Moderation and Blocking

University social media accounts should promote open, respectful dialogue and should not be used to suppress criticism, disagreement or unfavorable opinions about the university, its policies, programs or personnel.

Do not remove comments simply because they are negative, critical or disagree with the university. It is best practice to hide an inappropriate comment when possible rather than delete it. Comments should be removed only when they clearly violate the account's established community standards – for example, comments that contain threats, harassment, hate speech, obscene or sexually explicit material, personal or confidential information or other clearly inappropriate content. Spam, scams, and automated or otherwise inauthentic accounts may also be removed or blocked.

Do not block users simply because they are critical of the university or its employees. Blocking should generally be reserved for spam, bot, fraudulent or persistently abusive accounts when blocking is necessary to protect the account or its community.

Consistent Approach to Comments

Account administrators should apply moderation standards consistently, regardless of the viewpoint expressed. A comment should not be removed simply because it is embarrassing, inconvenient, politically controversial, critical of the university or critical of a particular individual or decision.

When comments are enabled on a post, the expectation should be that all viewpoints are permitted, subject to the same content-based moderation standards. If a particular post or topic is not appropriate for open discussion, account administrators should consider disabling comments on the post rather than selectively removing unfavorable comments.

When in doubt about whether a comment or account should be removed or blocked, administrators should consult [UMAC](#) before taking action.

Managing Direct Messages

Direct messages sent to university social media accounts should be monitored regularly and handled promptly and professionally. When another university office is better equipped to assist with the message's content, direct the user to the appropriate contact or resource. If you are unsure of how to proceed in responding to a message, [contact the UMAC office](#).

Do not request or share confidential, protected or personally identifiable information through social media messages. Conversations involving sensitive information should be moved to an appropriate

university communication channel. Messages may be subject to applicable records requirements.

Messages involving threats, harassment, safety concerns or other sensitive issues should be documented and reported to the appropriate university office. Do not use direct messages on social media to prolong exchanges with users that are argumentative, unproductive or inappropriate.

Official University News and Crisis Communications

To ensure consistency, accuracy and coordinated messaging across the university, official university news, crisis communications and emergency communications should only be reshared from the university's primary/main social media accounts.

University-affiliated accounts should not independently create, paraphrase or share original posts about university-wide emergencies, crises, significant incidents, major announcements or official university news unless specifically directed to do so by University Marketing and Communications.

When an official university announcement is issued, individual colleges, departments, offices and other affiliated accounts may share or repost the original content from the primary university account rather than creating a separate version of the message. This ensures that the university community receives consistent information and is directed to the official source for updates.

This practice is particularly important during a crisis or emergency, when information may change rapidly. Do not speculate, provide unofficial updates or share information from secondary sources. If additional information is needed, direct followers to the primary university account or the university's designated emergency communications channel.

AI Usage

University communications should reflect the real experiences, people, programs, achievements and campus life at UCA. AI tools may support the content creation process, but there must be human oversight and responsibility in reviewing all content before it is published. AI tools should not be used in ways that misrepresent the university or its appearance, or create misleading representations of university activities or individuals. AI-generated or assisted materials should be carefully reviewed to ensure factual accuracy and alignment with university standards.

[See the complete guide for AI usage.](#)

Accessibility

All social media accounts affiliated with UCA must comply with WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Information on how to comply with these standards is available in the [Social Media Accessibility Guide](#).

Canva

UMAC maintains a Canva presence to provide easy access to approved branding and templates for routine graphic needs. Use of this tool for social media posts is encouraged, but more complex or comprehensive design requests should be submitted to UMAC through the [Communications Toolkit](#).

Social Media Best Practices

For guidance on areas such as content planning, posting frequency, audience engagement and other platform-specific best practices, refer to the [UCA Social Media Best Practices Guide](#).

Style Guide

UCA follows Associated Press (AP) style, along with university-specific editorial guidelines. For guidance on areas such as capitalization, abbreviations, titles and acronyms refer to the UCA Editorial Style Guide.