



## **Social Media Policy**

Hope International University (HIU), recognizes that social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Vimeo, Instagram, Google Plus, LinkedIn and Flickr have emerged as both effective and increasingly important forms of communication for both our community and the world at large. HIU believes these mediums can be great tools to inform and interact with its diverse constituents as well as foster community and increase HIU branding and promotion efforts. In order to utilize these new mediums effectively, HIU has developed a social media policy to guide faculty and staff operating official social media accounts created to represent HIU's colleges, departments, programs or offices.

### **Purpose**

- 1.1. This policy is intended to help staff and faculty make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs and podcasts and social networking websites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn YouTube, Pinterest, Google Plus, Flickr and other similar social networking sites.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the standards staff and faculty are required to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which use of social media will be monitored, and the University's actions with respect to breaches of this policy.
- 1.3. This policy supplements the *Computer & Network Use Policies*.
- 1.4. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

### **2. Who is covered by the policy?**

- 2.1. This policy covers all faculty, staff, student employees, consultants, contractors and volunteers (collectively referred to hereafter as **staff or staff member** in this policy).

### **3. The scope of the policy**

- 3.1. All staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of HIU and its services, employees, partners, customers, and competitors.

3.2. Breach of this policy may be dealt with under the *Performance Management* procedures as detailed in the *Staff Handbook*, and, in some cases, may be treated as serious misconduct leading to termination.

#### **4. Responsibility for implementation of the policy**

4.1. The Director of Marketing & Public Relations bears overall responsibility for the effective governance of this policy.

4.2. The Director of Marketing & Public Relations is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimize risks to University operations.

4.3. All staff members are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All staff members should ensure they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Director of Marketing & Public Relations.

4.4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Director of Marketing & Public Relations.

#### **5. Using social media sites in HIU's name**

5.1. Only staff authorized by their supervisors are permitted to post material on a social media website in HIU's name and on behalf of HIU.

#### **6. Using work-related social media**

6.1. HIU recognizes the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about HIU and its services, employees, partners and community. HIU also recognizes the importance of staff joining in and helping shape industry conversation and direction through interaction in social media.

6.2. Staff are, therefore, permitted to interact on approved social media websites about industry developments and regulatory issues. Approved social media websites are:

- (a) Blogs
- (b) Facebook
- (c) Twitter
- (d) LinkedIn
- (e) Pinterest
- (f) Google Plus
- (g) Flickr
- (h) YouTube
- (i) Vimeo
- (j) Instagram

This list may be updated by the Director of Marketing & Public Relations.

6.3. Before using work-related social media, staff member must:

- (a) Have read and understood this policy
- (b) Have sought and gained prior written approval to do so from his/her supervisor and the Director of Marketing & Public Relations
- (c) Completed the “Social Media Account Set-Up” form (available in the Public Folders)

## **7. Rules for use of social media**

Staff who are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy must adhere to the following general rules:

7.1. Do not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.

7.2. Avoid publishing contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people not intended to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details without their express permission.

7.3. Activity on social media websites during office hours should complement and/or support staff role and should be used in moderation.

7.4. Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive (that is, practices that reduce competition in the market), private or confidential information. If unsure whether the information falls within one of these categories, discuss this with the appropriate department director, Vice President or the Director of Marketing & Public Relations.

7.5. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party without that third party's consent.

7.6. Before including a link to a third party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website will permit it. All links must be posted so that it is clear to users that they have moved to the third party's website.

7.7. When making use of any social media platform, staff must read and comply with its terms of use.

7.8. Do not post, upload, forward or post a link to chain mail, junk mail or gossip.

7.9. Be mindful of the impact a contribution might make to people's perceptions of HIU as a Christian, higher education institution. If a staff member makes a mistake in a contribution, staff member must be prompt in admitting and correcting it.

7.10. Staff members are personally responsible for content published into social media tools – be aware that what is published will be public for many years.

7.11. Do not escalate heated discussions; try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to defuse arguments and correct misrepresentations. Staff must never contribute to a discussion when angry or upset. Return to it later when the response is calm and rational.

7.12. If there is any uneasiness or doubt about material for publication, always consult with the appropriate department director, Vice President or the Director of Marketing & Public Relations first.

7.13. Do not discuss colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers without their prior approval.

7.14. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory.

7.15. Before the first contribution on any social media site, observe the activity on the site for a while before launching, in order to get a feel for the style of contributions, the nature of the content and any 'unwritten' rules that other contributors might follow.

## **8. Monitoring use of social media websites**

8.1. Staff should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken as outlined in the *Staff Handbook*.

8.2. HIU reserves the right to restrict or prevent access to certain social media websites if supervisor considers personal use to be excessive. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.

8.3. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, cause embarrassment to HIU and to its constituents, constitute a criminal offense or otherwise give rise to legal liability.

8.4. In particular, uploading, posting, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will be considered serious misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):

- (a) Pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
- (b) A false and/or defamatory statement about any person or organization;
- (c) Material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to HIU, its community or its staff;
- (d) Confidential information about HIU or any of its staff or clients (without written authorization);
- (e) Any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for the University or the staff member); or
- (f) Material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

Any such action will be addressed under the *Staff Handbook*.

8.5. Where evidence of misuse is found, University officials may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with the *Performance Management Procedures*, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those assigned to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

8.6. If any staff member observes any use of social media by other members of staff in breach of this policy, please report it to the appropriate department director, Vice President or the Director of Marketing & Public Relations.

## **9. Monitoring and review of this policy**

9.1. The Director of Marketing & Public Relations shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

This policy may be updated at any time without notice, and each time a user accesses a social networking site, the new policy will govern usage effective upon posting. To remain in compliance, HIU suggests regular review of the Policy, as well as the other website policies. By continuing to post any content after such new terms are posted, staff member accepts and agrees to any and all such modifications to the Policy.

HIU reserves the right to monitor, prohibit, restrict, block, suspend, terminate, delete, or discontinue any staff member's access to any social media site, at any time, without notice and for any reason and at its sole discretion. HIU may remove, delete, block, filter or restrict by any other means.