

The University of Queensland Union College Acceptable Use of Social Media Policy

Purpose

We recognise that social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Snapchat and many others are central to how you connect, share and participate in college life. Social media blurs the line between your personal and public life, and what you post can affect your safety, the safety of others and the reputation of Union College and the broader higher education sector.

This policy sets out the minimum standards for your use of social media while you live at Union College. It aims to:

- Help you use social media in ways that are safe, lawful and respectful
- Protect your privacy and the privacy and rights of others
- Prevent and address technology-facilitated abuse, including forms of gender-based violence, in line with the national Action Plan Addressing Gender Based Violence in Higher Education and the forthcoming National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence
- Support the Australian Universities Accord vision for safe, high-quality student experiences on campus and online.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All residents using any social media platform, whether for personal use or, if authorised, on behalf of Union College
- Any content you create, share or engage with that identifies or could reasonably be linked to Union College, UQ or members of our community.

Definitions

What we mean by social media

For this policy, “social media” includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking platforms (for example, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Bluesky)
- Video and photo sharing platforms (for example, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, Threads, Discord, Vimeo, Flickr)
- Blogs and websites with comments or “your say” features, including personal, corporate and media-hosted blogs
- Public wikis and online collaborations (for example, Wikipedia, Reddit)

- Forums, discussion boards and groups, and online review sites (for example, Whirlpool, TripAdvisor, Yelp, Booking.com)
- Instant messaging services (for example, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Viber, SMS)
- Geo-spatial tagging and “check-in” features (for example, Foursquare and location tagging on other platforms).

Legal Compliance & Age Restrictions

You must comply with Australian law and the platform-specific terms and conditions when using social media. This includes:

- Online safety and age-restriction requirements under the Online Safety Amendment Act 2024 and related regulations
- Criminal and civil laws relating to harassment, stalking, threats, discrimination, image-based abuse, defamation, privacy, copyright and consumer protection.

In particular:

- You must not use social media to engage in unlawful behaviour, including threats, hate speech, serious harassment, incitement of violence, non-consensual sharing of intimate images or other forms of technology-facilitated abuse.

If your conduct may breach the law, we may need to notify UQ, external authorities (such as eSafety or police) or cooperate with their investigations.

Safety, Respect, & Gender-Based Violence

We are committed to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, including technology-facilitated abuse, consistent with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 and the Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education.

You must not use social media to:

- Bully, harass, threaten, vilify or humiliate others, especially based on gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion or other protected attributes
- Engage in or facilitate image-based abuse, including creating, sharing or threatening to share intimate images or recordings without consent
- Stalk, dox (share private information), or engage in persistent unwanted contact that causes fear, distress or harm
- Promote or normalise gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment or coercive control.

If we receive a disclosure or report of social media behaviour that may amount to gender-based violence or other serious harm, we will:

- Prioritise the safety, wellbeing and wishes of the person affected, using trauma-informed practice
- Manage the matter through our Addressing Concerns and Complaints Policy and other relevant policies, with procedural fairness for all involved
- Cooperate with UQ, regulators and law enforcement where required.

Privacy, Consent, & Filming in Residential Spaces

Living in a residential community means you share spaces with others who have a right to privacy and to feel safe.

You must:

- Respect other people's privacy. Do not tag them, post photos or videos of them, share their content or reveal their location without their permission
- Obtain consent from all visible individuals before posting "day in the life" or similar videos filmed in residential areas, corridors, bathrooms, common rooms or other shared spaces
- Avoid posting content that reveals sensitive personal information about yourself or others (such as home addresses, phone numbers, bank details, health information or student IDs) in ways that could expose anyone to harm.

We encourage you to:

- Use privacy and security settings on your accounts
- Avoid saving passwords on shared devices
- Think carefully before sharing content that could be misused if taken out of context.

AI, Deep-Fakes, & Content Creation

Emerging technologies, including AI, can be helpful tools but also create new risks for misinformation, manipulation and harm.

If you use AI tools for social media content creation, you must:

- Disclose, where appropriate, that AI has assisted in creating your content (for example, "Created with AI assistance")
- Check the factual accuracy of AI-generated content before sharing it, especially where it relates to Union College, UQ, public health, safety or other sensitive topics

- Not upload confidential or sensitive College-related data (including internal documents, student details or incident information) to third-party AI platforms
- Avoid creating, sharing or amplifying deep-fake or manipulated media that could deceive, defame or harm others.

We encourage you to use tools such as reverse image search or verification services when you are unsure whether images or videos are genuine, and to seek advice from staff if you come across suspicious or harmful content.

Prohibited & Restricted Content & Activities

You must not use social media in ways that:

- Bring Union College or UQ into disrepute, including by posting false, misleading or malicious comments about the College, staff, residents or partners
- Disclose confidential information or intellectual property belonging to Union College, UQ or others, such as internal documents, non-public decisions, private communications or commercially sensitive information
- Promote third-party products or services using College branding, logos, uniforms or locations without written authorisation ("social commerce")
- Use College branding or claim to speak on behalf of Union College without prior approval from the Deputy Head of College – Student Life.

If you are authorised to post on behalf of Union College:

- You must follow any additional guidelines and approval processes provided to you
- Your content should align with our values, policies and legal obligations, and must be accurate, respectful and in line with brand and style expectations.

Responding To Harmful Or Inappropriate Social Media Behaviour

If you experience or witness harmful behaviour on social media (such as harassment, threats, hate speech, gender-based violence, impersonation, or serious misinformation), we encourage you to:

- Clearly ask for the behaviour to stop, if it is safe to do so
- Stop engaging with the person if the behaviour continues
- Keep evidence, such as saving texts, messages or emails and taking screenshots of posts or comments
- Block unwanted accounts or mute conversations where appropriate
- Report the behaviour to the platform and, if relevant, to eSafety or other bodies

- Report the issue to the Resident Wellbeing Lead or Deputy Head of College, especially where the behaviour involves residents, staff or Union College, so we can support you and consider further action.

We will listen, support you and, where appropriate, act in line with our complaints and safety policies and our national obligations around gender-based violence and student wellbeing.

Misinformation, Disinformation, & 'Fake News'

Social media can quickly spread false or misleading information. To help protect yourself and others, you should:

- Be skeptical of sensational or “clickbait” headlines, especially those in all caps with excessive punctuation
- Check the URL and website – fake sites often mimic real news outlets with minor changes in the address
- Investigate the source – look for credible, reputable organisations and authors with a track record of accuracy
- Cross-check information with trusted and independent sources before sharing
- If you are unsure whether something is true, do not share it.

This supports the Accord’s emphasis on critical thinking, digital literacy and responsible engagement with information in higher education.

Consequences

If you breach this policy, primarily through serious or repeated misconduct, consequences may include:

- A request to remove or correct harmful or misleading content
- Behavioural or disciplinary action under the Resident Code of Conduct and Addressing Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Restrictions on your involvement in college social media activities or leadership roles
- Referral to UQ, eSafety or law enforcement where your conduct may be unlawful or where safety concerns are significant.

We will apply consequences in a fair, proportionate and transparent way, consistent with procedural fairness and our obligations under the Australian Universities Accord, the National Student Charter and the national gender-based violence reforms.

Review

We review this policy regularly to:

- Reflect changes in law, platform rules and best practice
- Align with ongoing work under the Australian Universities Accord and the Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education
- Respond to feedback and experience within our community.

Document Number: RES0402

Topic: Use and misuse of social media

Approval Authority: Head of College/CEO

Last Approval Date: January 2026

Review Date: December 2026 (or earlier if legislation or sector expectations change)

Audience: Current and future residents, parents and carers, Union College workers and Board, key stakeholders and regulators

Disclaimer: Union College's policies and procedures for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, including sexual misconduct, are designed to be consistent with and aligned with The University of Queensland's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and associated procedures, as well as UQ's broader frameworks and commitments relating to gender equality, respect, and safe, inclusive campus communities.