# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

| Category: Corporate Communications |  |
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| Policy Number: TBD |  |
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| Approval Authority: | Adrienne Galway, Special Advisor to President |
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## 1.0 PURPOSE

The College encourages the use of social media for professional and academic purposes and recognizes the value of social media as a significant tool for the creation and dissemination of news and information about the College.

The purpose of this policy is to establish College-wide governance and standards for the use, creation, operation, and management of OFFICIALGeorge Brown College social media accounts, which are defined as channels that speak on behalf of the college and have oversight by College employees. These include, but are not limited to, channels for schools, academic divisions and departments at George Brown College.

The policy aims to preserve, protect, and enhance George Brown’s image and reputation by presenting the College in a clear, unified and consistent manner. Content distributed through social media reinforces the brand and positive perception of the College.

Social media includes, but is not limited to, all forms of web-based tool and platforms including web pages, message boards, internet forums, blogs/microblogs, and social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram.

## 2.0 SCOPE

**In Scope:**

* This policy applies ONLY to official George Brown College channels (corporate & affiliate) and students, employees and volunteers whose social media includes the college’s seal or logo or involves the College’s resources and expenses
* This policy covers all social media platforms - current platforms as well as emerging platforms that may not be specifically referenced in this policy, for example Clubhouse.
* As per George Brown’s Policy Statement on Freedom of Expression, members of the George Brown community are free to express their views and contest the views of others. All members must respect the rights of others to express their views. Speech that violates the law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code [LINK to code] , is not allowed. Speech that constitutes harassment, a threat or hate speech is not allowed.

**Out of Scope:**

* This policy does not apply to personal/individual employee social media use or accounts
* This policy does not apply to social media channels/accounts developed and/or administered by third-party groups, organizations or individuals.
* Paid advertising on social media platforms is outside the scope of this policy. The Marketing Department is solely responsible for any paid social media advertising that takes place on any George Brown College channels.

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

This includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within the policy and procedure.

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| Word/Term | Definition |
| Official Accounts | George Brown College official accounts (corporate and affiliate channels) that speak on behalf of the College and have some oversight by College employees. These include, but are not limited to channels for schools, academic departments and offices at George Brown College |
| Third Party Accounts | Social media accounts that do not officially speak for George Brown and are not operated by a College employee. No official connection with the College. |
| Corporate Channels | Social media channels managed centrally by the Corporate Communications and Marketing departments -   * Facebook: [George Brown College](https://www.facebook.com/georgebrowncollege/) * Instagram: [@gbcollege](https://www.instagram.com/gbcollege/) * Twitter: [@gbcollege](https://twitter.com/GBCollege) * TiKTok: [www.tiktok.com/@georgebrowncollege](http://www.tiktok.com/@georgebrowncollege) * YouTube ([www.youtube.com/georgebrowncollege)](http://www.youtube.com/georgebrowncollege)) * LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/school/13964)](http://www.linkedin.com/school/13964)) |
| Affiliate Channels | Social media accounts that are operated from a George Brown College department, academic division or staff member in their capacity with the College. These may also include accounts operated by student groups and individual faculty and staff members. These accounts may include College branding in the profile picture or banner, or mention of George Brown College in the account bio. |
| Personal Account | Social media accounts created by employees or students who may have affiliation with George Brown College (for example: job title) but opinions and content shared are not a direct representation of the College. |

## 4.0 POLICIES

**4.1 The Department of Corporate Communications:**

* Is the lead account holder and operator for George Brown’s Corporate social media channels and is responsible for providing oversight to all official accounts and guidance to George Brown departments and academic divisions.
* Does not manage, oversee or monitor third party social media accounts including pages/channels/blogs developed by students, vendors, members of the public, as well as any pages representing the George Brown Student Association.
* Is responsible for maintaining the master list of all official accounts, their account holders, and login credentials for continuity and/or security reasons. Social Media account login information shall be kept confidential and stored in an encrypted and secure location.
* Is responsible for monitoring George Brown social media mentions, comments, direct messages, reviews and tags on all corporate channels.
* Can recommend the suspension or deactivation of any official channels which have remained inactive and/or dormant for an extended period (four weeks or more).
* Can direct affiliate channels in the event of an emergency regarding the type of content to be posted including emergency-related information and updates, in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety and Security.
* Can provide guidelines, tips and recommendations for coordinating social media activity within departments and divisions.
* Only designated members of the Communications and Marketing teams can upload and share videos to the College YouTube account. They will work with the video owner to ensure all technical and content requirements are met.

**4.2 Official Accounts/Channels**

**Social Media Account Request and Approval Process**

* The College authorizes the creation and use of **official** social media channels, provided their use is professional, protects the reputation and brand of the College, and complies with approved policies and applicable laws and regulations. Official accounts (corporate and affiliate) include, but are not limited to, channels for schools, academic departments and offices at George Brown College.
* All requests to create new official channels must be presented to Corporate Communications for assessment and approval via the online account registration form. This must be done prior to account creation.
* Official channels must be approved and registered with Corporate Communications and provide confidential login information and account holder details for use in the event of an emergency, temporary suspension, deactivation or where the account manager is not accessible or no longer works at George Brown.
* All accounts created prior to January 1, 2021 must be registered. All approved accounts will be listed in the George Brown Social Media Directory.
* Failure to register and obtain approval for new official channels could result in an account being terminated if it does not adhere to or meet the College’s standards and/or the guidelines outlined within this policy.

**LinkedIn and YouTube**

* LinkedIn and YouTube have specific rules related to organizational accounts to ensure that content and technical requirements are met.

* Divisions or departments wishing to use YouTube as an official platform connected with the College must work with the Digital Engagement Team for consultation on planning and development.
* Divisions or departments wishing to use LinkedIn as an official platform connected with the College must work with the Group Marketing Manager to be set up as a showcase page under the George Brown College Company page.

**4.3 Account Management**

* Accounts must be managed and maintained by the applicable Academic Division or Department that created them. If a George Brown affiliate account is managed by a third party, this must be reported to the Corporate Communications and approved by the Dean/Director/designate of the Academic Division or Department. The Division/Department that created the account(s) remains responsible for the account’s content and activity.
* The Dean/Director/designate of their applicable Division or Department is responsible for ensuring that employees managing their affiliated social media account(s) have read and understand this Policy as well as the accompanying Social Media Guidelines and procedures (collectively referred to as the Social Media Playbook).
* Channels should maintain consistent activity to remain online or live. Inactivity and lack of consistent monitoring may affect George Brown’s reputation. All official accounts (corporate and affiliate) are prohibited from making or posting offensive, defamatory, disparaging, harassing, discriminatory or indecent content of any kind about anyone.
* Channels must follow the Terms of Service set forth by the social media channels they are using.

**4.4 Account Visibility**

* Only Corporate and in-language International channels are permitted to be showcased and linked directly on the George Brown College website, [www.georgebrown.ca](http://www.georgebrown.ca)
* Affiliate channels are searchable in the George Brown College Social Media Directory, housed on [www.georgebrown.ca](http://www.georgebrown.ca)

**4.5 Fair Use, AODA and Accessibility**

* Channels must adhere to the [George Brown College AODA Accessibility Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/sites/default/files/aoda/policies/george_brown_college_aoda_policy.pdf), available on the George Brown College website.
* Channels must adhere to the [George Brown College Accessible Media Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/media/5681/view#:~:text=In%20accordance%20with%20George%20Brown,available%20in%20an%20accessible%20format.), available on the George Brown College website.
* Channels must adhere to all relevant copyright laws and legislation.

**4.6 Style & Brand Guidelines**

* Channels must adequately reflect their connection to George Brown through consistent branding and website links which conform to George Brown brand standards to ensure consistent user experience across all channels. This includes, but is not limited to, accurate branding and identification in public account descriptions, bios, profile information, logos, avatars and profile icons.
* Channels should use an appropriate naming convention. “GBC” and/or “George Brown College” must be used to identify the account’s College-affiliation. It must also include a clear identifier for the department or division.
* Channels must adhere to the George Brown College Reputation Standards Guide, available on the George Brown College Self-Publishing System.

**4.7 Photography and Video Consent**

* Channels are prohibited from publishing images or video of people under the age of 18 without the expressed consent of the individual’s parent or guardian. Consent from the individual themselves is required for identifiable images or video published of those over 18.
* Channels must include appropriate image/photographs credits and attributions.

**4.8 Confidentiality and Proprietary Information**

* Channels are prohibited from disclosing trade secrets, confidential, or proprietary information about the College. Some examples of confidential or proprietary information within the meaning of this policy include marketing strategies, financial data, contract terms, research, and confidential information about George Brown students, employees, donors or business/community partners.

**4.9 Prohibited Conduct, Activity and Negative Posts**

* Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content or images that that could be interpreted as threatening, racist, sexist, in other ways discriminatory. Channels must adhere to the [George Brown College Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/media/3816/view)
* The College encourages open dialogue on all its social media accounts. However, negative and/or controversial comments, complaints or posts that are potentially defamatory must be brought to the attention of Corporate Communications. If it is decided that a response will be made, it must be approved in advance by Corporate Communications.
* Posts that reference a safety and security issue must be forwarded immediately to Public Safety and Security and Corporate Communications.

**4.10 Emergency/Crisis Communications**

* Corporate Communications can direct official channels in the event of an emergency regarding the type of content to be posted including emergency-related information and updates, in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety and Security. Departmental accounts should not speculate or post unauthorized information without approval, as this can result in the distribution of incorrect information.

**4.11 Personal Use of Social Media**

**Protected Activity**

This policy is not intended to govern or restrict personal presence on the web or to abridge or otherwise restrict principles of academic freedom**.** <https://www.georgebrown.ca/about/policies/freedom-of-expression-policy>

* George Brown College recognizes that its employees have an interest in using social media during their non-working time. A personal or private social media account:
* May have affiliation with George Brown College (for example: Job title) but opinions and content shared are not a direct representation of the College.
* does not require official approval or registration
* does not use the George Brown College logo, branding, or name in its profile
* is managed and populated with content outside of work hours on a personal computer or device
* The College does not govern or regulate content on private or personal social media accounts by employees. In their personal use of social media, employees should take reasonable steps to ensure that readers do not confuse their personal statements and opinions with the statements and opinions of George Brown, including by posting a disclaimer, such as: ***“All opinions expressed here are my own, and do not necessarily reflect those of my employer” or “Opinions are my own”***

**Guidelines for personal/private accounts:**

* Employees must not use the George Brown logo and other College branding without prior written authorization from the Department of Corporate Communications and/or Department of Marketing.

## 5.0 PROCEDURES

Social media platforms require variable procedures. While this document outlines policies that cross all platforms, ‘best practices’ and guidelines for use across all platforms can be found in Appendix A: Social Media Guidelines.

## 6.0 Non-Compliance Implications

The Employee Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Non-Academic Student Behavior and Acceptable Use Policy continues to govern employees’, students’ and other users’ access to and use of George Brown’s computer network and information resources.

This policy has been sanctioned by George Brown College, requiring compliance across the College. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures commensurate with the offence.

## 7.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Social Media Guidelines & procedures

Social Media Escalation Matrix

## 8.0 RELATED POLICIES

Other related College policies include:

* [Captioned Media and E-text Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/caption_media_e_text.pdf)PDF icon
* AODA Accessibility Policy ﷟ PDF icon
* Accessible Media Policy PDF icon
* Freedom of Expression Policy PDF icon
* [Complaints Regarding Advertising or Marketing](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/complaints_regarding_advertizing.pdf)PDF icon
* Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment Policy PDF icon
* [Copyright Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/copyright.pdf)PDF icon
* [Intellectual Property Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/Intellectual_Property.pdf)PDF icon
* [Privacy Policy](https://www.georgebrown.ca/privacy_policy/)PDF icon
* [Employee Code of Conduct - Academic Staff](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/Employee_Code_of_Conduct_Academic_Staff.pdf)PDF icon
* [Employee Code of Conduct - Administrative Staff](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/Employee_Code_of_Conduct_Administrative_Staff.pdf)PDF icon
* [Code of Non-Academic Student Behavior](https://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/code-of-student-behaviour-and-community-standards.pdf)PDF icon
* Integrity in Scholarly Research and Scholarship Policy PDF icon

## Appendix A

Social Media Guidelines and Procedures (available from the Corporate Communications Department)