



# Social Media Policy

## Aim

The aim of this policy is to develop expectations for using social media as an AUSC member.

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## 1 Background

Current communications online include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest etc. It is an increasingly prevalent and powerful means of communication.

AUSC encourages committee members and club members to use these tools as a way of staying in touch with members and promoting and sharing messages, news, events and AU Sport as a whole. There are, however, guidelines and expectations expected with this use.

## 2 Revision

This policy is to be maintained and reviewed by the AUSC Committee.

## 3 Application

This policy applies to all members, administrators, officials, coaches, players, spectators and volunteers of AUSC.

## 4 Facebook

### 4.1 Groups

AUSC currently administers two Facebook groups: Main AUSC group (Section 4.1.1), and AUSC underwater rugby (Section 4.1.2).

People can be invited to join these groups or can request to be added by the admin (see under Admins for more information).

#### 4.1.1 AUSC

AUSC currently has a Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8335810049/>

AUSC's Facebook Group is currently closed, however anyone can apply to join the page, as it is open to past and current financial members, to share announcements and receive comments.

AU Sport staff are also members of AUSC Facebook Group, in order to facilitate communications for AU Sport matters as per AU Sport's Social Media Guidelines.

#### 4.1.2 Underwater rugby

AUSC also has a Facebook group page for its underwater rugby team:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/299173546960460/>

AUSC White Pointers' Facebook group is currently closed, however anyone can apply to join the page, as it is open to anyone interested in playing underwater rugby, in order to share announcements and receive comments.

### 4.2 Administration

Social Media can be very time consuming. It is busy, instant and public, where everything happens now. Ideally, you would have a couple of 'admins' to manage your social media to ensure the information is up to date and relevant and that messages/comments and requests are responded to.

The admins need to constantly monitor the Social Media platform and respond carefully and respectively to positive comments and take action on anything negative (refer to Section 6 for further information). It is recommended that the admins check the account at least every two days

to ensure posts are responded to appropriately. The admins must also remember to keep the admin privileges up to date, with those no longer in admin duties removed and new admins assigned.

#### 4.2.1 AUSC group

It is recommended to limit admins to only a few committee members. It is recommended only the AUSC President, Information Officer, and 1-2 others be given admin status.

### 4.3 Sensitive information

Note that Facebook reserves the right to change rules without warning. It is important to understand the privacy settings throughout Facebook, to minimise the chances of accidentally sharing private information wider than intended.

## 5 Online behaviour

AUSC encourages social media use (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.) by its committee members and club members and seeks to engage through it with the broader UofA and sporting communities. As social media blurs the lines between people's personal and professional expression, users must think carefully about their online conduct in order to preserve and protect individual reputations and the reputation of AUSC and the UofA.

The same laws, policies, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting within and outside the AUSC and UofA community apply online. AUSC committee members and club members are responsible for their own actions and need to follow the same behavioural standards.

AUSC committee members and club members breaching these expectations through social media use will face the same consequences under the AUSC Code of Conduct. AUSC committee members and club members are also entitled to enjoy the same protections and rights online as in the offline world, such as general freedom of expression. If it would normally be acceptable to express an opinion about something offline, it is equally acceptable online. However, it is important to remember that the permanence, visibility and connectivity of social media sites can result in communications having a far wider and more permanent audience and impact than in the offline world, making it even more important to act and express thoughts and opinions rationally, respectfully and appropriately.

While AUSC will moderate its own official social media sites, AUSC will not monitor or sanitise (censor or alter) content posted externally by its committee members and club members at large, absent reasonable complaints and evidence, or alleged breaches of law or AUSC and University policy. Ultimately, committee members and club members are responsible for their own conduct - but where committee members and club members use any devices, services or technology provided by AUSC (and the University), or specifically relating to AUSC personnel or activities, all content will be open to scrutiny, moderation and consequences.

## 6 General principles

Remember that the same standards apply online as in real life - including laws, AUSC policies, behavioural expectations and the rules of common courtesy - and so do the same consequences for breaching them. In addition, while the benefits are compelling, there are a number of dangers to be aware of so you can manage your social media safely.

The following principles provide some additional guidance specifically relevant to social media use:

- Be respectful, genuine and credible.

- Post appropriate content.
- If you make a mistake, fix it quickly.
- Maintain your online presence with updated and responsive content.
- Keep your password secure and log out of Facebook if you are on shared device.
- Maintain confidentiality. Don't share any confidential, private or sensitive information and gain consent before publicly posting people's names, photos, whereabouts and other details.
- Make sure you fully understand the privacy settings you have for limiting who can see your information or posts.
- Be aware of liability. You are responsible for your own posts, and they are almost impossible to erase.
- Think about how your posts might affect other people. If you write something negative or inflammatory about someone on a social media site, the whole community can see it - so it may have a much greater impact on others.
- Look out for negative personal comments (bullying). What might start as harmless teasing online can escalate and lead to ongoing harassment. If necessary, comments will be removed instantly and offenders will be counselled and warned.
  - If people continue to post negative comments, people will be blocked from AUSC's Facebook page, or in extreme cases consider further disciplinary action, such as suspending the offenders from AUSC activities.

When using social media in an AUSC capacity, please keep the following in mind:

- Distinguish between your personal and professional capacity. Make it clear when you are not speaking on behalf of AUSC. If an issue relates to an AUSC role and you are commenting on it, you should identify yourself and your connection to AUSC.
- Act within your authority. Just as you need authority to speak on behalf of AUSC to the media or outside entities, you need authority to speak as an AUSC representative on social media sites.
- Use your online presence to promote AUSC and not to damage it.
- Something posted on a social media site is still a written communication, so the same legal ramifications can flow, such as defamation, trade practices/fair trading violations or breach of privacy or confidentiality - and because it's written in a permanent forum, it has the same evidentiary value as a more formal, hard copy communication.
- Respect AUSC, AU Sport and the UofA branding in a way that complies with the AUSC logo use and the UofA Branding & Visual Identity Policy.

## 7 Social media use expectations

It is expected that those using social media on behalf of AUSC will conduct themselves appropriately and be guided by the following principles, in conjunction with the preceding information:

- All social media postings, blogs, status updates and tweets are treated as public 'comment'.
- Postings (written, photos or videos) will feature positive club news and events.
- Personal information about members will not be disclosed.
- No statements will be made that are misleading, false or likely to injure a person's reputation.
- No statements will be made that might bring AUSC, AU Sport or the University of Adelaide into disrepute.

- Abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements will not be tolerated. Offending posts will be removed and those responsible will be blocked from the site and/or AUSC activities. Furthermore, those may be reported to AU Sport for further disciplinary action.

## 8 Non-compliance

AUSC committee members and club members may face disciplinary action for sending inappropriate electronic communication or posting online content or comments that harass, offend, intimidate or humiliate another member, as outlined in the AUSC Code of Conduct.

Under certain circumstances, cyber bullying is a criminal offence that can be reported to the police. In addition, members who publish false or misleading comments about another person in the public domain (e.g. Facebook, YouTube or Twitter) may be liable for defamation.

## 9 References

AU Sport – *Social Media Guidelines*, approved by AU Sport Board on 14 July 2014,  
<http://www.theblacks.com.au/Common/Filer.ashx?FID=4310>.

Office for Recreation and Sport, The – *V-Star Club Handbook*, <https://www.recsport.sa.gov.au/v-star/club-handbook/index.php>.

Play by the Rules – *Social Media Toolkit*, <http://www.playbytherules.net.au/toolkits/social-media-toolkit>.

University of Adelaide – *Social Media Policies and Guidelines*,  
<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/technology/policies/best-practice/social-media/>.

## 10 Document control

Revision (Date)	Person	Comments
0 (13/10/2015)	<b>Author:</b> David Warren <b>Reviewed:</b> Committee (via Meeting 13/10/2015) <b>Approved:</b> David Warren, President	Document released to club membership.