

# Social Media Policy

## University Operations – Administrative

### CWU Policy 203-23

**Effective:**

**Policy Review Date:** TBD

**Policy Executive:** Chief of Staff

**Responsible Office/Unit:** Office of Marketing and Communications

#### **Policy Statement:**

Central Washington University (CWU) recognizes the value of social media as a tool for communication, engagement, and storytelling. This policy provides clear rules, guidelines, and best practices to empower users in effectively managing official CWU accounts while ensuring brand consistency, protecting university assets, and maintaining a professional and cohesive digital presence.

#### **Applicability:**

Official CWU accounts, current and future, representing CWU colleges, departments, programs, and official recognized student clubs and organizations. CWU employees, authorized volunteers, or students who manage these accounts and any account that utilizes the CWU marks to represent the account, including word marks.

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#### **Content:**

Policy

Appendix A - Guidelines for Requesting a New Account

Appendix B - Process for Reconciling Existing Accounts

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#### **(1) Reason for Policy**

- A. The CWU Social Media Policy is designed to support CWU's brand integrity and voice, foster a positive and engaged university community, and provide clear guidelines that align with institutional values. By establishing consistent expectations for social media accounts, the policy helps ensure that CWU's online presence remains professional, accessible, and aligned with the university's mission/vision.

#### **(2) Purpose and Permitted Use**

- A. Official CWU accounts are intended to support the university's mission/vision by sharing information, promoting engagement, and representing CWU's values in digital spaces. These accounts must be used to communicate accurate, relevant, and timely content that contributes

positively to the university's public image and community relationships. Social Media use of official CWU accounts is not permitted for:

1. Personal expression or opinion Partisan political activity or lobbying, whether personal or on behalf of the university
2. Commercial endorsements of organizations outside of the university's business enterprises
3. Fundraising outside of approved CWU channels
4. Sharing of confidential, restricted, or proprietary information
5. Posting of content that violates University Policy, Student Conduct Code ([WAC Chapter 106-125](#)), or collective bargaining agreements.

B. Violations of these expectations may result in:

1. Immediate removal of content
2. Temporary or permanent suspension of account access
3. Disciplinary action, as outlined in university employee and student conduct policies, or collective bargaining agreements
4. Revocation of permission to operate official CWU accounts

C. Social media use refers to any activity conducted on social networking platforms. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Published content:
  - a. Posts.
  - b. Captions.
  - c. Comments.
  - d. Videos.
  - e. Photos.
  - f. Stories.
  - g. Reels.
  - h. Live streams.
  - i. Any other publicly visible material.
2. Unpublished content:
  - a. Drafts.
  - b. Scheduled posts.
  - c. Hidden posts.
  - d. Archived posts.
  - e. Content stored within platform tools.
3. Private or semi-private communication:

- a. Direct messages (DMs).
  - b. Group chats.
  - c. Private stories.
  - d. Restricted/close-friends content.
  - e. Messages sent through platform-integrated communication tools.
4. Engagement actions:
- a. Likes.
  - b. Reactions.
  - c. Shares.
  - d. Re-posts.
  - e. Saves.
  - f. Follows.
  - g. Tags.
  - h. Mentions.
5. Account behavior and identity signals:
- a. Profile information.
  - b. Bios.
  - c. Usernames.
  - d. Handles.
  - e. Imagery.
6. Community management actions:
- a. Comment moderation.
  - b. Hiding or deleting comments.
  - c. Blocking users.
  - d. Reporting content.
  - e. Responding to messages or public posts.
7. Blocking and moderation actions:
- a. Blocking.
  - b. Muting, or restricting users.
  - c. Hiding or deleting comments.
  - d. Reporting content or accounts.

### **(3) Requesting a New Social Media Account**

- A. All new official CWU social media accounts must be sponsored by a university department and reviewed and approved by the Office of Marketing and Communications before launching.

### **(4) Account Oversight**

- A. All official CWU accounts must have at least two full-time CWU employees designated as administrators and be assigned to a department. These individuals are responsible for account oversight, security, and ensuring compliance with university policy.

- B. Administrators must use strong passwords, store login credentials securely, and update access whenever staffing changes occur. Any suspected security breaches must be reported immediately to CWU Information Services and Security and the Office of Marketing and Communications.

## **(5) Copyright Compliance**

- A. All content posted to official CWU accounts must comply with copyright law. Administrators are responsible for confirming who owns any material they plan to share—such as a photo, video, song, or written work—and securing appropriate written permission when necessary. Limited use of copyrighted material may qualify as “fair use” if it is non-commercial, educational in nature, and uses only a small portion of the original work. However, fair use is not guaranteed and should not be assumed. When in doubt, always seek written permission from the content owner and provide proper attribution if required.
- B. Unauthorized use may result in content removal, legal consequences, or university disciplinary action. The administrator’s department will be responsible for the payment of any copyright sanctions imposed on the university.

## **(6) Crisis Communication**

- A. The CWU main accounts are the only social platforms authorized to communicate crisis-related updates outside of the Rave Guardian emergency notification system. These accounts will direct the community to the official CWU Emergency Management notification webpage for authoritative, real-time information. All other accounts must consult official messaging as directed by the university. Reference [CWU 601-08 Campus Safety and Security](#) for information on campus safety and security notifications.

## **(7) Comment Moderation**

- A. CWU encourages respectful dialogue on its social media channels. While open discussion is welcomed, comments must remain civil, relevant, and free from obscenity, threats, harassment, hate speech, defamatory language, or the disclosure of personal or confidential information. Spam, product promotions, and sexually explicit content are also prohibited. Opinions expressed in comments do not reflect the views of CWU, and the university is not responsible for user-generated content on its platforms.
- B. Additionally, do not hide or remove comments solely because they are critical, express disagreement, or share personal opinions about the university. Comments must be made in a viewpoint-neutral way unless they violate the guidelines above.

## **(8) Reconciliation of Existing Accounts**

- A. To ensure consistency, accountability, and brand integrity, all existing official CWU accounts, regardless of when they were created, must be reviewed and brought into alignment with this policy.

## (9) Use of Personal Devices

- A. Content created, sent, or stored on personal devices may become subject to CWU public record retention and disclosure requirements.

## (10) Definitions

- A. **Official CWU Accounts:** Social media accounts, current and future, on any platform, that represent CWU colleges, departments, programs, or official recognized student clubs and organizations.
- B. **Social Media Platform:** Any digital service or application used to create, publish, and share content and participate in social networking, including but not limited to Instagram, Facebook, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, Discord, Reddit, Threads, and emerging platforms.
- C. **Main CWU Accounts:** Social media accounts that are managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications that represent the university.
  - 1. Instagram: @central\_washington\_university
  - 2. Facebook: Central Washington University
  - 3. LinkedIn: Central Washington University
  - 4. X: @CentralWashU
  - 5. YouTube: @CentralWashU
  - 6. TikTok: @cwuwildcats
- D. **CWU Marks:** Any official registered or trademarked CWU marks, including wordmarks, logos, lockups, icons, or branded visual elements ([CWU 203-03: Communication and Identity Plan](#)).

## (11) Relevant existing policies

- A. [CWU 202-17 Contracting](#), Appendix A, section (3)B.1 - Non-Negotiable Click-Through Agreements: An online contract, the terms of which the supplier will not negotiate, and which requires a user to indicate acceptance by clicking an “OK”, “I Agree”, or other similar button.
- B. [RCW 42.56](#): Social media content created or received through official university accounts is considered public records and must comply with state and federal public disclosure and record retention laws. Posts are subject to public records requests and must be managed and archived appropriately. A public record is defined in [RCW 42.56.010\(3\)](#) as any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.

1. The term “writing” is broadly defined to include not only traditional written records, but also photos, maps, videos, voicemails, webpages, emails, text messages, and social media content ([RCW 42.56.010\(4\)](#)).
  
- C. [RCW 42.17A.555](#): University-managed social media platforms may not be used to support or oppose political candidates or ballot measures. This includes sharing partisan content or campaign materials using public resources.
  
- D. [RCW 49.44.200](#): Employers may not request or require employees or applicants to disclose login credentials, access personal accounts, or change privacy settings. These rules do not apply to university-managed accounts or platforms provided for work purposes.
  
- E. [RCW 4.24.790](#): Creating or managing a social media account that falsely represents another person with intent to deceive or cause harm is prohibited and may result in civil liability.
  
- F. [RCW 4.24.792](#): Posting an individual’s personal identifying information without consent, especially with intent to harm or harass, is prohibited and may carry legal consequences.
  
- G. [RCW 9A.90.120](#): Sending threatening, obscene, or intentionally harmful messages through social media may constitute cyber harassment and is subject to criminal penalties under Washington law.
  
- H. [WAC 181-87-062](#): Education professionals may face disciplinary action for engaging in unprofessional conduct via social media, including inappropriate interactions or communications with students or the public.
  
- I. [WAC 292-110-010](#): State resources, including time, equipment, and accounts, must be used for official university business. Personal or political use of university-managed social media is prohibited.
  
- J. [WAC 390-05-290](#): Social media content that qualifies as political advertising—intended to influence votes or campaign support—is subject to regulation. Paid or mass-distributed content must comply with relevant state laws.

**History:**

## Appendix A - Guidelines for Requesting a New Account

**(1) To request a new account, submit a ticket to the Office of Marketing and Communication Project Management System. Include the following information:**

- A. Name and purpose of the account
- B. Target audience
- C. Platform(s) requested
- D. Letter or email from sponsoring department
- E. Names and roles of two designated account administrators
- F. Confirmation of use of a shared CWU departmental email

**(2) Non-negotiable click-through agreements do not require prior review or approval by the Contracts Office if all of the following conditions are met:**

- A. An authorized university contracting agent has reviewed the agreement and determined the terms are acceptable.
- B. If payment is required (including free trials that convert to paid services), a Purchasing Card Modification must be submitted and approved, and payment must be made using the Purchasing Card.
- C. The purchase is within the contracting agent's authorized scope and does not exceed \$10,000.

**(3) If these conditions are met, the authorized university contracting agent may agree to the terms in one of the following ways:**

- A. Accept the agreement directly by clicking "I agree," completing the purchase, or signing electronically.
- B. Provide written delegation of contracting authority to another individual to accept the agreement on their behalf. This delegation must include the Contracts Office.

**(4) Upon approval, the Office of Marketing and Communications will provide:**

- A. Account naming conventions and expectations
- B. A copy of CWU's current brand guidelines and social media best practices
- C. Training resources and accessibility standards

## Appendix B - Process for Reconciling Existing Accounts

- (1)** The Office of Marketing and Communications will assess all existing official CWU accounts for compliance with CWU branding, accessibility, security, and administrative standards. Accounts may be asked to update login credentials, adjust naming conventions, transfer ownership, or undergo training to meet university guidelines.
  
- (2)** Accounts that are inactive, duplicate existing efforts, or cannot be brought into compliance may be recommended for consolidation or deactivation.