Social Media Guidelines

1.   Overview

What is Social Media?

1.1 Social media refers to social sharing services that facilitate user-generated content and conversation over the Internet such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.

Social Media at Ryerson University

1.2 The University recognizes that social media is changing how we communicate with students, colleagues and the world at large.

1.3 The University has a vital interest in how its community members are using communications technology, given its potential to positively and negatively affect the University's reputation.

1.4 Members of the University community have rights and responsibilities regarding communications technologies.

1.5 The purpose of the Ryerson University Social Media Guidelines is to promote proper usage of social media within the University community. To learn more, please contact **Zeena Benjamin** (zeenabenjamin@ryerson.ca) Social Media Specialist, University Relations - Marketing.

2.   Best Practices and Guidelines

Creating Social Media Accounts

2.1 Each social media platform has different audiences, purposes, cultures and approaches. They also have different written and unwritten codes of conduct. It is essential that your content is being transmitted through the right channel, in the right way, to the right audience.

2.2 Before creating a social media presence for your office or department, please consider the following questions:

(a) What type of content will you post using your social media channels?

(b) Is there an audience that will be interested in this type of content on your intended channels?

(c) Are there existing University channels sharing similar content?

(d) Will you be able to provide consistent, unique content over time?

(e) Is it possible to use existing accounts to distribute your content?

(f) Will your intended content duplicate the efforts of already existing Ryerson accounts.

2.3 If you decide to create a social media account, you become responsible for administering the account (the account administrator). If you create an account on behalf of a group, then you need to select an account administrator.

2.4 Account administrators shall consider the following recommendations or requirements:

(a) Notify **Zeena Benjamin** (zeenabenjamin@ryerson.ca) Social Media Specialist, University Relations - Marketing, with the name and contact information for the account administrator(s) as well as the URL for the account. Ryerson Social Media and Digital Services does not make this information public.

(b) Actively monitor the account on an on-going basis, during business hours or for a specified, publicly stated time period (e.g., 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday to Friday). Exceptions may be made for events that take time outside of designated hours, for example: move-in day, on-campus sporting event after-hours.

(c) Create and regularly post meaningful content aligned with the University's brand.

(d) Maintain the account in accordance with the Guidelines and applicable Policies outlined in Section III of the Guidelines.

(e) Adhere to social-media best practices and naming conventions when creating your account name and visual identity to maintain a unified University community voice and visual presence. Contact Marketing and Creative Services to request [Ryerson-branded social media icons](#) for your channel(s).

(f) Each social media account administrator must have separate login credentials. Keep your login credentials private and do not share them with anyone. If

multiple administrators must manage the social media account, use account management tools (such as TweetDeck) to control permissions among multiple users.

(g) Do not use your University password as your social media password. If your social media account is compromised, your account will be at risk.

(h) Refrain from using social media to engage in media pitching or media interviews. If you are contacted by a member of the accredited media about a post or comment on a social networking site, refrain from responding and contact Public Affairs.

(i) Complete a University social media seminar, advertised through the Human Resources Learning Events Calendar.

Channels

2.5 If you have assessed these considerations and concluded that there is a need to create an additional social media account, consider which channel is most appropriate for your content. A variety of platforms that can be used for different purposes include:

(a) **Facebook:** Content tends to be "wider" in scope and posts should be less time-sensitive than Twitter. Reputation building content focused on the "bigger picture" at Ryerson.

(b) **Twitter:** Quick and immediate. Focus on current events and announcements at the University as well as provide live-updates. Primary means of communication with key audiences on social.

(c) **LinkedIn:** Professional environment that has a very specific audience and is great for specific goals (e.g., recruitment), but not ideal for a general social presence.

(d) **Snapchat:** Similar to Twitter in its immediacy, but it requires more robust content creation from the community manager. Creates a sense of one-to-one communication between users.

(e) **Instagram:** Visually driven platform that can provide an inside look at Ryerson from President's appearances to current events. Live feature allows to broadcast events for students who are not on campus.

Set-Up

2.6 When setting up a social media account, consider the following questions:

(a) What is the name of your channel?

   (i) To avoid confusion and to optimize your discoverability across search engine results, include 'Ryerson' as a keyword across your handle, account name, account bio, etc. Although unit names and character limits will guide your implementation, the ideal naming convention for Ryerson account handles and names would be 'Ryerson' + '__' where '__' represents your unit or account differentiator (e.g., **Ryerson**HR).

   (ii) Avoid using 'Rye' or 'RU' whenever possible. If absolutely necessary, use 'RU' only where space is limited. Example:
   Twitter Account Handle: @**Ryerson**HR
   Twitter Account Name: **RU** Human Resources
   Twitter Account Bio: **Ryerson**'s HR Department: tweets about…

   (iii) Visual appeal and brand unity are important considerations for your social channel set-up. Contact Marketing and Creative Services to request [Ryerson-branded social media icons](#) for your channel(s).

(b) What are your goals?

   (i) It is important to have structured and clear goals when launching social channels. You have to define whether you are working to:
      A. raise awareness (impressions);
      B. generate audience activity (engagement); or
      C. establish an online portal for the audience's information, education or a combination of both.

(c) Who will run your channel?

   (i) It is important to have a dedicated account manager who develops content, responds to requests and monitors activities. The account manager will be responsible for generating content and responding to the audience.

(d) How frequently do you plan to post?

   (i) It is important to maintain a social presence once a channel is established, by engaging with audiences and generating unique content beyond re-tweets and re-sharing articles. An inactive or a stagnant social media account can damage a brand as much as not having an account.

   (ii) General recommended frequency of posting:
      A. Facebook: 2-4 posts per week
      B. Twitter: Daily
      C. Instagram: 3-5 posts per week
      D. LinkedIn: 2-3 posts per week

(e) What monitoring tools will you use?

   (i) All platforms provide built-in monitoring and analytics. To fully capture the discussion and maximize your social media strategy, consider additional tools such as Sysomos, HootSuite, Sprout Social, etc.

(f) From which other University channels will you need support?

   (i) New channels take time to set up and to attract followers. Consider which additional channels within the University's social infrastructure are most appropriate to support for your channel.

(g) Who is your audience segment within the University social infrastructure?

   (i) The University has a variety of social media channels. Some deliver messages to a wide audience, while others are very specific. It is

important to identify your audience segment, to maximize your social media strategy.

Best Practices

2.7 Use sound judgement and common sense in all online communications.

2.8 If you are unsure about your content, voice or approach, monitor the online channels where your audience is talking about you (e.g. Twitter, Facebook or other social media channels). Before setting up an account, understand the best practices and culture that regulate users for the proposed platform.

(a) *Be Transparent* – Accurately represent your office or department.

(b) *Be Strategic* – Approach your social media communications with a clear plan and line of responsibility. Create a social media strategy for the academic year that states your account's goals, voice, audience, content, and administrator(s).

(c) *Be "Ryerson"* – The University is an open, inclusive and progressive institution. Posts and comments should be inclusive, respecting and reflecting the University's diverse community.

(d) *Add value* – Give your audience meaningful content that reflects your office or department's area of expertise.

(e) *Engage* – Frequently monitor conversations and promptly respond to questions, comments, and incidents.

(f) *Schedule* – Create a content calendar or a theme calendar.

(g) *Track* – Generate regular analytics reports: knowing what is performing well and what is not on your channel can help you improve your strategy. You can use in-platform tools (e.g., Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics) or external analytics software. If you have any additional questions about analytics, contact **Zeena Benjamin** (zeenabenjamin@ryerson.ca) Social Media Specialist, University Relations - Marketing.

(h) *Use caution* – Do not get involved in every discussion. Sometimes, not saying anything (but still closely monitoring the discussion) is the best course of action.

(i) *Prioritize* – Do not burn out your content: prioritize what you want to discuss daily, weekly and month to month.

(j) *Respect sensitive information* – Do not share anything that is not public knowledge or may result in harm (financial, reputational, physical, legal, regulatory, etc.) to individuals or to the University.

(k) *Always think before you post* – Stay on-message and on-brand, and consult with a manager if unsure. Never post, re-tweet or distribute:
   i. Spam;
   ii. Off-topic or unprofessional remarks;
   iii. Profanity, obscene content or personal attacks;
   iv. Copyrighted or trademarked materials without the proper permission.

(l) *Obtain the necessary approvals for contests* – Approvals and legal requirements:
   i. Student giveaways or contests must meet all legal contest requirements. Before advertising any giveaway or contest on your social media channel, obtain legal advice from the Office of the General Counsel and Secretary of the Board of Governors at gcbs@ryerson.ca

(m) *Respect Trademark and Copyright laws* - your posts and user-generated content (UCG) posted to your account must never infringe others' copyrights,

outube.com/
   (n) trademarks, rights of publicity or other third-party rights. If you have any concerns about the legality of UGC or the legality of your proposed posting, contact the
Office of the General Counsel and Secretary of the Board of Governors at
   gcbs@ryerson.ca

Best Practices for Personal Social Media Accounts

2.9 The line between professional and private social media usage can be easily blurred. Be conscious about mixing your personal and business lives. Even when communicating online, you are not exempt from the laws and regulations governing personal liability.

2.10 When using University electronic resources for personal social media use, make sure you are in compliance with University policies and guidelines, listed below. A good approach is only to post what you would say during in-person conversations with colleagues.

Best Practices for Students on Social Media

2.11   Personal Use

(a) Students are free to use personal social media however they see fit. Ryerson University mentions all mentions of Ryerson Accounts as well as use of the term "Ryerson" and hashtag "#Ryerson".

(b) All of the inappropriate and/or offensive mentions of official Ryerson accounts will be monitored and moderated as per the Social Media Guidelines. A moderator may hide and/or delete these comments as well as block users who consistently engage in such practices online.

(c) Any content that threatens the wellbeing of Ryerson students or safety of Ryerson campus will be investigated internally and dealt with accordingly.

2.12   Use on Behalf of Ryerson University

When creating content for social media on behalf of Ryerson University, students:

      i.   Must not change designated username and password of the account in question.
      ii.   Must not add their friends to the list of accounts Ryerson is currently following.
      iii.   Must not disclose information about the account to a third-party without express consent of the Ryerson Social Media representative.
      iv.   Must not make any derogatory or threatening remarks towards the audience on social media
      v.   Must not make inappropriate or discriminatory comments.
      vi.   Must not consume alcohol and other substances or appear to be under the influence of any such substance.
      vii.   Must not speak of Ryerson University in a derogatory way such that it may damage Ryerson's reputation.
      viii.   Must not answer any incoming questions without permission of the Ryerson Social Media Account Manager.
      ix.   May be asked to communicate certain messages while in control of Ryerson Social Media accounts.

3.   Applicable Policies

3.1 The University does not have a single, specific policy regarding social media.

3.2 There are numerous University policies and guidance that address individual conduct and internet usage. Read and understand these policies and guidance documents before creating a University social media account or posting on University social media. Below is a list of relevant policies and guidance documents. Go to the University policies website to see the complete list of university policies (http://www.ryerson.ca/about/policies/index.html)

(a) Student Computing Guidelines (CCS)

(b) Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct (Policy 61)
- o   Section C – Offenses prohibited under the code
- o   Section D – Remedies and Penalties

(c) Workplace Civility and Respect Policy

(d) Guide to Workplace Civility

(e) Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policy

(f) Information Protection Policy

(g) Information Protection and Access Policy (Privacy Policy)

(h) Copyright guidance and procedures

4.   Emergency Procedures

4.1 In the event of offensive content, complaints, or emergency issues, take the following steps:

(a) **Step 1:** If the issue is a privacy or security concern, contact the Information Systems Security Office or the Information and Privacy Access Office immediately.

(b) **Step 2**: Notify Office of Public Affairs
- o   Manager, Public Affairs: 416-979-5000 x4630

(c) **Step 3:** Confirm identity, if possible, and preserve the ACTUAL content that forms the subject of the complaint (i.e., take a screen capture of the offending material).

(d) **Step 4**: Consult with your immediate supervisor (unless they are the subject of the complaint). If you are not able to deal with the complaint, refer the matter to the most appropriate area of the University (e.g., HR, DHPS, Vice-Provost Students).

4.2 If you have additional questions or require additional advice about emergency procedures, contact Public Affairs: 416-979-5000 x4680.

5.   Contacts

5.1 If you require additional information regarding the following issues, the attached links provide you with contact information:

(a) General questions and social media advice: **Zeena Benjamin** (zeenabenjamin@ryerson.ca) Social Media Specialist, University Relations - Marketing

(b) Ryerson brand guidelines and visual standards: Marketing and Creative Services;

(c) Social media icons: Marketing and Creative Services;

(d) Social media analytics and campaigns: **Zeena Benjamin** (zeenabenjamin@ryerson.ca) Social Media Specialist, University Relations - Marketing

(e) Matters relating to Human Resources: Human Resources;

(f) Matters relating to privacy and information security: Director of Compliance at fippa@ryerson.ca.

(g) Matters relating to giveaways, contests, trademark and copyright issues, or any other legal matter: The Office of the General Counsel and Secretary of the Board of Governors at gcbs@ryerson.ca.