University of Groningen

Social Media guidelines 2019

1. Introduction

Social media is an important chapter in the University of Groningen’s communication strategy. Social Media platforms are indispensable tools through which the University of Groningen shares news, listens to online voices and connects with audiences.

The University of Groningen uses several social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and WhatsApp among others. Besides the corporate social media accounts, several accounts are managed by faculties, degree programmes and services within the UG, which serve their communication goals.

These guidelines were written to protect the University brand and organisation, the staff and the users of social media. Furthermore, they serve to guide staff to use social media effectively in an ever changing online-world.

2. Social Media Goals

The University of Groningen aims to use social media to inform and engage target audiences such as prospective students, current students, staff members, inhabitants of Groningen, researchers and alumni. All UG social media should be used as active platforms on which not only push messages are sent but active conversation are held through discussion and interaction. We aim to create an international online community mirroring the international atmosphere of our university.

3. Overall guidelines

New social media account?
Do you want to set up a new UG social media account? Please contact socialmedia@rug.nl and specify which platform you want to use, who the target audience is and how you plan to use the platform.

Quitting?
When you notice you are not posting regularly anymore, consider quitting / deleting the account. Otherwise it looks bad for your and the University’s reputation.
Recognisability
Due to the many different UG and UG-related social media accounts, it is important that audiences are able to recognize official UG-accounts and that audiences are able to distinguish between different accounts in order to increase findability.

Each Social Media account exists of the following parts:
- Profile picture/thumbnail
- Name
- Bio
- Username/handle
- (Header photo)

Profile picture/thumbnail/ava
In order to increase recognisability, the following logos must be used

- Corporate: will use the white social media logo on a red background.
- Faculties: Will use a red social media logo on a white background.
- Services: May design their own thumbnail using the following guidelines or use a red university social media logo on a red background on a white background.

Guidelines House style thumbnail of UG Services
The thumbnail should match the UG house style meeting the following requirements:
- The image in the thumbnail is a line drawing
- The line drawing is in the colours red and white
- The image in the thumbnail does not include the name or abbreviation of the Service, department or organisation.

Thumbnail designs have to be put to the social media- and house style teams of the Communications Department.
Name

- Corporate: University of Groningen
- Faculties: “Faculty Name - University of Groningen” - only use UG if University of Groningen is too long to be allowed on chosen platform
- Services: “Service Name - University of Groningen” - or “Service Name - Faculty - UG”

Try to avoid using “RUG” or “Rijksuniversiteit Groningen” as most of our platforms should be international. Exceptions of course are strict Dutch accounts, for example the Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen or the Bureau Groninger Taal en Cultuur.

Bio
Create a short summary which includes important keywords describing your faculty or service and refer to the University of Groningen. Think about which keywords users will use to search for you on the platform and make sure those keywords are included.

Handle
Use UG or University of Groningen or Groningen in your handle whenever possible.

Key messages / Key themes

- Open, academic community
- Societal value of our scientific research: Healthy ageing, Energy, Sustainable Society
- Student life
- UG as Top 100 institution - over 400 years of research and academic excellence
- The city of Groningen - #TheCityIsOurCampus

The key themes may not be relevant to all accounts.

4. Style guide

Photos and videos
A photo or video should be central to almost every post; no matter which platform or content area. Make sure to find a high quality and engaging image.

- Photo sizes differ between different platform. Check out in-depth guidelines for images on different platforms
- Using photos makes easier to cross-post at different social media platforms
• Videos should always include subtitles, since most audiences will view them without sound - English subtitles are most appropriate even when the video is spoken in English
• Keep texts short and easy to read + use appropriate humor and appropriate references to popular culture

Frequency of posting
• Instagram and Facebook: Post at least three times a week, preferably early morning or in the evening.
• LinkedIn: Try to post once a week.
• Twitter: Try to tweet, answer and retweet on a daily basis, preferably early morning, during lunchtime and in the evening.

Encourage interaction
• Use questions to increase engagement
• Use hashtags and tag people/organisations (on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) to increase reach. Think of: #Groningen #UniversityOfGroningen #nothingtopsgroningen #university #name of discipline
• Tag people and accounts in your post. Note: if you tag the UG, we’ll be able to see and possible reshare your post. Tag us on Twitter or in Insta-stories!
• [Shorten URLs.]
• Check your sources before you post and re-post messages. Avoid posting “fake news” stories by only using verified and recognisable news sources, especially when posting about scientific research.
• Avoid posting or re-posting posts from commercial third parties.
• English must be the main language of all social media platforms unless target audience is specifically Dutch (such as the Scholierenacademie).
• Make posts personal as well as representative for a University. You may use smileys and exclamation marks occasionally to connect with audiences, however the UG needs to come across as a professional organisation.
• Positive and neutral comments: reply to and like whenever appropriate and possible, ask questions to create conversations.
• Negative comments: Assess whether criticism is fair and appropriate. If so, reply to the comment or send a personal message (and reply publicly that you have sent a PM), if criticism is inappropriate or rude; delete it or ignore it. Messages that use curse words or personal attacks should always be deleted.

Targeting and Advertising
Organic posts, for example on Facebook, can be adjusted for reach. You may want to make a post only available to Prospective students - you can do this by limiting reach to 17 - 21 year olds.

You may want to advertise using your social media channels. Most platforms have two options for advertising: boosting existing posts and creating new ads. We advise only using the latter. Need help with advertising? Contact socialmedia@rug.nl for one of our social media experts.

Analytics

Analyzing results through measurements of engagement, click-through-rate, likes, followers and sentiment will lead to better post for your target audience.

5. Advise per platform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Optimal Frequency posting</th>
<th>Type of content</th>
<th>Target audiences</th>
<th>Extra comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1 -2 times per day</td>
<td>Photo/video’s with 1 or 2 lines of text - also use photos when posting a link. Minimize re-posting from third party: make your own posts including picture</td>
<td>Broad audience: Facebook can be used to reach a diverse range of audiences. Note that usage of FB by younger demographics is declining.</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Content Recommendations</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Contact</td>
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<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
<td>1 time per day, stories and live videos 3 times per week</td>
<td>High quality photos or videos. Diversify the type of pictures posted. Use of hashtags highly recommended. Corporate hashtags are: #universityofgroningen #thecityisourcampus #nothingtopsgroningen #myUGstory. Specific hashtags will be created for events.</td>
<td>Prospective students, current students: young audience</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for advice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter</strong></td>
<td>&gt; 3 times per day. Respond fast and regularly.</td>
<td>Keep it short and include visuals (SMB max) whenever possible, incorporate relevant hashtags to increase reach, ask questions and use polls.</td>
<td>Somewhat older audience, scientists, scholars, press, politics, alumni</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for advice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LinkedIn</strong></td>
<td>Once or twice per week, maximum once per day.</td>
<td>Relevant to business-minded audience, corporate updates. Visuals still important.</td>
<td>Prospective master/phd students, staff, prospective staff</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for advice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WhatsApp</strong></td>
<td>Respond within 24 hours</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Prospective students; current students</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for advice</td>
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<td>family - can be used both on mobile or desktop - personal and quick responses are expected</td>
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| **Snapchat**  
Send videos, pictures or upload stories that are only visible for short period of time - informal channel | 1-5 times per day | Action-filled, sort videos | Prospective students, current students, young audience |
| User has to know your username in order to find you. Make sure username is marketed on other channels |
| [Contact](socialmedia@rug.nl) for advice |
| **Youtube**  
Uploading and organising videos | As often as possible, minimum of 10 to start | Videos; both short fast-paced clips as longer content | Broad audiences, younger audiences |
| Contact [socialmedia@rug.nl](socialmedia@rug.nl) for advice |
| Use keywords and tags to increase reach |
| Add subtitles and a long description to increase traffic and views |

**Other social media**

An array of social media exists world-wide - some prospective students may only use social media available in their target country. The Communication Department does use different social media accounts, such as the Chinese WeChat to communicate. Please contact [socialmedia@rug.nl](socialmedia@rug.nl) if you are interested in foreign social media accounts.

**6. Requests for sharing your content on the corporate social media accounts**

You can email [socialmedia@rug.nl](socialmedia@rug.nl) to ask us to repost or re-share your content on the Corporate social media accounts.
Please be aware that we sometimes deny requests to post or re-share your content. This could be for the following reasons:

- No photo or video provided. We don’t share text-only messages as these do not work on social media.
- We don’t post photos with text edited in. Facebook restricts these types of images, so your reach would be very low.
- Your post is commercial or trying to promote a third party.
- Your target audience is too restricted. Our social media platforms are followed a wide audience - of current students and researchers, Groningers, internationals and Dutch people, media, alumni and prospective students - and posts that are only interesting for a limited audience will have a hard time reaching a large audience due to the social media algorithms.
- If you are trying to reach a limited audience, there are usually alternatives:
  - Vacancies should be posted to our job boards, not social media.
  - Information for current students should be shared through the Student Portal and the narrowcasting system
  - Information for staff should be shared through MyUniversity and the narrowcasting system
  - Sometimes advertising is a better way of reaching your target audience. For example, if you want to promote an event to prospective students in a certain area, or want to reach parents of students about an event. Also relevant if you want to share your news only with people that are specifically interested in your topic.

If you have important news that you’d like to share, but has been denied, you could always contact one of us below. Please note that the earlier you involve us with your project, the more we can help you create content that will work for our channels.

- Selma de Vries, selma.de.vries@rug.nl, coordinator Facebook, LinkedIn + Instagram
- Jorien Bakker, j.a.bakker@rug.nl, coordinator Twitters
- Rutger Brood, r.h.brood@rug.nl, coordinator social media advertising

7. Personal social media accounts by staff members

These are allowed, of course! However,

- present yourself as an individual. Do not use UG logos nor the name of the UG and make sure it is clear that your opinions do not reflect the UG. This needs to be explicitly stated if you mention working for the UG in your bio.
• do not spread false information about the UG. Only share information about the UG that is verified and not confidential.
• watch out: your content may not always be private even if your privacy-settings are high.
• you are responsible for your online expressions - however, realize that you can be affiliated with the UG.

Contact

Communications Department
UG Social Media Team
UG House Style Team
Oude Boteringestraat 44
9712 GL Groningen
socialmedia@rug.nl
huisstijl@rug.nl
Tel: 050-3634444

Corporate accounts:
www.twitter.com/univgroningen
www.facebook.com/universityofgroningen
www.youtube.com/universityGroningen
https://www.linkedin.com/school/rijksuniversiteit-groningen/
www.instagram.com/universityofgroningen
WhatsApp: +31649230111