University of Groningen

Social Media guidelines 2017-2018

1. Introduction

Social media is an important part of 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, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and WhatsApp, among others. In addition to the corporate social media accounts, there are several accounts managed by faculties, degree programmes and services within the UG in connection with their particular communication goals.

These new guidelines have been written to protect the University brand and organization, the staff and the users of social media. Furthermore, they are designed to help 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 channels should be active platforms on which not only push messages are sent but dialogue is encouraged, through discussion and interaction. We aim to create an international online community which reflects 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.

Recognizability
With so many different UG and UG-related social media accounts, it is important that audiences are able to recognize official UG-accounts and can distinguish
between different accounts, so they will be easier to find. 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 recognizability, the following logos must be used:

- Corporate units will use the white [social media logo](#) on a red background.

![Corporate Logo](#)

- Faculties will use a red social media logo on a white background.

![Faculty Logo](#)

- Services may design their own thumbnail using the following guidelines, or use a red University social media logo on a white background.

![Service Logo](#)

The icons can be found in the [logo database](#).

**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 organization.

Thumbnail designs have to be approved by 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.

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 UniversityofGroningen or Groningen in your handle whenever possible.

Key messages
● Societal value of our scientific research
● Student life + life in Groningen
● UG as Top 100 institution – over 400 years of research and academic excellence
● International community
● Healthy ageing, Energy, Sustainable Society

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 platforms. Check out in-depth guidelines for images on different platforms.
● Using photos makes it easier to cross-post over different social media platforms.
● Videos should always include subtitles, since most audiences will view them without sound. English subtitles are the most appropriate, even when English is spoken in the video.
● Keep texts short and easy to read + use appropriate humour 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 at least once a month.

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/organizations (on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) to increase reach. Think of: @univgroningen #Groningen #RUG #nothingtopsgroningen #university #name of discipline
- Shorten URLs.
- Check your sources before you post and repost messages. Avoid posting ‘fake news’ stories by using only verified and recognizable news sources, especially when posting about scientific research.
- Avoid posting or reposting posts from commercial third parties.
- English must be the main language of all social media platforms unless the target audience is specifically Dutch (such as the Scholierenacademie).
- Make posts personal as well as appropriate for a University. You may use smileys and exclamation marks occasionally to connect with audiences, but the UG must come across as a professional organization.
- Positive and neutral comments: Reply to and like whenever appropriate and possible, ask questions to initiate 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 containing curse words or personal attacks should always be deleted.

Targeting and Advertising
- Organic posts, for example on Facebook or Twitter, 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 use your social media channels for advertising. Most platforms have two options for advertising: boosting existing posts and creating new ads. We advise using only the latter. Need help with social media advertising? Contact socialmedia@rug.nl to contact one of our social media experts.

Analytics
- Analysing results by measuring engagement, click-through-rate, likes, followers and sentiment will lead to posts better suited to your target audience.
5. Advice 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><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
<td>1–2 times a day</td>
<td>Photo or videos with 1 or 2 lines of text. Also use photos when posting a link. Minimize reposting from third party: make your own posts, including picture</td>
<td>Broad audience: Facebook can be used to reach a wide 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 a list of best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
<td>Once a 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 a list of best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter</strong></td>
<td>3 times a day</td>
<td>Keep it short and include visuals when possible, incorporate relevant hashtags to increase reach, ask questions and use polls</td>
<td>Older audience, academic audiences, press, politics, alumni</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for a list of best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LinkedIn</strong></td>
<td>Once or twice a week</td>
<td>Relevant to business-minded audience, corporate updates. Visuals still important.</td>
<td>Prospective Master’s or PhD students, staff, prospective staff</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for a list of best practices</td>
</tr>
<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 a list of best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snapchat</strong></td>
<td>1–5 times a day</td>
<td>Action-filled, short videos</td>
<td>Prospective students, current students, young audience</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:socialmedia@rug.nl">socialmedia@rug.nl</a> for a list of best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YouTube</strong></td>
<td>As often as possible, minimum of 10 to start</td>
<td>Videos, both short, fast-paced clips and longer content</td>
<td>Broad audiences, younger audiences</td>
<td>Use keywords and tags to increase reach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other social media**

Various social media have worldwide reach, but some prospective students may only be able to use the social media available in their home country. The Marketing Department uses different social media accounts, such as the Chinese
WeChat, to communicate. Please contact socialmedia@rug.nl if you are interested in foreign social media accounts.

6. Personal social media accounts of staff members

These are allowed, of course! However,

- present yourself as an individual. Do not use UG logos or the name of the UG, and make sure it is clear that your opinions do not reflect those of 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, but be aware that you can be seen as being 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: 050-36 34444

Corporate accounts:

www.twitter.com/univgroningen
www.facebook.com/universityofgroningen
www.pinterest.com/univgroningen
www.youtube.com/universityGroningen
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