Red Deer Polytechnic

Social Media Manual	
Parent Policy: Brand Standards Policy	
Category: Administrative	**Approval Date:** November 9, 2020
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Procedure Administrator: Strategic Communications and Marketing	**Review Period:** 5 Years
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PURPOSE

To outline specific directions on how to implement and comply with the Brand Standards Policy and the Media Relations Policy and Media Relations Procedure.

SECTION 1: Red Deer Polytechnic Official Accounts

Definition: social media accounts representing Red Deer Polytechnic, its brand, services, departments, divisions, programs or Schools. These accounts are created by Polytechnic Schools, divisions or departments to transmit information, promote events, and assist in student recruitment and retention.

Naming Convention for Red Deer Polytechnic Official Accounts

Every account representing the Polytechnic in an official capacity must include "Red Deer Polytechnic," "the Polytechnic," or "RDP" in its name and description.

Profile pictures for official accounts are created by Strategic Communications and Marketing, using the Polytechnic's master logo and the School, division or department name. Once official profile pictures are established, they do not change.

Cover photos or videos may be changed to reflect seasons, initiatives or current calls to action, but should adhere to Red Deer Polytechnic brand guidelines and size dimensions. Strategic Communications and Marketing can assist official account content managers with creating and updating cover photos or videos.

General Guidelines for Official Accounts

- Determine the goal and strategy behind the account. Know who your audience is.

- When possible, create and display posting guidelines for your audience; and stick to them. For example, if you indicate 'no posting commercial or promotional messages to your page', delete these.

- Set up e-mail notifications so you know when someone posts to your page or mentions your account.

- Determine if your account will be monitored by a team or individual.

- Ensure your account is set up according to the platform's regulations and policies.

- Respond to your audience's questions and criticism; do not automatically censor a negative post.

- Decide what instances may require account operators to seek guidance from supervisors or Strategic Communications and Marketing before responding to users.

- Posts that are spam or offensive or do not follow your page's posting guidelines should be removed.

- Think about how you are going to measure the success of your account: post views, number of shares/likes, counts of followers and fans, audience engagement; will you utilize analytic and scheduling tools to measure your efforts?

- Always go back to your social strategy to review:
  - What is the purpose of the post;
  - Will our audience engage/be interested;
  - Spelling, context and grammar;
  - Appropriate use of hashtags and tagging users;
  - Does it embody Red Deer Polytechnic's brand character?

Give them what they want. Pay attention to engagement levels, click through rates and analytics. This data gives you some insight into what your audience likes. Focus on the needs and wants of your audience when creating content.

Keep it short. Web content is best served in short, informative bursts. Written content should not exceed 200 - 300 words and videos should remain under 2 minutes. Social media has changed how people consume content and filter content. They are looking to be entertained and informed in a very short period of time (roughly 15 seconds).

Be accurate. Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly to be transparent with your followers.

Be respectful. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it is wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Your reputation, and the Polytechnic's, is best served when you remain above the fray. Always be honest and respectful.

Think before you post. There is no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be screenshot or copied. Do not post anything on any social media site that you would not want quoted on a billboard.

Maintain confidentiality. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Red Deer Polytechnic, its students, its faculty, its employees or alumni. Use good ethical judgment and follow Polytechnic policies.

Check and update often. Social media is first and foremost a platform for audience engagement. Fans and followers expect quick responses and valuable content. Enable notifications for your account to be alerted when your audience interacts with you, respond as quickly as possible— within the hour, if possible; at least within the day, even if it is only to say: "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you."

Maintain your account. Audiences follow social media accounts with the expectation that content will be maintained and updated on a regular basis. Do not allow a lapse in content, even during holidays or summer months you should arrange for someone to monitor your accounts. If an account remains dormant for more than 3 months (with no activity from the account), Strategic Communications and Marketing will contact the account administrator to revisit a content strategy or assist in the removal of the account.

Monitor. Keep an eye on conversations that are happening around your department/area. Not everyone will tag you in their tweet or post, and it's important to monitor what people are saying about the Polytechnic directly and indirectly so we're aware of the conversations. Do so by searching hashtags and words that people would use to talk about the Polytechnic or anything that relates to your specific department/area, etc.

Know your platform. Your followers have content and frequency expectations based on what social platform you are using to engage with them. Contact Strategic Communications and Marketing for platform-specific expectations and guidelines.

Be aware of liability. You *can* be held legally liable for what you post through an account.

SECTION 2: Red Deer Polytechnic Professional Accounts

Definition: social media account designed to present an individual's scholarly work, course activities and/or professional interests. It may mention an affiliation with the Polytechnic; however, views and content shared or created are not intended to reflect the views and values of the institution.

Naming Convention for Red Deer Polytechnic Professional Accounts

Should faculty or administration wish to create an account to discuss their field of expertise, scholarly activity or classroom activities on a social media platform, a professional account or page should include the person's name and field of expertise. For example, John Doe, PhD - Biology Instructor.

Adding a Disclaimer. A common practice among individuals who write about the field in which they work is to include a disclaimer on their site, usually in an "About" section of a social media profile. If you discuss your teaching, course curriculum and/or scholarly activity on a professional account, you must include a sentence similar to this: *"The views expressed on this [blog, website, social media account] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Red Deer Polytechnic."*

Professional accounts must use a naming convention which does not convey the account as an Official Red Deer Polytechnic Account. In practice, this means that "Red Deer Polytechnic" or "the Polytechnic" can't be used in the name of the account.

Red Deer Polytechnic's logo or other elements of Red Deer Polytechnic's brand can't be used in the profile or cover photos.

General Guidelines for Red Deer Polytechnic Professional Accounts

In addition to the Guidelines identified earlier in the Red Deer Polytechnic Official Account section, a couple of other items to note specifically relating to Red Deer Polytechnic Professional Accounts include:

Don't make endorsements. Do not use Red Deer Polytechnic's name or identity to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party or candidate.

Communicating with students. Instead of following students on social networks, consider creating a learning group or hashtag for your program. This will allow you to communicate with students on a platform they are comfortable with, while respecting privacy and boundaries.

SECTION 3: Student Society Accounts

Definition: social media accounts representing official Student Societies established through the Students' Association of Red Deer Polytechnic, to inform followers about Society information and events. It may mention an affiliation with the Polytechnic and the Students' Association (SA); however, views and content shared or created are not intended to reflect the views and values of the Polytechnic or SA.

Naming Convention for Student Society Accounts

Should Student Societies wish to create an account to discuss their field of study, activities, events, or share other information on a social media platform, a Student Society account or page should include the name of the Society. These accounts may wish to (but don't have to) include "Red Deer Polytechnic" or "the Polytechnic" in the name. For example, Red Deer Polytechnic Social Work Student Society.

Adding a Disclaimer. A common practice among individuals is to include a disclaimer on their site, usually in an "About" section of a social media profile. Student Societies must include a sentence similar to this: "*The Red Deer Polytechnic Social Work Student Society is affiliated with the Students' Association of Red Deer College. The views expressed on this [blog, website, social media account] are those of the Red Deer Polytechnic Society Work Student Society alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Red Deer College or the Students' Association of Red Deer Polytechnic.*"

Red Deer Polytechnic's logo or other elements of Red Deer Polytechnic's brand can be used in the profile or cover photo of a Student Society Account. To do so, the Polytechnic logo (or other elements of Red Deer Polytechnic's brand) and permission to use it must be obtained from Strategic Communications and Marketing or from the Marketing & Communications Coordinator in the Students' Association. Permission to use the Students' Association logo or elements of its brand must be obtained from the Marketing & Communications Coordinator in the Students' Association.

SECTION 4: Student-Generated Communities

Formal or informal student communities on social media platforms are popular forums for students to converse and discuss their experiences at Red Deer Polytechnic. These groups focus on campus life and student experiences at the Polytechnic.

Some examples of these types of social media accounts are Facebook Groups or Pages such as: Red Deer Polytechnic Confessions, Chitter, and Yik Yak.

These student communities are monitored by the Strategic Communications and Marketing and used to inform social media strategies by gaining insight to the student body, their concerns, and their celebrations.

These groups are run by students for students. While you may intend to engage as an individual expressing support, ideas or opinions, you are also engaging as a Red Deer Polytechnic employee. Please avoid intervening, commenting or otherwise engaging in these social media communities, unless absolutely necessary, such as a report or threat of violence or harassment on campus.

SECTION 5: Emergency Situations

Threat of Violence on Campus or Student of Concern

If you receive a threat of violence on any social media account you manage, see a threat while monitoring other online conversations, or see indication that a student is considering self-harm or suffering from depression immediately:

1. Screen capture the online post

2. Contact Campus Security and Strategic Communications and Marketing to notify them of the threat, include the screen capture in the email and as much information as possible.

3. Strategic Communications and Marketing will monitor the situation on social media and provide further updates to Campus Security.

SECTION 6: Social Media Advertising

The Red Deer Polytechnic Strategic Communications and Marketing manages all online advertising, for recruitment, retention, event promotion and general awareness of the Polytechnic, partnering with Red Deer Polytechnic's Schools and Service Departments. Contact your School or Service Department's Marketing Strategist or call extension 4953 to discuss online advertising.

SECTION 7: Social Media Response Guidelines

Inappropriate Conduct

Sometimes a few bad words can spoil a good conversation. The vast majority of social media interactions are appropriate, but it's important to know how to handle abusive language and situations on social media when they occur.

Follow this general procedure in the case of inappropriate comments on social media:

- Evaluate opportunities for a constructive response.

    a. If yes, respond in a friendly and upbeat manner, with a link to more information

or a point of contact. Monitor for new developments.

    b. If no:

        1. Do not engage

        2. Screen capture the post

        3. Forward the post to Strategic Communications and Marketing, and monitor for new developments

        4. If appropriate, work with Strategic Communications and Marketing to formulate a response

        5. If necessary, hide or delete post

        6. Contact social@rdpolytech.ca for additional support with inappropriate conduct on social media.

SECTION 8: Branding and Visual Elements

Photos

Images undoubtedly enhance social media posts. Authentic images are more engaging for audiences than stock photos. If you require an image that cannot be conveyed with photo, ensure the image you choose is fair use and not obtained from an image search. Visit Pexels or Pixabay for free fair use images.

GIFs

GIFs (looping video image) are a fun way to interact with your audience and add a visual element to your tweets and stories. Twitter and Instagram incorporates a 'GIF keyboard' or 'GIF sticker' so you can easily search for an image to enhance your messaging. Ensure the GIFs you choose have legible font (if applicable) and support the message of your tweet or story. Pop culture references are great additions; however, before utilizing a GIF ensure you know they full context and history of the reference.

SECTION 9: Best Practices for Each Social Media Platform Facebook

Facebook is aimed at engaging followers and informing your community. Facebook users range from teens to seniors, and typically Red Deer Polytechnic's Facebook followers are current students, alumni or parents of students and community stakeholders. Facebook pages also act as a customer service tool and often receive numerous inquiries about programming, deadlines/ fees, etc.

General Guidelines

- Don't create a "dummy" account to operate your Facebook page; you must have your own Facebook account to become a page Administrator or Editor.

- Set up notifications so you know when fans are interacting with your page and you can reply in a timely manner.

- Add 'monitored hours' to your 'About' section to set expectations of when your followers can expect replies to their inquiries, i.e.: "This page is monitored between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays". However, please be prepared to

watch the page outside these hours in case defamatory or explicit content is posted to your page (you can also add approvals to your page so that nothing is posted without your approval).

- Know the rules and regulations of a page. If you plan to promote something with a contest, ensure you are following Facebook's rules or limits may be placed on your page.

- Adding visuals to your posts enhances the appeal of the content.

Posting Expectations

- Publishing more posts does not equal more followers or engagement- more enticing content does.

- Your audience doesn't likely expect you to post every day. Since content on Facebook lives longer than on Twitter or Instagram, it is okay to post something every other day.

- You may still post daily; however, your posts should be relevant to your followers so they engage with your content. Don't post just for the sake of posting. The more your posts produce audience engagement the more organic reach they will have.

Strengths and Weaknesses

After content is posted it may not be appear immediately in your followers' timelines. There is no magic time to post that will help get your content seen in user timelines; rather, who sees your content and when is determined by how engaging it is.

The Facebook algorithm does not usually work in the poster's favour; Facebook likes to entice users to 'boost posts' (pay) to get their content seen. For these reasons, if you have a last minute item to promote, Facebook is not the best tool to reach your audience quickly; try to allow a few days lead time.

On the other hand, Facebook does offer its live video option, which notifies your followers when pages they like and their friends 'go live'. This is an additional tool you can use, from time to time, so not to annoy your followers with repetitive notifications.

Quick Tips & Tricks

- If you're talking about another page, tag them in your post so that they're aware and may help share your content. Type '@' at the beginning of their name to tag.

- Facebook stories are pictures or short videos that disappear after 24 hours. Tap the camera icon in the top left corner of the screen, a camera screen will come up, which you can put in selfie mode or camera mode. Snap away or record a short video. You will then see a white circle with an arrow in it which, when tapped, will take you to the 'share photo page'. This is where you can choose to send it to a particular person, add to your Facebook timeline, or add to 'your story' which will mean it is visible to all your friends.

- Hiding a Post: Facebook includes a useful feature for dismissing off-topic or derogatory comments, called "Hiding. When you hide a post, only the original poster (and their friends) will be able to see their comment. This is a useful tactic for keeping conversations on topic, without openly deleting the post.

- Try using the page tabs. Facebook is creating tabs for different reasons (i.e. promoting jobs, events, videos, services, community, groups, etc.). These tabs can help share

specific information in a dedicated spot.

- Use Facebook Insights to find out who your followers are, how they interact with your posts, and pull statistics for posts, videos, and much more.

- Take some time to sit down and plan out your posts. Facebook has a scheduling tool, 'Creator Studio', which can help manage your time and busy schedule so your Facebook is still active.

Twitter

Twitter is micro content, presented in 280 characters or less. It gives you the ability to talk on trending topics, discoverable by *#hashtags*, and connect with other users. Twitter is more popular with millennials and middle-aged adults, both male and female.

Red Deer Polytechnic uses Twitter to promote news, events, remind students of important deadlines and, due to its algorithm, it is the primary social media tool for crisis communications.

Posting Expectations

- Depending on how many accounts you follow, content can move fast! It's not uncommon for an account to post up to 20 times per day. **BUT** the content should be valuable to the followers and some of those posts should be replies and conversations, not all one-way promotions.

Strengths & Weaknesses

- There are only 280 characters to work with, so sometimes you have to be very concise and crafty in your messaging, or deliberate and make your tweets into a chain or story.

- Content can move down people's timelines very quickly; ensure you use relevant hashtags or tag people so that your tweets get noticed and cause some engagement.

- Twitter makes regular enhancements, with the newest being the reply feature. This will allow your reply to be 280 characters and removes the account names as part of that count, which was the previous format.

Quick Tips & Tricks

- Don't start a tweet with @. Starting a tweet this way acts like a direct reply and only people that follow both you and the person you're talking to will see the conversation. If you want more people to see your reply or tweet, either start the tweet with a word or a period in front of the @.

- Use Twitter analytics to find out who your followers are, including their demographics and interests, so you can better cater your content to what they would like.

- Enhance your reach by adding a photo to your tweet and tagging relevant accounts in the photo- this allows you to notify/reach more people so that they can help spread your content.

Instagram

Instagram is photo-sharing platform that is great for unique images and snapshots of life on campus - this could be campus architecture or student/staff portraits. People like to see artsy photos of the Red Deer Polytechnic's campuses, but they also like relatable images (students studying in the Forum) with real people. Think of Instagram like an online photo album.

Like Twitter, hashtags are used to make content discoverable. Red Deer Polytechnic engages with both current and prospective students on Instagram, as well as local businesses and community members. Users follow one another and 'like' or comment on each other's posts or videos.

Instagram also allows for one minute video posts that are shared to users' timelines, just like still photos.

One feature Instagram has is called 'Stories' which are short video clips (up to 15 seconds) or photos with a shelf life of 24 hours. Consider the videos and photos that appear within Stories as 'behind the scenes' content where it's more authentic and less curated. These appear outside a user's regular timeline and are a separate function in the platform. Instagram is always creating new stickers, polls, and features on Stories so make sure you keep up to date with them to make the most of it.

Similar to YouTube, Instagram has a feature called 'IGTV' which are longer video clips (minimum 1-minute, and up to 60 minutes), designed to feel like you're watching TV. These videos should be more thought out and planned than a video that might go on Stories.

Newer features to Instagram are 'Reels' and 'AR filters'. Reels are short and discoverable video clips which are entertaining to watch. You can record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio, effects, and new creative tools. Augmented reality (AR) filters are computer-generated effects layered over the real-life image your camera displays. They are used within Stories.

Posting Expectations

- Three or four times/week. Followers don't expect multiple posts per day, but you won't annoy them if you post a new photo/video daily. Plus, with the introduction of Stories on Instagram, you have new ways to share content with your audience.

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Like most social media platforms, Instagram has moved to an algorithm to display user content; it doesn't show up chronological. Instead, Instagram has tended to promote content with better engagement higher up user's timelines. The more a user engages with your content (likes, shares, comments, etc.), the more your content will appear in their feed and Stories. Engaging content is key to the success of your platform.

- Instagram is great for visual promotion. When combined with the description field, your posts can be powerful in creating your message and building an interactive following.

- Be mindful of the images you post because it is the image that will attract followers. Poor pictures (i.e. blurry or low-quality photos, graphics, photos with text-heavy content, posters, etc.) will have people that follow you skip past you in their feed and not read the message in your description

Quick Tips & Tricks

- To mention a 'friend' or other follower in your caption, type @ in front of their username (e.g., "great story, @reddeerpolytechnic"). Your friend will then receive a notification in their activity feed letting them know that you mentioned them. If you want to reply to

someone in a comment thread, just mention them, and they will get a notification in their activity feed as well.

- If you're uploading a new photo and want to tag someone, tap on the person or object in the image that you want to tag and enter their name or Instagram username.

- To get your social accounts linked, go to the *Profile Tab > Linked Accounts > Share Settings*, then select which accounts you want to connect. Every time you upload a photo to Instagram, you'll have the option to select which photos you want to share to each of the social networks.

- To hide a photo that you're tagged in (it will appear in 'Photos of You'), **tap the**

  photo **and your Instagram handle will appear**. Tap your handle. When a menu pops up, select **Hide From My Profile**. If you don't want to be tagged at all in the photo, go to the **More Options** button and choose **Remove Me From Photo**.

- Think twice about why you're hashtagging your pictures: is it to get them seen by more people or to add them to the mix at a public event? Pick hashtags that are too common and they'll get lost in the flood, so keep them relevant and use them sparingly.

- Make use of the location tag when posting to your feed or Stories. Users can look up a location and see all of the posts and Stories with that location tag. Use 'Red Deer Polytechnic' as the location.

- Your profile is the first page that strangers see when they're checking out your Instagram feed, so make sure you give them a few good reasons to tap the Follow button. Direct visitors to your website by making use of the website field.

- Having your feed look cohesive and clean will draw more people to your page. To do this, try to edit your pictures strategically with the same filter each time so they create a nice flow throughout your feed.

Want your Stories to live longer than 24 hours? You'll want to tap the 'Highlight' button and upload it there. Your Story will stay up on your feed until you manually remove it. This is a great way to keep your content alive. Remember, not everything needs to be saved to your Highlights. Try creating themes to your different Highlight topics – kind of like a Table of Contents.

SECTION 10: Official Red Deer Polytechnic Hashtags

Hashtag List

Use Red Deer Polytechnic's hashtags to keep the conversation going. Be strategic about what hashtags you use and typically use one or two hashtags in a post. If you have a hashtag you would like added to the list, send it to social@rdpolytech.ca.

#MyRDP	Showcasing all that is happening within Red Deer Polytechnic. Used for sharing a campus experience, student stories, or connecting with our Polytechnic community. *Used majority of the time.

#RedDeerPolytechnic	Used when reaching a larger audience when generally speaking about the Polytechnic. Replace with #RDP (even though students and community members use #RDP, it means a variety of things on the internet that the Polytechnic does not want to be associated with).
#WelcomeToRDP	Welcoming accepted students and promoting different events and activities the first week of the fall semester.
#RDPAlumni	Keep in touch and updated about what Red Deer Polytechnic alumni are doing.
#RDPAthletics	For general Red Deer Polytechnic Athletics use.
#RDPLibrary	For general Library use.
#SummerAtRDP	Promotion of the School of Extended Education Summer Camps and Succession.
#RDPOResidence	Everything Residence related.
#SeriesAtRDP	Promotion of the School of Extended Education Series Summer Arts School.
#MyKingsMyQueens	Showcasing all that is happening within our Kings and Queens Athletics' teams.

SECTION 11: Contact Information

Red Deer Polytechnic Strategic Communications and Marketing creates and manages all Principle Institutional Accounts. These social media accounts represent Red Deer Polytechnic as a whole, including transmitting information, promoting events, and assisting in student recruitment and retention.

Strategic Communications and Marketing is pleased to support employees who manage Red Deer Polytechnic Official Accounts or Professional Accounts by providing a variety of expertise including:

- Account set-up
- Training
- Best practices research
- Social media strategies
- Engagement analysis support
- Crisis communications

Please contact Red Deer Polytechnic's Strategic Communications and Marketing department to obtain Red Deer Polytechnic's logo and permission to use it, or other elements of Red Deer Polytechnic's brand on any social media platform. In addition, the Marketing & Communications department is pleased to help individuals regarding any technical social media issues they may encounter, to discuss editorial content or brainstorming social media content, and to answers you may have.

Email social@rdpolytech.ca or call 403.356.4953.