

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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## PURPOSE

- AFTRS supports and encourages constructive, open dialogue and the exchange of ideas between staff, students and contractors at all levels within the School, in Industry and beyond. One channel of communication is through participation in social media channels and technologies (social media).
- The purpose of this policy is to provide AFTRS staff, students and contractors with guidelines for the effective and appropriate use of social media as part of their role at the School (official use) and when engaging in personal use of social media technologies (unofficial use).
- Due to the dynamic nature of social media and rapid advancements in technology development, this policy and guidelines will be updated regularly to reflect the changing needs and trends of social media channels, technologies, use and application.

## SCOPE

- This policy applies to all use of social media (except for non-identifiable private use of social media, as defined below) by all staff, students and contractors of AFTRS.
- This policy applies to all social media. Without limiting the scope of its application, social media technology is described under Definitions below. This policy covers future social media, and access to social media by any means regardless of ownership.

## POLICY STATEMENT

- AFTRS encourages the use of social media channels and technologies by staff, students and contractors to connect with each other, Industry and a broader community of researchers, business partners, alumni, supporters and colleagues as an important tool of academic, community, and Industry engagement, research and learning.
- With the rapid growth and application of social media, AFTRS recognises the need to provide clear guidance about expectations when social media is used as part of employment, study or in association with the business of the School. In particular, this policy emphasises the expectations of a safe, inclusive, diverse and supportive working and learning environment as set out in the AFTRS Charter and both the staff and students' respective Codes of Conduct.
- All students and contractors at AFTRS can expect to be treated with respect and courtesy regardless of the channel used.

### Formal AFTRS Social Media Sites

- AFTRS uses social media to facilitate interaction between students, staff, industry collaborators, prospective students, alumni, friends and supporters, and for direct education, research and business purposes. There are a number of official AFTRS social media presences, including LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook, which have restrictions on the creation and posting of content. These sites are managed by the Digital Content & Communications Manager.
- Staff and students outside of the Marketing team may have or be given limited master access to AFTRS social media channels and technologies. Users will be given clear instructions on what is expected and will be monitored by the Digital Content & Communications Manager. Please refer to appendix A for more detailed guidelines.
- Staff, students and contractors may engage with official AFTRS social media in compliance with these guidelines, and in keeping with the values and best interests of the School. Contributions must be topically related to the particular site or blog article and must be in line with the AFTRS Charter and respective Code of Conduct.

### Formal Requests for Comment

From time to time AFTRS staff may be asked to speak or make comment on behalf of AFTRS. This includes public speaking; comments to the press or broadcasters; comments in web-based communications including social media and, expressions of views via letter or email.

AFTRS supports the ideal of full and open discussion as contributing to academic integrity, scholarship, the sharing of expertise and the dissemination of knowledge. In doing so, the School supports staff in making public comments that relate to their teaching and professional area of expertise. However, the CEO is the principal spokesperson for AFTRS on all matters. If you are asked to make public comment on behalf of AFTRS, please advise your Divisional Director and CEO before responding.

## GUIDELINES

### Students: Official vs Unofficial Use

- Official use constitutes the use of social media when done so under the banner of AFTRS, for the purposes of your learning, whether this is through AFTRS supported technology, in an AFTRS web supported environment or through an external vendor/ external site. Please ensure that you engage with these platforms in a professional manner. Any inappropriate usage of these platforms will be investigated by the Director of Teaching & Learning/Director, People & Culture, and you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.
- Unofficial use constitutes the personal use of social media outside the realms of AFTRS and not for the purpose of your learning. In these cases, please ensure that your personal posts or comments do not reveal confidential or sensitive information about any AFTRS staff or students without their express permission. If such instances were reported, you may be held accountable for any comments that breach AFTRS policies, in particular, the AFTRS Charter, the Bullying and Harassment policy and the Code of Conduct

### Staff: Official vs Unofficial Use

- Official use constitutes the use of social media when done so under the banner of AFTRS, for the purposes of your role, whether this is through AFTRS supported technology, in an AFTRS web supported environment or through an external vendor/ external site. Please refrain from making statements that could be perceived as advocating or criticising government policies.
- Unofficial use constitutes the personal use of social media outside the realms of AFTRS and not for the purpose of your role. In these cases, however, it is important to note that if you represent yourself as a representative of AFTRS and/or discuss matters relating to AFTRS in the public space, this can have a significant impact on the reputation of the School and/or our partners, and you may be held accountable for any comments that breach AFTRS policies and procedures, in particular, the AFTRS Charter and the Code of Conduct.
- In circumstances where you are publishing content on an AFTRS related topic to your own social media pages such as Twitter or Facebook, and followers are aware you are an AFTRS representative, it is important that you use a standard disclaimer such as 'The postings on this site are my own opinions and views and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of AFTRS'.
- Please also ensure that your personal posts or comments do not reveal confidential information or information that is not freely available about AFTRS including, but not limited to, aspects of AFTRS policy, finance, details of internal AFTRS discussion, or AFTRS employees. If such instances were reported, you may be held accountable for any comments that breach AFTRS policies, in particular, the AFTRS Charter, the Privacy policy and the Code of Conduct.

### Consider the Impact

- In both work and study at AFTRS, all staff and students are encouraged to express their opinions and ideas. However, we remind you that you are expected to do this in a way that is appropriate, relevant to the topic being discussed, and is respectful. Please consider the impact of your online interactions .
- Core to our school values, as well as our Charter and Code of Conduct, is that we act with respect and generosity. Negative and/or personal derogatory comments on social media can be harmful – even if harm is unintended. Online attacks can cause real and deep emotional and psychological distress. Comments that would be deemed inappropriate in normal conversation are no different in the online or social media environment. And in the online space, it can be harder to gauge the day someone is having, or the lived experiences people are bringing to the conversation.
- Please always pause and think about what you want to say before responding or commenting. Consider all of your posts and comments through the lens of the AFTRS Charter, Code of Conduct and Bullying & Harassment Policy.

## **Breaches of Charter or Code of Conduct**

- AFTRS respects your right to have an opinion and we trust that you will respect the rights of your colleagues and peers to have and express their ideas and concerns. However, comments that breach the AFTRS Charter or Code of Conduct, or that could be considered, offensive, discriminatory, obscene, defamatory or illegal will be immediately removed (where possible) or you will be requested to remove such posts and/or comments.
- Posts and/or comments of this nature will be investigated and followed up by the Director of People & Culture. This applies where you have made a post/comment on your own personal social media account and there is a clear connection between yourself and AFTRS. The Bullying and Harassment policy may come into effect in these instances and you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## **Issues Involving or Relating to the School**

- If a sensitive or negative issue is being discussed in a public or social media forum that relates to the School, responding can often inflame the issue by making individuals or lobby groups believe AFTRS is 'concerned' or 'upset' about their discussion, or that the School is likely to change a decision. Staff, students and contractors are expected to consult with the Digital Content & Communications Manager, Student Engagement Manager or Director, People & Culture before responding.

## **Respect Copyright, Intellectual Property and Privacy**

- Please do not post content that includes material that is not your own work without proper reference or acknowledgement of that work and the source. Please note that you may not post or tag images of individuals or of their work in open or closed groups that relate to AFTRS and its staff and/or students unless they have given you permission to do so.
- You will be directed to remove posts featuring the work or faces of students without their permission.

## **Personal Responsibility**

- Remember that what you write is ultimately your responsibility. While AFTRS respects the right of its staff and students to participate in social media, you will be held accountable for anything you publish (on official and unofficial social media sites) that breaches AFTRS policies.

## **Staff: Connecting with Students via Social Media**

- AFTRS recognises that social media plays an increasing part in how we communicate and share ideas today. In order to manage real or perceived conflicts of interest, please only engage with current students via social media platforms on a professional basis.
- It is preferred that you connect professionally with students through professional social media platforms such as LinkedIn, however AFTRS also notes the increasing role Facebook has in professional connections with pages such as the AFTRS Noticeboard, I NEED CREW and Film & TV Networking, becoming increasingly popular ways to connect.
- Where a student has requested to connect with you via traditionally personal social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, please take a moment to consider whether your page or timeline contains anything that you would not want the general staff and student population to know about and whether it contains any content that could be considered contrary to the AFTRS Charter or the Code of Conduct.
- It is advised that you do not provide personal information that can put you at risk.
- Please also take a moment to consider whether you would be happy for your entire student cohort to connect with you on a personal platform. If the answer is no, then it is best to use professional connection platforms like LinkedIn to ensure there is no real or perceived conflict of interest.

## **Remember The Internet is Forever**

- What you publish on the internet can remain public for a long time. Content can be replicated and shared beyond the original intended audience and viewed out of context by recipients who it was never intended for. It is recommended that you review the terms and conditions of social media channels and technologies that you are regularly using as some third-party sites claim your content as their property.
- Do not rely on the security settings of the social media channel or technology as a guarantee of privacy. It is recommended that you adjust your privacy settings according to your own needs.

## **COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING ISSUES: MISCONDUCT & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

- Staff and students are expected to comply with AFTRS policies and refrain from engaging in any discriminatory or harassing behaviour. Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.
- Staff and/or students who see a post that they consider to be in breach of the Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment policy or the AFTRS Charter are encouraged to report this to the Digital Content & Communications Manager, Student Engagement Manager, Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning.
- Staff members who believe they are being bullied, harassed or discriminated against via social media should raise their concerns with their manager, Divisional Director or the Director, People & Culture.
- Students who believe they are being bullied, harassed or discriminated against via social media should raise their concerns with the Student Engagement Manager, Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning.
- In the first instance, where appropriate, staff and students are encouraged to make use of the options for conciliation or mediation as part of the informal resolution process, before proceeding to lodge a formal grievance. Instances where this may be inappropriate include where there are threats of physical violence, which should be reported to AFTRS Security or the Police. Students are encouraged to contact Student Centre and/or a Safe Conversation Officer for personal assistance and support if they are experiencing sexual harassment. A list of current Safe Conversation Officers can be found on Moodle.
- All complaints will be investigated in a confidential manner. If found to have grounds, remedial or disciplinary action will be taken. In serious cases this may involve expulsion or dismissal. Normal disciplinary procedures apply.

## **Significant Issues Involving the School**

- If a significant issue arises within social media, particularly one affecting or implicating AFTRS staff or students, the following steps will be taken:
  1. Digital Content & Communications Manager, Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning will review and identify the level of issue, those discussing the issue, the forums used and the extent of the commentary along with any legal ramifications
  2. Digital Content & Communications Manager, Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning will follow the conversations to maintain a clear and current understanding of what is being discussed
  3. If appropriate, Executive Team briefed and assessment of commentary for accuracy / defamation / legal issues / organisational sensitivities
  4. Where appropriate, the Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning will conduct an investigation. If found to have grounds, normal disciplinary procedures will apply
- If directed by AFTRS, staff, students and contractors must remove, and cooperate with all attempts to remove, any comment, post or other online content that is deemed to be in breach of this policy or any other AFTRS policy and procedure.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Executive Team

- The Director, People & Culture is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and the investigation and management of issues relating to this policy, in conjunction with the Director, Teaching & Learning where relevant.
- The Director, Partnerships & Development is responsible for the scheduled review of this policy, in conjunction with the Director, People & Culture.
- The Executive Team is responsible for ensuring that the policy is shared, understood, promoted and role modelled.
- The Executive Team is responsible for updating the Business Risk Management report in relation to activities and issues relating to this policy.

### Marketing: Digital Content & Communications Team

- Provide strategic advice on the appropriate and best use of AFTRS social media channels for community engagement
- Manage the AFTRS primary public social media channels and technologies
- Ensure social media channels are updated with content that promotes and supports the AFTRS community
- Actively monitor and respond to public contributions and comments, managing the brand
- Identify and respond to any controversial and/or sensitive commentary about AFTRS or relating to AFTRS staff, students and alumni in any public social media channels

### People Leaders & Student Engagement Managers

- Understand, promote and role model the policy
- Provide advice and guidance to staff and students on issues relating to their own or identified controversial or sensitive posts
- Refer content that potentially breaches the AFTRS Charter, Code of Conduct or any other policy to their divisional director or the Director, People & Culture

### Individual Staff & Students

- Monitor and moderate their own professional accounts, profiles and networks
- Seek advice from the Digital Content & Communications Manager, Student Engagement Manager, Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning on issues relating to their own or identified controversial or sensitive posts

## DEFINITIONS

- Terms and definitions:

**AFTRS Business:** includes but is not limited to, financial, commercial in-confidence, service providers, works and/or stakeholders associated with the school.

**Non-identifiable private use of social media:** use of social media in a way that does not associate the user with AFTRS and/or does not involve AFTRS or have an impact on the AFTRS brand or reputation.

**Official Use:** constitutes the use of social media when done so under the banner of AFTRS, for the purposes of your role, whether this is through AFTRS supported technology, in an AFTRS web supported environment or through an external vendor/ external site.

**Social Media Technologies:** web-based technologies that enable users to create, share, build networks and discuss content in virtual communities and networks.

**Unofficial Use:** constitutes the personal use of social media outside the realms of AFTRS and not for the purpose of your role.

## RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

AFTRS Student Rules, Policies and Procedures (Student Handbook)  
AFTRS Enterprise Agreement 2017  
Business Risk Management Framework  
Code of Conduct (Staff)  
Code of Conduct (Students)  
Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2018  
Grievance Procedures  
ICT Acceptable Use Policy  
Misconduct Procedures  
Privacy Policy  
Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy 2017

## FEEDBACK

- AFTRS staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing [policy@aftrs.edu.au](mailto:policy@aftrs.edu.au).

## APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	CEO
Responsible Officer	Director, Partnerships & Development
Next Review Date	19 October 2023 (Three years from Effective Date)

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	19 October 2020
Amendment Authority and Date	<Add the previous approval authorities and amendment dates as Name DD/MM/YYYY; Name DD/MM/YYYY.> [Policy & Governance Officer adds the latest amendment information]
Notes	This document replaces Social Media Policy (Dec 2019) PPG154, and combines Social Media Policy and Procedures in one document.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: AFTRS Corporate Social Media Guidelines

The same high standards of conduct and behaviour expected of AFTRS staff and students, also apply when participating online through social media. Online participation should reflect and uphold the values, integrity and reputation of AFTRS.

The Digital Content & Communications Manager manages and authorises the use of all official AFTRS social media accounts. The Digital Content & Communications team are responsible for engaging online with current and/or prospective students, alumni, industry stakeholders and the general public in an official capacity.

In some cases, staff from other divisions and students may be asked to assist with this work, in a specific way, and they will be trained accordingly.

Comments made from AFTRS social media accounts must not:

- endorse or make judgements about specific film making equipment, products or services
- discuss circumstances surrounding AFTRS specific relationships with service providers or industry partners
- disclose or discuss commercially sensitive or confidential information
- make personal judgements about service providers or industry partners

If an online discussion involves specific individual circumstances or personal details, the moderator must 'switch channel' by directing current and/or prospective students, alumni, industry stakeholders and the general public to an alternative medium (e.g. telephone, direct message, email, letter, face-to-face) as appropriate.

#### **Making Public Comment**

In valuing the academic freedom of the AFTRS community, AFTRS also recognises its responsibilities as a national cultural and higher education institution. From time to time AFTRS staff may be asked to speak or make comment on behalf of AFTRS. This includes public speaking; comments to the press or broadcasters; comments in web-based communications including social media and, expressions of views via letter or email.

AFTRS supports the ideal of full and open discussion as contributing to academic integrity, scholarship, the sharing of expertise and the dissemination of knowledge. In doing so the School supports staff in making public comments that relate to their teaching or professional area of expertise. However, the CEO is the principal spokesperson for AFTRS on all matters

Official AFTRS media releases may only be issued with the approval of the CEO or the AFTRS Council.

In making public comment made in their area of teaching expertise the School expects that staff:

1. Adhere to this policy and with the AFTRS Charter and Code of Conduct
2. Advise their Divisional Director and CEO of any public comment they are invited to make and/or have made.
3. Will protect the privacy of personal information entrusted to them in the course of their employment
4. Will protect commercial-in-confidence information
5. Restrict their public expression of opinion or comment to matters that will not risk damage to the School's reputation
6. Must not represent a personal viewpoint as being that of the School
7. Ensure their comments can be evidenced

Any public comment on matters outside a staff member's recognised area of professional expertise must only be made in their capacity as a private citizen. In this circumstance staff must not:

1. Represent their comment(s) as being in their professional capacity as an expert or representative of AFTRS
2. Use the AFTRS name in association with their own
3. Make such comments/submissions using AFTRS letterhead and/or AFTRS electronic or physical address.



## APPENDIX B: Identifying and Addressing Issues

These guidelines are designed to assist you if you believe you may be the subject of online bullying or harassment. They are not meant to replace AFTRS formal processes outlined in this policy.

**Identify:** Online abuse can take many forms. According to a 2017 study, up to 40% of young people and 39% of adults report being socially excluded, threatened or abused online (eSafety, 2017; Roy & Burnside, 2019).

Online abuse is defined as the “repeated or severe targeting online of an individual or group through harmful behaviour.” Common tactics include hateful speech, sexual harassment, threats of physical and sexual violence, impersonation and non-consensual pornography.

If you’re being abused, naming what you’re experiencing not only signals that it’s a tangible problem, but can also help you communicate with responsible managers within the School as well as the Police if necessary.

**Document:** Ensure that you screenshot online abuse or harassment before reporting it to the platform. If you are successful in having it taken down, you may lose evidence that you later need.

If you’re being abused repeatedly by a specific individual or group, you may want to create a log, which can help you see patterns and build up evidence.

**Escalate:** Whether the abuse is coming from a member of the AFTRS community, or from outside of the School, escalate your concerns immediately to the Digital Content & Communications Manager, Student Engagement Manager, Director, People & Culture and/or Director, Teaching & Learning.

If the abuse is external to the School, we will support you as much as practically possible to address the issue and ensure you feel safe.

**Practice self-care:** Online abuse is not your fault. It is normal to feel scared, embarrassed, ashamed, exhausted and anxious. Try not to ignore your feelings. Make time for self-care practices such as meditating, reading, walking, cooking or listening to music and seek help. Students can access our in-house counsellor through the Student Centre and staff can access the EAP (details via People & Culture or the intranet).

**block / report / mute:** You can block accounts (so they cannot communicate with or follow you), and you can sometimes mute accounts or even specific posts or words (so you don’t have to see them). You can report abuse that violates terms of service to try to get a post taken down or an account suspended.

Worth noting however, blocking can escalate abuse, muting can mask threats you may need to monitor, and reporting mechanisms are not always effective, even when abusive content blatantly violates terms of service. Enlisting allies can help: Trusted friends or colleagues can keep tabs on your mentions while you’re blocking and muting, inform you of any escalation or threats, and report with and for you.

\*adapted from Vilks, V, 2020, *You’re not Powerless in the face of Online Harassment*

APPENDIX C: Case Studies (for use in training only – not to be included in the policy doc)

1. Student: You've been part of a workshop that you really loved. You took some pictures during the workshop of you, your team and the facilitators slides. You are writing a post about what a great day you had – do you post the pictures?
2. Staff: You see a post in an online community making a derogatory assessment of an AFTRS alumni film. You think the post is inappropriate and possibly even bordering on casual racism – what do you do?