University of Balamand

Policy for Use of Social Media Platforms

Title: Social Media Platforms Policy

Document Type: Public

Policy Owner: Office of the President, Office of Media and Communication (OMC)

Applies to: All members of the University of Balamand community

Effective date: Immediately

For More Information, Contact: Office of the Provost, Office of Media and Communication, Office of Student Affairs

Contact Information:

Provost@balamand.edu.lb or 06-930-250   Extension: 1633 or 1511

digital@balamand.edu.lb or 06-930-250   Extension: 1310

osa@balamand.edu.lb or 06-930-250   Extension: 3930

Official Website: https://www.balamand.edu.lb/AboutUOB/Pages/University-Policies.aspx

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Background

The University of Balamand (UOB) recognizes the value of the responsible and influential function of social media platforms in reaching a broad internal and external audience. The University of Balamand also emphasizes the purposeful use of social media to reflect the university's mission, values, and commitment to education and research excellence as well as to enhance community and social engagement and outreach.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the university community's engagement with social media platforms aligns with the University of Balamand's commitment to ethical conduct, academic excellence, professionalism and branding guidelines. The policy also governs the effective and responsible use of social media platforms by members of the university

community prioritizing both personal and university security and reputation while tagging, or mentioning the University of Balamand.

Applies to:

This policy is applicable to all members of the University of Balamand community when directly or indirectly mentioning university-related information on social media. This policy is applicable to all members of the UOB community involved in communication from, by, for, or about the university especially those managing UOB'social media platforms.

Definitions:

Social media: The term encompasses websites and applications that facilitate content creation and sharing, as well as platforms focusing on social networking, public or mass communication. This definition includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, Snapchat, X (previously known as Twitter), TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Reddit, Quora, Blogs, Vimeo and many others current and future.

Official social media account: Is an account formally approved by the University of Balamand Office of Media and Communication and authorized to use the University of Balamand logo. Examples are the accounts used in an official capacity by a Faculty, department, central office, study program or a university unit. Official social media accounts serve the purpose to disseminate university news and information, promote activities and/or communicate with the university community members or the public.

Crisis communication on social media: Is defined as a university reaction to any activity on social platforms that has the potential to negatively affect the institutional operations and/or the reputation of the University of Balamand. An emergency communication response extends beyond isolated instances of impolite comments or individual complaints.

Policy Statement

This policy ensures that the University of Balamand community's utilization of social media platforms aligns with the university's compliance with ethical standards, commitment to academic excellence, professionalism, and adherence to branding guidelines. While recognizing the importance of the freedom of speech and academic freedom as essential cornerstones of intellectual discourse within the academic community, the policy advocates for a purposeful, responsible and respectful online environment.

The policy for use of social media platforms stipulates the following:

1. The Office of Media and Communication (OMC), in consultation with and approval from the Office of the President, is responsible for the production and implementation of the University of Balamand social media strategy, overseeing the university's social media presence, and managing its accounts.

2. The Office of Media and Communication (OMC), upon consultation with and approval from the Office of the President, is the university entity that determines the social media sites where the University of Balamand establishes a presence.

3. All content or data to be published on social media on behalf of the University of Balamand must be approved by the Office of Media and Communication (OMC).

4. All content or data to be published on social media on behalf of the University of Balamand must be professionally presented (professional in quality, relevant in content), factually accurate, adhere to good language mechanics (grammar and spelling), and be plagiarism-free. The content or data must not violate any copyright laws or infringe on the intellectual property rights of others.

5. Any Faculty, department, institute or unit planning to start a new social media account must submit a request to the Office of Media and Communication (OMC) at digital@balamand.edu.lb for approval to ensure compliance with the University of Balamand social media strategy.

6. Any student organization or club planning to start a new social media account must submit a request to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) at osa@balamand.edu.lb. The OSA will in turn coordinate with the OMC to obtain the approval of the request.

7. The administrators of approved social media accounts must be faculty or staff members of the University of Balamand.

8. Administrators of approved social media accounts must seek guidance form the Office of Media and Communication (OMC) via minuted meetings prior to the accounts'online presence.

9. The Office of Media and Communication (OMC) must be granted access to all social media accounts as "owner" to enable the OMC to efficiently track and monitor all University of Balamand social media accounts.

10. Any changes to the designated account administrator(s) must be immediately reported to the Office of Media and Communication (OMC).

11. The campus, Faculty, department, institute or unit managing an approved social media platform must keep the site up-to-date with current and relevant UOB news in alignment with UOB's mission and values. Only social media accounts approved by the OMC may be listed on any official university web page, or print or electronic publication, as well as in the directory of social media pages available through the university website www.balamand.edu.lb.

12. The Office of Media and Communication (OMC) is the university entity that approves the use of the brand marks, logos, and designs on social media.

13. The University of Balamand is neither responsible nor liable for any opinion expressed or action taken by any member of the university community using social media for personal purposes. Although faculty, staff, and students are allowed to disclose their connection to UOB, when doing so, the University of Balamand community members should bear a disclaimer exonerating the university from their personal opinion. The University of Balamand bears no responsibility or accountability for any UOB community member's declared opinions.

14. University of Balamand members using social media accounts for personal purposes are not authorized to publish the UOB logo on their personal accounts but are allowed to share links to content made public by UOB's social media from the original source.

15. Social media accounts should not be used to announce official university news which has not yet been disclosed by the Office of Media and Communication (OMC). No confidential or proprietary information about the university should be posted on personal sites.

16. Faculty members using social media for teaching and learning must abide by the academic rules and regulations in addition to the social media policy.

17. The Office of Media and Communication (OMC) is the university entity that performs crisis communication, training on the use of social media platforms, social media awareness programs/guidelines, as well as monitoring and evaluation of social media pages.

18. All social media activities must adhere to national and international laws and must observe and respect the University of Balamand social climate and the societal customs.

Enforcement

The University of Balamand Use of Social Media Platforms policy is in alignment with UOB ethical standards and the professional conduct code in higher education. This policy is enforced by the Office of Media and Communication (OMC) that reports to the Office of the President.

The Office of Media and Communication (OMC) shall monitor the performance of all social media pages and generate quarterly analytic reports to be submitted to the Office of the President. The decision to continue or close social media pages is based on the OMC reports and the decision of the Office of the President. Closure is mainly based upon the pages' inability to ensure effective, responsible, and ethical promotion of UOB's events and activities and failure to offer relevant, impactful, and engaging content.

Reported violation of the Use of Social Media Platforms policy by faculty members, staff, or students may result in disciplinary action taken by the Office of the President in consultation with deans or directors.

For social media pages maintained by unknown managers and unlawfully using UOB's name or logo, the Office of Media and Communication (OMC) will report these pages and action will then be taken according to the platform community guidelines.