

Social media policy

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contents

1.	Policy statement	1
2.	Policy objective	1
3.	Policy content	1
3.1	Personal use of social media	1
3.2	Official use of social media	2
3.3	Appropriate use of social media	3
3.4	Breach of this policy	3
4.	Roles and responsibilities	3
5.	Scope	4
6.	Associated documents	4
7.	Definitions	4
8.	Contact point	4
9.	Review	4

1. Policy statement

This policy has been developed to:

- outline the use and governance of the Audit Office's official social media accounts
- define and communicate the standards in which Audit Office employees should conduct themselves in social media interactions
- provide guidance for employees on the appropriate use of social media.

2. Policy objective

This policy aims to minimise the risks associated with social media. It provides Audit Office employees with clearly defined standards of how to conduct themselves when using social media, in line with the Audit Office core values.

3. Policy content

The Audit Office embraces the use of social media and acknowledges it provides an opportunity to:

- broaden the impact of our work by reaching more stakeholders
- share the Audit Office's culture and values to attract quality employees
- promote employee expertise and generate pride in vocation
- enable external stakeholders to engage with our work.

However, as the statutory authority responsible for conducting audits on all NSW government entities, universities, and local councils, some use of social media can threaten our actual or perceived independence, our integrity and our reputation.

Any use of social media, whether for personal or professional purposes, must consider potential threats to the independence, reputation and integrity of the Audit Office and employees are reminded that objectivity threats can arise from their use of social media. For example, our independence and/or reputation can be threatened if on a social media platform an employee:

- makes a contribution to controversial, sensitive, confidential or political matter
- posts derogatory and/or obscene posts about their manager, a colleague, or an auditee
- tweets, retweets or likes negative comments that relate to our auditees or a government policy.

All employees must therefore be aware of their responsibilities under the [Conflict of Interest and Professional Independence Policy](#).

It is also essential that employees are alert to the fact that when we participate online, including on social media, our contributions are equivalent to commenting to the media or at a public forum. For this reason, all employees must use good judgment about what material appears online, and in what context.

Contributions on social media platforms include, but are not limited to:

- posting, liking, making comment on, soliciting comment on, or responding to content
- sharing videos, photos and other material.

3.1 Personal use of social media

Overview

The Audit Office recognises that its employees are citizens and members of the community, and may use social media in their personal life. In doing so, it is important employees behave in a way that does not threaten the Audit Office's reputation or its independence and that any potential, perceived or

actual conflict or threat to professional independence that arises is recognised, adequately managed and reported in line with the requirements of the Conflict of Interest and Professional Independence Policy.

Employees should be aware that any participation or contribution made in a personal capacity still carries reputational risk and must be made in line with the [Audit Office Code of Conduct](#). Caution should be taken when using all social media platforms, but this is particularly important when using LinkedIn and other platforms where it is easy to be identified as an Audit Office employee.

Responsibilities

Employees are personally responsible for their own participation, and for the contributions they make on any social media platform.

Employees using social media in a personal capacity must:

- read, understand, and comply with the Audit Office's [Code of Conduct](#), [Conflict of Interest and Professional Independence Policy](#), and [ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- be polite, respectful, and constructive in all interactions
- ensure that any contributions they make are accurate and do not mislead
- not make contributions to controversial, sensitive, confidential or political matters or topics that relate to staff or our auditees in order to protect the Audit Office's independence and reputation
- not make contributions that could be interpreted as a personal political view or political advocacy
- only contribute to content that is classified as publicly available information and not use or disclose any confidential or secure information obtained in their capacity as an employee
- consider explicitly stating on contributions that the stated views are their own and not those of the Audit Office or the NSW Government. For example, this can be achieved on LinkedIn by adding 'views my own' to the 'Headline' text
- not imply they are authorised to speak as a representative of, or on behalf of, the Audit Office or NSW Government
- not use an Audit Office email address or any Audit Office or NSW Government logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal contribution
- not provide comments to journalists, politicians or lobby groups other than in the course of their official duties and when authorised to do so by the Auditor-General or Deputy Auditor-General
- not provide interviews related to their professional career unless authorised to do so by the Auditor-General or Deputy Auditor-General
- not make any contributions to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful
- not make any contribution that is, or could be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another employee or contractor of the Audit Office
- adhere to the relevant site's terms of use, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, intellectual property and other applicable laws.

3.2 Official use of social media

Overview

Employees should not make public comment on any topic related to our audit work unless authorised to do so by the Auditor-General. To do so constitutes a representation of the Audit Office and as such, authorisation to comment publicly on any aspect of our work usually only extends to the Deputy Auditor-General as the appointed Audit Office media liaison, and certain members of the communications team.

Responsibilities

Employees who are authorised to comment as an Audit Office representative must:

- read, understand, and comply with the Audit Office's [Code of Conduct](#), [Conflict of Interest and Professional Independence Policy](#), and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- be polite, respectful, and constructive in all interactions
- disclose they are an employee of the Audit Office, and use only their own identity, or an approved official account or avatar
- ensure that any contributions they make are within their area of expertise and authority
- ensure that their contributions do not threaten the Audit Office's actual or perceived independence, bring the Audit Office into disrepute or cause damage to its reputation
- only disclose or contribute to information classified as public domain information
- ensure they do not contribute to or disclose official, confidential, or secure information
- only make contributions that are accurate and do not mislead
- ensure they are not the first to make an announcement (unless specifically authorised to do so)
- not make any contributions to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful
- adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, intellectual property and other applicable laws, and the Audit Office's policies.

3.3 Appropriate use of social media

Social media platforms can be useful workplace resources. All employees are permitted reasonable personal use of these resources and are trusted to act responsibly when using these sites as well as to comply with this policy and the Audit Office's [Code of Conduct](#), [Conflict of Interest and Professional Independence Policy](#), and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

3.4 Breach of this policy

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action. This may involve a verbal or written warning or, in serious cases, termination of employment or engagement with the Audit Office.

The Audit Office will remove, or request the employee to remove, any material where there is a breach of this policy or any other Audit Office policy, and may seek to recover any costs incurred as a result of a breach of this policy.

Some examples of failing to adhere to the policy include an employee:

- making derogatory and obscene posts about their manager on Facebook
- tweeting, retweeting or liking negative comments about an auditee or a NSW government policy from their Twitter account
- disclosing non-publicly available information about an audit topic on an online forum.

4. Roles and responsibilities

All employees are required to comply with this policy.

Senior executives and managers are required to:

- communicate and discuss this policy with employees
- ensure employees understand and follow this policy.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Audit Office. Employees who are authorised to represent the Audit Office in social media, or who discuss the Audit Office or business related issues in their personal use of social media platforms, are required to follow this policy.

6. Associated documents

This policy should be read and interpreted in conjunction with the following documents:

- Use of social media – real life scenarios
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Conflict of Interest and Professional Independence Policy](#)
- ICT acceptable use policy
- [Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Privacy Management Plan](#)
- Records Management Policy.

7. Definitions

Employee is any employee of the Audit Office, including contractors and temporary staff.

Manager is an employee who is responsible for the supervision of employees.

Social media tools are defined in this policy as all online media which allow user participation and interaction and include, but are not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Yammer, YouTube, Snapchat, Tik-Tok, Pinterest, Reddit, Flickr, blogs, micro-blogs, activity stream sites forums and discussion boards.

Contributions on social media platforms include, but are not limited to posting, liking, making comment on, soliciting comment on, or responding to content, sharing videos, photos and other material.

8. Contact point

Guidance should be sought from the Executive Manager Communications and Business Support in instances where an employee or manager is unsure how to comply with their obligations under this policy.

9. Review

The Executive Manager Communications and Business Support will review this policy every two years, or earlier if significant new information, legislative or organisational change warrants an update.