



# MANIPAL

ACADEMY of HIGHER EDUCATION

(Institution of Eminence Deemed to be University)

Ref: MAHE/REG/CIR

Date: April 30, 2021

## CIRCULAR

### Sub: Social Media Policy

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In anticipation of approval of the Executive Committee, Manipal Academy of Higher Education has approved **Social Media Policy** for employees.

The details of the Policy are given in the enclosed annexure for your information, records and to be notified to all. This will be with immediate effect.

*Sabhatit*

**Dr. Narayana Sabhatit**  
**Registrar**

**To:**

- ✉ The Heads of all Constituent Units / Hospitals / Centres of Excellence / Teaching and Research Departments / Functional Departments of MAHE, Manipal, Mangalore, Bangalore and Jamshedpur Campuses

*Copy for necessary action to:*

- ✉ Director – PR and Media Communication, MAHE, Manipal

**Copy for information to:**

- ✉ Pro Chancellor | Vice Chancellor | Pro Vice Chancellors, MAHE, Manipal
- ✉ Deputy Director, HR, MAHE, Manipal
- ✉ Deputy Director, Legal, MAHE, Manipal
- ✉ EC file

*Encl: as above*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA CELL – MAHE**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (For Employees)**

#### **1. Introduction:**

Social media has gained utmost popularity over the past few years as an open source of information and knowledge sharing platform. Universities and other educational institutions are using social media space to interact with their students, faculty members, alumni and other stakeholders. It not only provides students access to useful information but also connects them with learning groups and other educational systems that make their overall learning process more interesting and engaging. MAHE actively use social media to disseminate information about academic and research activities of the University to its stakeholders, to communicate success stories to general public to enhance the public image of the university online. Keeping in mind the dynamic role of social media in the higher education sector, MAHE has established a dedicated and centralized **Social Media Cell (SMC)** under the Department of Public Relations and Media Communication effective from January 1, 2021.

#### **2. Objective:**

This policy aims at providing guidance to its employees on the official use of the social media - which is broadly defined for the purpose of this policy as blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chatrooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a concurrent manner. This will also be applicable to similar platforms which will come into force in future.

#### **3. Applicability:**

This policy shall be applicable to all the employees on the rolls of MAHE – this includes faculty members, non-teaching staff, research staff, consultants etc. This will also be applicable to all the employees of outsourced agencies deployed to the constituent units of MAHE.

#### **4. Official Social Media Accounts of MAHE**

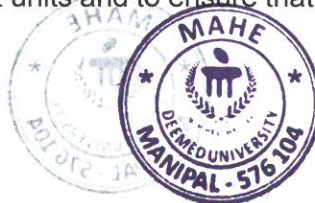
**4.1** MAHE shall have its own official account on various social media platforms monitored, curated and exclusively handled by the Social Media Cell.

**4.2.** Constituent units / hospitals / teaching and research departments can have their own official accounts on social media, managed and handled by the Social Media Co-ordinators of the units under the guidance and supervision of MAHE Social Media Cell.

#### **5. Guidelines & Responsibilities**

**5.1.** A dedicated and centralized Social Media Cell has been established under the Department of Public Relations and Media Communication, MAHE Manipal. The Director, PR & Media Communication of MAHE will be the overall head of the Cell.

**5.2.** Major objective of the Cell is to facilitate effective functioning of all the official social media accounts of MAHE & its constituent units and to ensure that all constituent units communicate



the right messages, at the right time and at the right platform through the authorized people representing the organization.

**5.3.** The policy provides selection of a suitable candidates from every constituent units as Social Media Co-ordinator to facilitate and manage all the social media platforms / accounts of the respective units. The Institutional co-ordinator shall pro-actively use all official platforms in consultation with the respective Heads of the Institution (HoI) / Heads of the Department and Head of Social Media Cell, MAHE.

**5.4** All social media accounts officially recognized by MAHE must have at least one employee as its administrator in the respective Institution / Unit at all times to ensure adherence to this policy. If the designated employee leaves the organization or no longer wishes to be an administrator, HoI shall ensure handing over the above responsibility to a suitable person transferring all administrative permissions/rights of all the relevant platforms to the new person. Whenever possible, an Institution shall appoint two employees to act concurrently as account administrators for a social media site representing respective Unit of MAHE. If two employees are not available to serve in this capacity, a member from the MAHE Social Media Cell may serve in that capacity.

**5.5.** Administrators are responsible for managing and monitoring content of their social media accounts in consultation with MAHE Social Media Cell. Administrators are also responsible for removal of the content that violate the terms and conditions of its use as per the approved guidelines of MAHE.

**5.6.** The use of official logo of MAHE and constituent units are strictly restricted to the official pages of social media accounts of the respective units. Official logo of MAHE shall not be used by the individual employees in their personal pages/accounts.

**5.7.** All the stakeholders to whom this policy is applicable should assume responsibility for preventing misuse of MAHE's name through various social media platforms. Institutional Co-ordinators shall consult with the Head of Social Media Cell, MAHE in case of any clarifications in this regard.

**5.8.** It is important that the employees not to use their own names on social media in ways that state or imply MAHE's endorsement in connection with a project or product promotions, or an idea or policy being endorsed by MAHE. It is therefore advised that the individuals stating their affiliation with MAHE on social media platforms apply usual disclaimers.

**5.9.** While using social media platforms, one must refrain from speaking on behalf of MAHE. Any "comments", "likes", responses or any other communication on the social media platforms using one's personal account, except when it is MAHE's official stated position on these platforms.

**5.10.** Employees shall not use offensive, vulgar or derogatory language in their comments on different social media platforms which directly or indirectly maligns or tarnishes the image of MAHE. All are required to respect privacy of their fellow colleagues or other stakeholders.



## 6. Guidelines for Content:

**6.1** Employees are expected to adhere to professional standard of conduct at the online platform as followed in the normal workplace. Users are fully responsible for what they post to social media platforms.

**6.2.** Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about MAHE or its constituent units. Advised to post content which are not threatening, obscene, not violating law of the land, intellectual property rights and other privacy laws. MAHE Social Media Cell may remove or direct the administrators to remove the contents which are violations to the above.

**6.3** Presentation of own personal opinions endorsed as official opinion of MAHE or any of its constituent units are strictly prohibited. Even when you are using own personal accounts, it should be clear that the views expressed on your site are not those of MAHE and you are not acting or representing MAHE or its constituent units. While not a requirement, employees may consider adding the following disclaimer to personal social media accounts. *“While I am an employee at MAHE, comments made on this account are purely my own and not of MAHE.”*

**6.4** All stakeholders of MAHE must refrain from uploading any information on social media that is culturally sensitive in nature, malicious, derogatory or discriminates on the basis of cast, creed, faith, colour, belief or is perceived racially offensive.

**6.5.** When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.

**6.6** Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

**6.7** Refrain from using information and conducting activities that violates MAHE or Government rules and regulations.

**6.8** Employees shall not publish / post any information that is confidential in nature. Employees are also advised to refrain from commenting on controversial topics / issues which attracts media attention / legal complications. Clarifications may be sought from the respective HoD/Hols in case of any doubts on the nature of such contents.

**6.9** If employees encounter any situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, he /she shall disengage from the dialogue in diplomatic manner and seek advice of the Manager – Social Media Cell - MAHE.

**6.10** Employees shall not refer or post images of current or former employees, students etc. without their consent. Employees also should obtain appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.



**6.11** Personal Computers / laptops are provided to the employees to complete the assigned work at their respective places. Above computers are not to be used to manage the personal social media accounts of the employees. It is highly recommended that employees keep their personal accounts separate from official accounts.

**6.12** The following non-exhaustive list is considered to be unacceptable in nature and should never be posted in any social media platform:

- 6.12.1 Confidential information (which may include research not yet in the public domain, information about fellow students or staff or personal matters, non-public or not yet approved documents or information)
- 6.12.2 Details of complaints/potential complaints and/or legal proceedings/potential legal proceedings involving MAHE and its constituent units
- 6.12.3 Personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission
- 6.12.4 Comments posted using fake accounts, made-up names or using another person's name without their consent
- 6.12.5 Inappropriate material, including images, that is or may be perceived to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, indecent, defamatory, or hostile towards any individual, group or entity
- 6.12.6 Any other posting that constitutes, or may constitute, a criminal offence
- 6.12.7 Anything which may bring MAHE into disrepute or compromise the safety or reputation of colleagues, former colleagues, students, staff and those connected with MAHE
- 6.12.8 And any other details / information which is the subject matter of Social media policy from time to time.

## **7. Rules for Data Privacy/Integrity**

**7.1** The Social Media Cell of MAHE shall adhere to highest standards of applicable laws, national and international, from time to time in order to protect privacy and confidentiality of personal information and records of individuals associated with MAHE and its constituent units including Hospitals.

**7.2** The stakeholders of MAHE shall also ensure confidentiality of patient records originating from its constituent teaching hospitals and take all reasonable efforts to guard patient privacy by adhering to highest standards of ethical conduct and applicable laws from time to time when using social media platforms to share news of accomplishments of units/departments/institutions.

## **8. Breach of Policy:**

**8.1** Any posting/publishing online found to be in violation of this Policy shall be removed forthwith by such an employee on directions from the appointing authority.

**8.2** Any acts or deeds from the employee(s) found to be in violation of the defined terms of Social Media Policy shall be treated as "misconduct" as per the *Service Rules* governing their employment and subject to subsequent disciplinary actions.



**8.3** Users found violating this policy may be denied access to MAHE’s computing resources in addition / or as part of the disciplinary action.

**8.4** MAHE may also refer serious violations of applicable law of the land to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **Addendum to the Social Media Policy**

#### **Best Practices for Social Media:**

In addition, the following general guidelines apply for social media usage to all users under MAHE. Sharing official news/updates, events or promoting faculty and student work through social media tools is an excellent, low-cost way to engage the community and build our brand. Employees and students are encouraged to repost and share information with their family and friends that is available to the public (press releases, articles in the MAHE official notifications etc.). The best way to share such news is to link to the original source. When sharing information that is not a matter of public record, please follow the below guidelines.

#### **9.1 Maintain Confidentiality**

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about MAHE, its students, its alumni or your fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow university policies.

#### **9.2 Maintain Privacy**

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.

#### **9.3 Respect organization’s time and property**

It is appropriate to post at work if your comments are directly related to accomplishing work goals, such as seeking sources for information or working with others to resolve a problem. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time.

#### **9.4 Do No Harm**

Let your Internet social networking do no harm to MAHE or to yourself whether you’re navigating those networks on the job or off.

#### **9.5 Understand Your Personal Responsibility.**

MAHE employees and students are personally responsible for the content they publish on Blogs, Facebook, Twitter or any other form of user-generated content. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time— protect your privacy.

#### **9.6 Be Aware of Liability**

You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Increasingly, employers are conducting web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.



### **9.7 Maintain Transparency**

The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred: Be thoughtful about your posting's content and potential audiences. Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a faculty or staff member of MAHE. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of MAHE.

### **9.8 Correct Mistakes**

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your corrections. If you are posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

### **9.9 Respect Others**

You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

### **9.10 Be a Valued Member**

If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Do not hijack the discussions and redirect by posting self/organizational promoting information. Self-promoting behaviour is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from web sites or groups.

### **9.11 Think before you post**

There is no such thing as "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Post only pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public (current and future peers, employers etc.).

## **10.0 Guidelines when posting as an Individual**

MAHE uses social media to supplement traditional press and marketing efforts. Employees are encouraged to share official news and events, which are a matter of public record, with their family and friends. Linking straight to the information source is an effective way to help promote the mission of the MAHE and build community. When you might be perceived online as an agent/expert of MAHE, you need to make sure, it is clear to the audience that you are not representing the position of MAHE or MAHE's policy. While the guidelines below apply only to those instances where there is the potential for confusion about your role as a MAHE agent/expert versus personal opinion, they are good to keep in mind for all social media interactions. When posting to a social media site you should:

### **10.1 Be Authentic**

Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a faculty or staff member of MAHE. However, please be clear that you are sharing your personal views and is not speaking as a formal representative of MAHE. If you identify yourself as a member of the MAHE community, ensure your profile and related contents are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues.



### **10.2 Use a Disclaimer**

If you publish content to any platform outside of MAHE and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with MAHE, use a disclaimer such as this: *“The postings on this site are my own and do not represent MAHE’s positions, strategies or opinions.”*

### **10.3 Do not Use the MAHE Logo or Make Endorsements**

Do not use MAHE logo or any other marks or images on your personal online sites. Do not use MAHE’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.

### **10.4 Take the High Ground**

If you identify your affiliation with MAHE in your comments, readers may associate you with MAHE, even with the disclaimer that your views are your own. Remember that you are most likely to build a high-quality following if you discuss ideas and situations respectfully. Do not pick fights online.

### **10.5 Don’t Use Pseudonyms**

Never pretend to be someone else. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.

### **10.6 Protect Your Identity**

While you should be honest about yourself, do not provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Do not list your home address or telephone number anywhere. It is a good idea to create a separate e-mail address that is used only with social media sites.

### **10.7 Does it pass the publicity test?**

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site as well. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a hoarding tomorrow or ten years from now?

### **10.8 Respect Your Audience**

Don’t use slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the MAHE community. You should also show proper consideration for others’ privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive such as politics and religion.

### **10.9 Monitor Comments**

Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments— it builds credibility and community. However, you may be able to set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments. A common practice among individuals who write about the industry in which they work is to include a disclaimer on their site, usually on their “About Me” page. If you discuss higher education on your own social media site, we suggest you include a sentence similar to this: “The views expressed on this [blog, Web site] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of MAHE.”





## **11.0 Guidelines when posting on behalf of the MAHE**

Online collaboration tools provide low-cost communication methods which foster open exchanges and learning. While social media tools are changing the way we work and how we connect with the public and other higher education institutions, MAHE policies and practices for sharing information remain the same. In addition to the general guidelines discussed above, when you are creating or posting to a social media site on behalf of MAHE you need to:

### **11.1 Seek Approval**

Any messages that might act as the “voice” or position of the MAHE or its constituent units must be approved by MAHE or the respective Head of the constituent unit or their authorized delegate.

### **11.2 Be Accurate**

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It is better to verify information with the source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible – that is how you build community.

### **11.3 Be Transparent**

If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of MAHE or its constituent units, clearly state your role and goals. Keep in mind that, if you are posting with the official username, other users do not know you personally. They view what you post as coming from the MAHE/Units. Be careful and be respectful. What you say directly reflects on MAHE as an organization. Discuss with your supervisor the circumstances in which you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

### **11.4 Be Timely**

Assign an administrator who can regularly monitor postings and its contents. Aim for standard times for postings and updates. The recommended minimum frequency is once or twice a week. But be sure not to overload your updates. Followers will stop paying attention if you overload them with information.

### **11.5 Be Responsible**

What you write ultimately is your responsibility. Participation in social computing on behalf of MAHE is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. If you want to participate on behalf of MAHE, be sure to abide by its standard practice guidelines.

### **11.6 Respect Others**

Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with one another, but please be respectful of others’ opinions. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

### **11.7 Be a Valued Member**

If you join a social network like a *Facebook* group or comment on someone’s blog, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Post information about topics like MAHE events or a book you have authored only when you are sure it will be of interest to readers. In some forums, self-promoting behaviour is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups.



## 12. Safety & privacy tips for social media networking

The internet is open to a world-wide audience. When using social media channels, ask yourself:

- a. Did I set my privacy setting to help control who can look at my profile, personal information and photos? You can limit access somewhat but not completely, and you have no control over what someone else may share.
- b. How much information do I want strangers to know about me? If I give them my mobile phone number, address, email, class schedule, a list of possessions (such as my data collection) how might they use it?
- c. Is the image I am projecting by my materials and photos the one I want my current and future friends to know me by? What does my profile say to potential faculty members/advisors? Future graduate school/internship interviewers? Potential employers? Neighbours? Family? Parents? Which doors am I opening and which am I closing?
- d. What if I change my mind about what I post? For instance, what if I want to remove something I posted as a joke or to make a point? Have I read the social networking site's privacy and caching? statements? Removing material from network caches can be difficult. Posted material can remain accessible on the internet until you've completed the prescribed process for removing information from the caching technology of one or multiple (potentially unknown) search engines.
- e. Have I asked permission to post someone else's image or information? Am I infringing on their privacy? Could I be hurting someone? Could I be subject to defamation suits? Am I violating network use policy?
- f. Does my equipment have spyware and virus protections installed? Some sites collect profile information to SPAM you. Others contain links that can infect your equipment with viruses that potentially can destroy data and infect others with whom you communicate. Remember to back up your work on an external source in case of destructive attacks.

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