

Laurentian University Social Media Guidelines

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Author	Digital Strategy Department (digitalstrategy@laurentian.ca)

Purpose

These guidelines apply to all official Laurentian University social media accounts, including those operated by faculties, schools, departments, units, clubs, and affiliated programs. They exist to protect the institution's brand integrity, ensure accessibility and compliance, and maintain continuity when staff transitions occur. Personal social media use is not covered by these guidelines.

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1. Before You Create a New Account

Creating a new official social media account is a long-term commitment. Before launching one, consider the following:

1.1. Is a new account actually needed?

Often the better path is to **post through an existing Laurentian account** (the main university Page, your faculty Page, or another established channel) rather than fragmenting audiences across more accounts. New accounts compete for limited attention and frequently end up neglected.

Reasons that may justify a new account:

- The audience is distinctly different from existing accounts (e.g., prospective students vs. alumni vs. current students)
- The content cadence is high enough to sustain a separate channel (at least 2–3 posts per week)
- There is dedicated staff time committed to managing it ongoing, not a "side of desk" responsibility
- The brand or program identity is clearly separate from parent accounts in the eyes of the audience

Reasons that **do not** justify a new account:

- One-time campaigns or short-lived initiatives
- The desire to "have a presence" without a content plan
- Avoiding coordination with the central communications team

1.2. Approval required

All new official social media accounts must be approved by the Digital Strategy department (digitalstrategy@laurentian.ca) before being created. Submit a request by email that includes:

- Proposed name and handle
- Platform(s)
- Target audience and how it differs from existing channels
- Content plan and posting frequency
- Names of staff and contact information of users who will manage the account
- Backup/coverage plan for vacations, leaves, and transitions

2. Account Setup and Continuity

This section is critical. Failed continuity is the most common reason institutional accounts get lost, locked out, or hijacked. Follow these practices without exception.

2.1. Use a shared department email address, never a personal one

When creating the account, use a generic or shared department email inbox (e.g., digitalstrategy@laurentian.ca, recruitment@laurentian.ca, or a unit-specific shared address). Do not use a personal Laurentian email like jdoe@laurentian.ca as the account's primary email.

This protects the account if the person leaves the university, goes on extended leave, or changes roles. Accounts tied to individual emails frequently become inaccessible when staff turn over, and recovering them from the platform can take weeks or fail entirely.

2.2. Ensure multiple people have administrative access

At minimum:

- The account must have **at least two active administrators** at all times, ideally three
- Administrators must be staff or faculty. Students may be an administrator as long as there is at least one other administrator who is either staff or faculty
- When an administrator leaves their role or the university, their access must be removed immediately, and a replacement should be added

2.3. Document the account in a central registry

All official accounts must be registered with the Digital Strategy department (digitalstrategy@laurentian.ca) so the institution maintains a master list. The registry should include:

- Platform, handle, and URL

- Owing department/unit
- Shared email associated with the account
- Names of current administrators

2.4. Store credentials securely

Passwords and recovery codes must be stored somewhere that is accessible to the administrators listed above such as a Shared Google Drive folder with strict sharing permissions. Never share passwords via email, chat, or written notes.

Enable **two-factor authentication (2FA)** on every account. Use the shared email or a shared authenticator method that all administrators can access, not a single person's mobile phone.

2.5. Plan for transitions

When someone with account access leaves or changes roles:

- Their administrator access must be revoked **on or before their last day**
- A replacement administrator must be added in advance
- Passwords should be changed as a standard offboarding step
- The central registry must be updated

3. Naming and Branding

3.1. Account names

- Use the format “laurentian[Unit Name]” or “lu[Unit Name]” to clearly tie the account to the university
 - Examples
 - laurentianrecruitment

■ luvoyageursmsoc

- For French-language accounts, use “laurentienne[Nom de l'unité]” or “ul[Nom de l'unité]”
- Avoid abbreviations or insider acronyms that prospective audiences won't recognize
- Handles should be consistent across platforms when possible

3.2. Profile imagery

- Use approved Laurentian visual identity assets, logos, brand colours, and approved imagery only
- Profile photos should be high-resolution and platform-appropriate (fit well within the square or circular icon format, with safe margins)
- Cover/banner images should follow brand standards and not include outdated information (dates, slogans tied to past campaigns)
- Contact Marketing department (marketing@laurentian.ca) for current approved brand assets and guidelines

3.3. Bio/About sections

- Clearly identify the account as an official Laurentian University channel
- Include a link back to the relevant Laurentian webpage
- If you have multiple links you'd like to display, consider creating a [Linktree](#)

4. Content Standards

4.1. Tone and voice

- Professional, warm, and inclusive, reflecting Laurentian's community
- Conversational where appropriate, but always representing the institution
- Avoid sarcasm, controversial humour or content that could be misinterpreted

4.2. Bilingual considerations

As a bilingual institution, Laurentian's official accounts should:

- Post in both English and French when content has broad audience appeal, either through separate posts or single bilingual posts with both languages
- Maintain separate French-language accounts where audience warrants it
- Coordinate with the Communications department's translation team (translation@laurentian.ca) to ensure quality translation if author is not proficient in the language posted, not machine-translated copy

4.3. Accessibility

All content must follow accessibility standards (relevant under Ontario's AODA legislation):

- **Alt text** on every image and graphic, describe meaningful visual content for screen readers
- **Captions or transcripts** on every video
- **Camel case for hashtags** (e.g., “#LaurentianU” not “#laurentianu”) so screen readers can parse them
- Avoid relying on colour alone to convey meaning
- Avoid excessive emojis or emojis that don't translate well to screen readers

4.4. Inclusivity

- Use gender-inclusive language (e.g., "everyone" instead of "guys")
- Be mindful when posting about students, get consent before tagging or featuring individuals, especially in identifiable photos

5. What to Post (and What Not To)

5.1. Generally appropriate

- Program promotion, student stories, faculty achievements
- Research highlights, awards, and recognitions
- Events, deadlines, and important university information
- Community engagement, alumni features
- Behind-the-scenes content (with consent)

5.2. Avoid posting

- **Confidential or unreleased information**, pricing changes, internal decisions, HR matters, financial details
- **Student information**, student names, photos, grades, or personally identifiable details without explicit consent (FIPPA compliance)
- **Political endorsements or commentary** on partisan political issues, unless aligned with the university's official institutional position
- **Personal opinions presented as institutional views**
- **Reactive content during crises or sensitive events** without coordination with the Communications office (communications@laurentian.ca)
- **Copyrighted material** without proper licensing (images, music, video clips)
- **Content involving real people without consent**

5.3. Crisis communications

If a crisis, controversy, or significant negative event occurs:

- Do **not** post on behalf of your unit without first coordinating with the central Communications office (communications@laurentian.ca)
- Pause scheduled content if appropriate
- Refer media or public inquiries to the Communications office (communications@laurentian.ca)
- Wait for institutional messaging before responding on social

6. Engagement and Community Management

6.1. Responding to comments and messages

- Respond to legitimate inquiries within one business day, where possible
- Use a professional tone, even when responding to negative comments
- Do not delete negative comments unless they violate platform community standards (hate speech, harassment, spam); deletion can escalate situations
- Hide rather than delete when feasible (this is less detectable to the original poster)
- Escalate harassment, threats, or serious complaints to the Campus Security department (security@laurentian.ca) as appropriate

6.2. Following and engagement

- Official accounts should generally follow other Laurentian accounts and key institutional partners
- Avoid following individuals' personal accounts from institutional accounts; keep followed accounts relevant to the subject matter
- Be cautious about liking or sharing content that could be interpreted as an institutional endorsement of a third party

6.3. Tagging and mentions

- Get consent before tagging students or community members in posts
- For staff and faculty, tagging is generally appropriate if they have an institutional or professional profile
- Tag partner institutions and organizations appropriately
- Where possible and relevant, invite related accounts to collaborate on your post; this will allow the post to appear on both your profile feed and the collaborating account's profile

feed. (For example, if your post covers an event done in collaboration with another department or association, you may collaborate with their account for cross-posting)

7. Compliance and Privacy

7.1. FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)

- Student records and personal information are protected under FIPPA
- Do not share student information online without documented consent
- Consent forms for using student stories, photos, or quotes should be retained by the unit

7.2. CASL (Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation)

- Social media generally falls outside CASL's scope, but direct messaging followers in promotional bulk may trigger CASL obligations. Consult Communications (communications@laurentian.ca) if planning DM campaigns

7.3. Platform terms of service

- All staff using official accounts must understand and follow each platform's terms of service
- Violations can result in account suspension or permanent loss

7.4. Copyright and intellectual property

- Only use images, music, and video clips you have rights to
- Stock photo subscriptions managed by the university are available for approved use, contact Marketing department (marketing@laurentian.ca)

- Do not repost others' content without permission and credit
 - Be especially cautious about music in videos; most popular music is copyrighted, and Reels/Stories with copyrighted music can be muted or removed
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8. Performance and Reporting

Official accounts should track and report on performance:

- Maintain basic metrics: follower growth, engagement rate, top posts
 - Review performance quarterly
 - Use platform analytics (Meta Business Suite, LinkedIn analytics, etc.) for native data
 - Align metrics with the account's stated purpose; vanity metrics like follower count matter less than engagement and conversion to institutional goals (event attendance, applications, inquiries)
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8.1. Account Retirement

If an account is no longer active or needed:

- Notify the Digital Strategy department (digitalstrategy@laurentian.ca) before deactivating
 - Consider whether to keep the account dormant (visible but not posting) or fully delete it – dormant accounts can confuse audiences
 - Post a final message indicating where audiences should follow instead
 - Update the master registry
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8.2. Questions and Support



For questions about these guidelines, account setup, or content strategy, contact:

Digital Strategy Department (digitalstrategy@laurentian.ca)

For questions about brand guidelines or brand assets, contact:

Marketing Department (marketing@laurentian.ca)

For questions about sensitive communication matters, contact:

Communications Department (communications@laurentian.ca)

For questions or immediate support with security matters, contact:

Campus Security (security@laurentian.ca)
