

**West Highland College UHI**

# **Communications Strategy 2019-22**

# West Highland College UHI

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2019-22

ELT manager	Principal & Chief Executive
Responsible officer	Marketing & Communications Manager
Date first approved by BoM	March 2016
Last Review Date	May 2019
Date Review approved by BoM	June 2019
Next Review Date	May 2022
Equality impact assessment	Completed May 2019
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action / Impact	BoM
C MacRae	May 2019	Refreshed in line with new WHC Strategic Plan and to include Social Media Guidelines, reflecting greater use by all staff of various social media platforms for Marketing and Communications purposes.	

## **1. Background**

West Highland College UHI is one of the newest colleges in Scotland having been formed by merger in 2010. It is also unique in that it has no single central campus but operates 10 college centres across an area of the west highlands which constitutes around one seventh of Scotland's land mass. A detailed college profile can be found in our [Strategy 2016-2021](#)

## **2. Aims**

- 2.1 Promote the college as the education provider of choice locally, regionally and nationally.
- 2.2 Provide opportunities to allow the Board and the Executive Leadership Team to articulate key strategic messages both internally and externally.
- 2.3 Increase engagement with potential and current students, staff and stakeholders.
- 2.4 Promote an understanding and awareness of the wider educational landscape in which the college operates both internally and externally.
- 2.5 To promote the activities of the college within the UHI partnership and the college sector regionally and nationally in order to positively influence key decision makers.

## **3. Objectives**

- 3.1 To deliver the right information to the right people at the right time through the right channels.
- 3.2 To provide a consistency of imagery, language and tone which appropriately reflects our Vision and Values and takes into account the college's approach to Equality and Diversity.
- 3.3 To build relationships with key stakeholders in order to influence and drive the local, regional, and national agenda to positively impact on the college's future.

## 4. Key Stakeholders

- 4.1 The college seeks to have a positive and beneficial impact on the communities and economies it serves through its delivery of a suitably skilled and educated workforce.
- 4.2 We also seek to build our own reputation as a key player and thereby influence and inform those partners involved in education and economic regeneration locally.
- 4.3 To this end, we have identified different groups with whom it is essential that we build strong and sustainable relationships as identified in our [Strategy 2016-2021](#)

### 4.4 Key Stakeholder Groups

- Students and their families
- Staff
- Schools and guidance professionals
- Employers and businesses
- Communities and community organisations
- Local authorities
- Funders and politicians
- Government, Skills and Economic Development Agencies
- The UHI Partnership
- Other colleges and universities in Scotland, UK and internationally

## 5. Key Messages

- 5.1 Key messages and policy positions will be developed strategically through our Board, its Committees and the Principal and Executive Leadership Team and will also include appropriate themes from UHI and its Regional Board.
- 5.2 A suite of policy statements will be developed and will focus on matters that the college wishes to prioritise and will be appropriately disseminated internally and externally, supported by Marketing & Communications Department. This will enable all teams across the college to consistently communicate with all stakeholders.

5.3

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>External Communications</b>	<b>Internal Communications</b>
Board & Committees	Formulate strategy and identify key messages which will be reviewed every 18 months and communicated to Principal	
Principal	Advise ELT of key messages	Principal will advise ELT of appropriate communications flowing from Board and Committees
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Inform Marketing & Communications Manager of key messages	ELT will authorise relevant teams to issue internal communications e.g. staff changes, estates and facilities information, staff learning and development etc.
Functional Managers	Prepare key statements and activities to be approved by Principal - including method of dissemination	Marketing & Communications will provide advice on wording/method as appropriate
All Team Leaders	Ensure messages are communicated to Key Stakeholders/CEGs/External contacts.	Line managers to ensure staff receive/understand communications during team meetings and are able to feedback appropriately.
Head of Student Support & Customer Services	Work with Marketing & Communications Manager to create suitable communication methods to current students	Ensure students receive relevant information.

## 6. Internal Communications

6.1 A variety of methods will be utilised to ensure the timely, professional and effective communication of college policies, activities and plans “in house” and across all geographies of the college and originating from a variety of teams. These will include a combination of

- Regular face to face team meetings
- Use of VC, Webex and Skype for meetings across geographies where possible
- Emails, phone calls and conference calls
- Department Road Shows
- Shared resources including MyDay staff and student portals, Reception and Centre plasma screens, Outlook calendars, Skype for Business, Shared Drive document storage, Staff Area Intranet, Cascade personnel management system, text alert systems, website news, social media, standardised templates for headed paper, etc. to ensure consistency of branding.
- All staff emails and e- news letters to communicate special or extreme events/highlight particular messages
- Formal communications such as Prospectus, Annual Report, College News, Principal’s updates, Performance Appraisals, Strategy Documents, Staff Survey Reports.
- Access to meeting minutes (including Board and Executive Leadership Team and College Management Group)
- Principal briefing sessions and Q&A sessions
- Staff Information and Consultation and Group meetings
- College committee meetings
- Annual all staff conferences and events

6.2 Appropriate methods of feedback will be built into all meetings and will include

- Minutes of team meetings to be circulated to all attendees
- All staff emails will have a point of contact for replies/questions
- Publication of formal documents will be notified to staff and feedback encouraged.
- Principal/ELT briefing sessions will include opportunities for Q&A
- Staff Consultation and Information Group meetings will be publicised regularly.

- 6.3 Formal mechanisms for capturing student feedback will be articulated through the following channels:
- Surveys (satisfaction and destination) coordinated by the college and the University of the Highlands and Islands
  - Course Committee Meetings
  - Student representation elsewhere such as Board meetings
  - Class Rep Meetings
  - Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) networks
  - Red Button
  - Complaints
  - A wide range of more informal routes for gathering feedback such as, one to one meetings with lecturer and other college staff.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that
- student feedback is captured and communicated through appropriate channels
  - subsequent actions are implemented
  - the action is communicated back to students

## **7. External Communications**

- 7.1 The Principal is ultimately responsible for all external communications.
- 7.2 Marketing & Communications Manager will approve all external communications on the Principal's behalf in liaison with senior management when appropriate.
- 7.3 Marketing & Communications will assist in the creation of a structured system of contact with stakeholders in order to ensure that key messages are delivered consistently to the right audience, by the right college staff member at the right time, avoiding duplication or dilution.
- 7.4 Curriculum and Student Support teams will liaise with Marketing & Communications in the production of appropriate communications to celebrate student successes and provide positive examples of student experiences externally where appropriate e.g. Keep Warm campaigns, Student of the Year awards.

- 7.5 All other college teams will contribute to the communications required to promote the activities of the college through positive news stories and celebrations of success e.g. awards, staff development, interest stories.
- 7.6 Marketing & Communications will be responsible for the overall content and production of core materials and platforms as shown below for the delivery of key messages. Marketing & Communications will have overall responsibility for the college's use of social media platforms currently including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to positively promote the college and its courses and will retain administrative and editorial rights for all college accounts. All college staff and teams will be encouraged to proactively promote their own their professional activities internally and externally. Where necessary, Marketing & Communications will provide training and or guidance to support this activity (see Social Media Guidelines).

### **Key Documents/Media/Platforms**

- [www.whc.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk)
- Prospectus
- Newsletters
- Fact Sheet
- Background briefing documents
- Marketing campaigns/Mail outs
- Social Media (all college accounts)
  - [www.facebook.com/WestHighlandCollegeUHI](https://www.facebook.com/WestHighlandCollegeUHI)
  - [www.twitter.com/WHC\\_UHI](https://www.twitter.com/WHC_UHI)
  - [www.instagram.com/whc.uhi/](https://www.instagram.com/whc.uhi/)
- Social Media Guidelines
- Media Releases
- Stakeholder communications
- Alumni communications



## **8. Media Relations**

- 8.1 Marketing & Communications Department will be the single point of communication for all media contacts within the college.
- 8.2 The Marketing & Communications Manager will be responsible to the Principal and the Executive Leadership Team for the preparation of news items which will positively enhance the reputation of the College to all stakeholders. Marketing and Communications Manager will also assist and stimulate the production of positive stories by other departments.
- 8.3 The Marketing & Communications Manager will be responsible to the Principal and the Executive Leadership Team in the preparation of appropriate responses and strategies to effectively handle sensitive or negative issues which may potentially come into the public domain eg Police attendance at the college, student or staff injuries.
- 8.4 The Marketing & Communications Manager will be responsible for routinely updating the UHI Media Relations team on appropriate stories where possible.

### **Key Documents**

- Media and Public Relations Policy and Guidelines (as per Colleges Scotland)
- Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan

## **9. Crisis Management and Rapid Response**

- 9.1 The college will prepare and regularly review appropriate guidance and protocols to assist management and staff in the communication of incidents or crisis situations to staff, students and the public where appropriate.
- 9.2 The college will seek to ensure that its reputation is protected and its staff, students and stakeholders are well informed on matters which may affect their safety or security.
- 9.3 Marketing will be the initial, single point of contact with the media in the event of any crisis or emergency situation at any college site.

### **Key Documents**

- Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan
- Media and Public Relations Policy and Procedure (as per Colleges Scotland)

## 10. Gaelic

- 10.1 The college seeks to recognise and promote Gaelic culture and language through its publications and events wherever possible and appropriate as detailed in its Operational Plan and [Gaelic Language Plan 2019-22](#).
- 10.2 As part of its Communications Strategy, Marketing Department will take a lead role in ensuring that relevant publications, nomenclature, and Gaelic representation and usage in social media is relevant and appropriate and to take active steps to promote the awareness of the cultural importance of Gaelic to our staff.

## 11. Planning and Evaluation Methods

- 11.1 Marketing will be responsible for planning an annual timetable of key communications and messages within its Operational Plan and for evaluating the success of these.
- 11.2 Success will be measured against college key performance indicators from Student Satisfaction Survey, Community Engagement Groups, Employer Surveys and News Media Monitoring services and through regularly reporting to the College Management Group.
- 11.3 This will be achieved through regular Self Evaluation meetings and by the Board and its Committees.

### Key Documents

- Marketing Operational Planning Calendar
- Marketing Activity Report to College Management Group

### Relevant Documents

1. Marketing Operational Plan & Calendar
2. Social Media Guidelines
3. Media Release Guidelines
4. Media and Public Relations Policy (as per Colleges Scotland)
5. Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan
6. Gaelic Language Plan 2019-22



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean  
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

# West Highland College UHI Marketing & Communications

# Social Media Guidelines 2019-21



**West Highland College UHI** will use Social Media as one aspect of its Marketing and Communications Strategy to

- Engage with potential students
- Raise awareness of the college with our communities and stakeholders
- Engage and interact with college staff
- Utilise as an additional form of targeted advertising for particular student recruitment campaigns

**We will not use social media platforms or private groups as a sole method of communicating with students in any part of our teaching practices.**

## College Presence

The Marketing team focuses its resources on three popular platforms to promote the college with a primary focus on recruitment:

<p><a href="#">Facebook</a></p>	<p>This platform is where the college is most established, the pages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Main college page</a> managed by Marketing</li> <li>• Curriculum pages e.g. <a href="#">School of Adventure Studies</a>; <a href="#">Creative Industries</a>; <a href="#">Digital</a></li> <li>• College centre pages e.g. Broadford and Auchtertyre; Portree; Ullapool</li> <li>• Department/function specific e.g. Student Services, BEST</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">Instagram</a></p>	<p>We launched our Instagram page in early 2019. This will increasingly be used as a main focus for Student Recruitment.</p> <p>There is a separate Instagram account for the <a href="#">School of Adventure Studies</a></p>
<p><a href="#">Twitter</a></p>	<p>The college account is currently used primarily for raising awareness of the college and promoting the college to Stakeholders. We are aiming to increasingly target potential applicants.</p>

Our goals are to

- increase likes/shares/followers/favourites etc. year on year
- successfully target particular campaigns to drive student recruitment
- create a positive profile of the college to our communities and stakeholders

Please contact us with any queries to [marketing.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:marketing.whc@uhi.ac.uk)

## Guidelines for setting up a college Social Media account

Before setting up a page you must complete the [Social Media Plan form](#) and send to [marketing.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:marketing.whc@uhi.ac.uk) for approval. We can help you get started with advice on account set-up as well as the on-going management and promotion of your page.

### 1. Branding

It is important to use West Highland College UHI branding wherever possible for consistency and recognition. You'll find logo files here: <http://staff.whc.uhi.ac.uk/marketing/>



Please use the [WHC UHI eagle icon](#) for all college social media accounts to ensure consistency in style and to widen recognition with our followers. You can personalise your page/account using a relevant cover picture. From time to time, Marketing will provide you with images to use or instructions to share posts that coincide with particular campaigns.

Contact Marketing for any issues relating to page set up or using the College brand identity for social media.

### 2. Page Name

**For Facebook** - West Highland College UHI should be included in full as part of your page name. For example: West Highland College UHI – Ullapool, West Highland College UHI – NC Child, Health & Social Care.

**For Twitter/Instagram** – be clear that this is your WHC UHI account and not a personal account by using the Eagle as your logo.

### 3. Account Type

College related accounts must be set up appropriately – not personal profiles.

Once you have set up your page you must inform Marketing and email a copy of the page link to [marketing.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:marketing.whc@uhi.ac.uk)

### 4. Sharing content from College pages

Make sure you “like” the main college accounts and tag all posts which may be of interest college-wide on the main college page:

- Facebook [West Highland College UHI](#)
- Twitter [@whc\\_uhi](#)
- Instagram [@whc.uhi](#)

You should also regularly share relevant posts such as new course info, events and student profiles from the main college page to your department/centre pages. Please share relevant posts to local community Facebook groups to increase awareness, for example Buy Sell Swap/“What’s on” pages.

### 5. Page Admins

Marketing must be given Admin Rights on all college Social Media accounts and Marketing will retain a list of all additional admins. When a staff member who had admin rights for a college account leaves employment with the college their admin rights should be removed, and relevant college account passwords changed.

## 6. GDPR and Copyright

Be aware of copyright and GDPR issues. Ensure that you have written permission to use the materials and images as any infringement could lead to legal action, even on social media sites. For further information and consent forms please see the GDPR section of the Marketing page.

## 7. Monitor all comments

Check your platform/s regularly. There are a number of good tools that can help you manage multiple social media accounts. Use your discretion to remove advertisements, spam and comments that are hateful, obscene or defamatory.

## 8. Good Practice

Respect others' privacy - don't post private information and/or individuals contact details.

## 9. Consider your tone of voice

Twitter, Facebook and other social media allow for more informal, conversational communication so don't be afraid to approach your messages in this spirit. Sometimes you may need to write in a purely utilitarian way and this is fine too, but always write in the first person, for example 'We are hosting a debate...' rather than 'the University of the Highlands & Islands is hosting a debate...'

## 10. Build a niche

Don't be tempted to tweet / share general news if it is unlikely to engage your audience. This will avoid duplication of messages (they may have seen the news on your website) and ensure your followers are getting the information they started following you for in the first place.

Content should make your audience SMILE, THINK, or BENEFIT them in some way. Include interesting posts about your team/department's activities, facts that are linked to your area of expertise as well as direct recruitment adverts.

## 11. Be as accurate as possible, but don't try to hide your mistakes

First of all, double check your posts for grammatical errors before publishing – and don't hesitate to let others know if you see them on college accounts.

If you make a mistake don't try to hide it, simply update the page with a correction. We all make mistakes and (generally) social media users like to feel they are communicating with people, not robots.

## 12. Always be courteous

Social media can often feel like an informal chat, but remember that you are representing West Highland College UHI in a public space. Be professional and respectful at all times. Do not engage in arguments or extensive debates. Anything you post can and will be seen, it may not always be possible to remove it.

### 13. Always respond to criticism publicly where possible.

Always engage with comments, especially positive ones – audiences want to know they are noticed. Don't try to sweep negative posts from others "under the carpet." Social media is a public forum and ultimately it looks good for us to be dealing with issues rather than hiding from them. Respond positively and promptly. If you are unsure how to respond to any negative criticism, please contact the Marketing team for advice.

### 14. Be active

Social media presences require care and feeding. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day, and to post fresh content several times a week, reconsider whether it's worth having the account. Your site is only as interesting as your last post - if that post is several months old, visitors will consider it mothballed.

### 15. Be timely

One of the great benefits of social media is the ability to share information almost instantly with a large audience. This timeliness is also one of the expectations of that audience. Be prepared to move quickly in response to new developments, announcements, or emergencies with relevant information on your site. A short amount of accurate information delivered at the time of need can sometimes be more valuable than a full report delivered well after the issue has passed.

### 16. Call to action

Always consider whether you need to include a point of contact or a link to further information in your post.