

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Queens College Social Media Guidelines



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Introduction

Maintaining a Strong Social Media Presence

The social media guidelines of Queens College contain rules, best practices, and resources for maintaining a strong social media presence while helping departments and offices to meet their goals. We invite you to approach social media with the following **key ideas in mind**.

Responsible Communications

Queens College is responsible for notifying the public about its activities. Social media is a critical source of information; digital communications should give followers a firm understanding of what your department/office is about and where they can go to learn more.

Engagement Tool

Social media allows us to speak to our community directly and in real time. Social media staff can instantly see what people are saying about the college, and community members can engage in these conversations.

Safety and Security

Queens College is committed to maintaining a safe environment in which learning and teaching can flourish. Social media managers should implement safety and security measures as recommended by [CUNY's policies](#) and rely on best online practices.

We advise removing and reporting any user comments that may appear under your posts that:

- Are off topic
- Are profane, violent, obscene, or abusive
- Encourage or support discrimination or hate
- Are duplicative or spam
- Advocate illegal activity
- Are misleading or contain falsehoods and/or inaccurate information
- Are threatening in tone or make personal attacks

Anything posted on social media is stored on the platform's server, which is not controlled by Queens College.

Service Delivery

Social media can be used as a vehicle to connect people with services, receive feedback, offer answers, and more. Think about how your program or department can deliver services through social media.

Social Media Staffing

It's strongly recommended that your office designate a staffer who has expertise in social media to manage accounts full time. We don't want affiliated college accounts to suffer from lack of strategy, attention, content, and appropriate branding.

Changing Tides

These guidelines may be periodically updated as new platforms and formats continue to emerge.

Where These Social Media Guidelines Apply—and Don't

Accounts Directly Affiliated with QC

These guidelines are intended for accounts directly affiliated with the college, including but not limited to:

- a. Academic departments (for example, Drama, Theatre & Dance, Photonics);
- b. Programs specific to academic departments and schools (for example, TIME2000);
- c. Administrative offices and student-serving departments (for example, Academic Advising, SEEK, QC Hub);
- d. Services that impact the college community (for example, QC Campus Eats);
- e. Cultural institutions (for example, Godwin-Ternbach Museum);
- f. Accounts created to represent an administrator at the college in their official Queens College capacity. More about official administrator accounts can be found on page 6.

Queens College students who affiliate themselves with QC (for example, student leaders and student clubs) must adhere to the [Queens College Social Media Guidelines](#) and exercise professional discretion when posting content. Students running such social media accounts are expected to abide by CUNY Student Policies and Procedures in an online environment.

Setting Up Accounts

All social media accounts directly affiliated with QC **must be approved by the college's Office of Communications and Marketing**. Among several considerations, we consider the size of your prospective audience and a department's capacity to regularly create content. To request approval to establish a social media account(s), submit the [Social Media Account Creation Request Form](#).

Before completing the form, consider the following:

- Do you have a staffer with experience managing social media?
- Do you have a legacy system in place?
- What is the purpose of your account? Is it to share news or events?
- Who is your audience, and what is their size?

Getting Started

Department, program, or institutional accounts **must be established using a @qc.cuny.edu email address** and supervised by Queens College employees. Students cannot create and maintain these accounts on their own but may work on them under the supervision of a QC employee.

We recommend setting up a legacy system where login information can be accessed and shared with more than one QC employee, and/or passed on to new employees, with appropriate supervisory approval, as needed. This includes establishing social media accounts with department or office email addresses (for example, marketing@qc.cuny.edu) rather than an individual QC email address (for example, youraccount@qc.cuny.edu).

Ownership of accounts directly affiliated with Queens College—including those established for administrators in their official college capacity--remain with the college in perpetuity. An example of this is the CUNY Queens College President's Facebook page.

Basic Account Information

Clearly identify your department, office, program, or job title. Indicate that the account is affiliated with Queens College by including QC in the handle, title, and/or bio.

Keep titles and bios clear and to the point. Use keywords and emojis to help you stand out. Include contact information and relevant links and update them as needed.

Responding to Direct Messages and Comments

Be responsive to any direct messages and comments you receive. Students tend to go to social media first for answers before looking at the college's website.

- Respond to direct messages promptly to show that you value engagement and communication with your audience. Aim to respond within 24–48 hours, but shorter times are preferred. The use of away messages is encouraged, so the sender knows their message has been acknowledged.
- An example of a good away message greets the person reaching out and gives a time limit as to when they'll receive a response: Hi, Knight! Thanks for reaching out. We will review your question or comment and will respond within 24 hours.
- Maintain a professional tone when communicating with your audience. Avoid slang, use proper language, and be respectful at all times.
- Aim to provide accurate information. If unsure how to answer a student's question, it is best to acknowledge that and provide reassurance that you are looking for a way to assist them or find the correct information.

- For quick responses to commonly asked questions, creation of a FAQ list is strongly recommended. This saves time and ensures that students receive help in a timely manner.

Content Creation Best Practices

Use eye-catching graphics, but keep them simple:

- Avoid excessive text. Social media users scroll quickly, so clear and simple visuals make content engaging.
- Include a clear call to action (such as “Apply now,” “Join us,” or “Learn more”) to guide the audience on what to do next.
- Use high-quality images and videos. Even when using a phone, ensure the pictures are bright and focused.
- Use real-life campus photos. Authentic images of students, events, and campus activities help one's audience feel more connected to the college.
- Use easy-to-read fonts. Avoid complex fonts that might be hard to read quickly. Refer to our [website guidelines](#) for fonts that are adequate for screens.
- Videos tend to engage with audiences better than still images. The length of each video depends on the platform: Instagram (15-30 seconds), TikTok (15-60 seconds), X (15-45 seconds), and Facebook and LinkedIn (1-2 minutes).
- Use a friendly, but professional tone when creating post copy. Some platforms encourage a more informal tone—use your discretion to balance formality with relatability. The use of profanity is strictly prohibited.

Social Media Profile Images and Biographical Information

The Office of Communications and Marketing reviews, approves, and monitors all social media branding. When setting up your account(s), please contact us so that we can assist with creating a profile image that stays true to the college's brand.

	DO's	DON'Ts
Biographical Profile Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The bio section of the profile should have information about the college or department and how it is affiliated with Queens College.■ It should also include a link to a Queens College website. Microsoft forms, websites where you can RSVP to events, and LinkTree links are acceptable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ In the bio section, do not link to a website that is not affiliated with Queens College.
Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ All profile images must be of high quality.■ Each school has its own color scheme, along with the name of the school, in its profile image. (See example No. 1 on page 8.)■ Administrative offices—which include Admissions, the QC Hub, Academic Advising, and so on—should use the No. 2 format for profile images. (See example No. 2 on page 8.)■ Schools and academic departments within a larger main school should use the same color as the school they're housed under. (For example, the School of Arts and Humanities can be yellow, and the Aaron Copland School of Music can also use yellow.) Academic departments and other programs will use the No. 3 format for profile images. (See example No. 3 on page 8.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The profile image must not be the same as that appearing on the main college account (@queenscollegeofficial on Instagram, @queenscollegecuny on TikTok, etc.).■ Do not use profile images if they appear pixelated on a desktop and mobile devices.

Examples of Social Media Logos

To obtain logos for your social media channels, please email marketing@qc.cuny.edu. These logos are strictly for social media use. For email signatures and other logos, visit our [Queens College Branding website](#).

No. 1: To be used by Schools



No. 2: To be used by Administrative Offices



No. 3: To be used by Academic Departments Offices

OPTION 1



OPTION 2



When it comes to cover photos (which can be found on Facebook, X, Bluesky, and LinkedIn), schools, administrative offices, and academic department offices can use what they like as long as they use discretion.

Photos, Safety, and Accessibility



Photo Usage, Copyright Laws and Intellectual Property

Copyright laws protect “original works of authorship” such as original writing, imagery, and music. These laws apply to both published and unpublished works. When you use an original work without proper permission, you may be engaging in copyright infringement and run the risk of legal action by the content creator.

Request permission and credit the author or source of your photo where you can—even if the photographer or creator posted the image publicly on their website or social media. It isn’t always clear whether an image is subject to copyright protection. When in doubt, just ask.



Photo Consent and Release Forms

As a rule of thumb, you should always ask for permission to photograph and post the image of an individual or group. Depending on the size of an event, location, and timeframe, this may not always be possible. Here are some general guidelines to help you decide when to obtain written/verbal consent:

- Always collect written/signed consent if an **individual is the sole focus** of a photo and/or if you intend to use their image for purposes other than social media (advertising, brochures, websites, etc.)
- When possible, collect written/signed consent from each individual when the focus is a **small to mid-size group of people** (friends, students in a classroom, etc.). If it isn’t possible to obtain written consent, obtain verbal consent and announce that anyone may opt out of being photographed by stepping out of the frame.
- Consent is not required for photos taken in public that feature a **large group of people** in which no single person or group is the focus (e.g. large events on the Quad). For photos of a large group taken in a private setting, an opportunity to opt out of the photo will suffice.
- We recommend informing guests that photos will be taken and used in different mediums by posting signs at your event or including it on your event invitation/confirmation. An example of language you can use is: “You may be on camera! This event may be photographed or recorded. By attending this event, you grant Queens College the right to use photographs or recordings in any and all media related to the educational mission of the college. Please let us know if you do not wish to be photographed or recorded.”
- Never photograph or post photos of children (younger than 18 years old) without parental consent.
- Be mindful of settings where the identity and privacy of individuals may be of concern (e.g. LGBTQIA+ events, rallies, support groups, etc.).



Privacy Protection

No personal, private, or FERPA-protected information may be posted on Queens College–affiliated social media accounts. When communicating with students via comments or direct messages, do not ask for personal information. Try to move the conversation off social media if the student needs assistance with an academic or personal matter. Queens College advises against sharing social media account passwords through email, as this could create a security risk in the event of a data breach.



Accessibility

All social media posts should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Make every effort to make your content accessible by providing captions to your videos and alt text on your photos. Visit the [CUNY Accessibility page](#) for more information.



Prohibited Activity

All QC-affiliated accounts are prohibited from posting offensive content, endorsing candidates running for public office, or engaging in online activity that undercuts the college's mission or reputation as an institution of public education.

All QC-affiliated accounts must abide by local, state and federal law as well as [CUNY policies](#) and the terms of service or user agreements of each social media service.



Reporting Misconduct

At your discretion, you may remove followers and hide inappropriate comments, including personal information, offensive language, and spam (e.g., advertisements for essay writing services or sexual solicitations). You may also report violations of community guidelines by using the platform's reporting portals.

If you encounter the following in public posts/comments or direct messages, immediately screenshot and report them to the appropriate office or department including direct links when possible. Do not delete any content until it has been reviewed.

- Threats of violence - [Report to Public Safety](#)
- Suicidal language - [Report to the Care and Concern Team](#)
- Accusations of discrimination and retaliation - [Report to CUNY's Reporting Portal](#)
- Accusations of sexual harassment or sexual assault - Report to the [Title IX Coordinator](#)
- If you have other concerns, don't know whether content violates CUNY policy or whom you should alert, or would like to keep the Office of Communications and Marketing informed about social media activity - Report to the [Office of Communications and Marketing](#)

Resources

Queens College Calendar Request

You can use Queens College's [Event Request Form](#) to request that your event is shared on QC's web calendar, in our weekly email newsletter *This Week at QC*, on digital signage, and on our social media accounts. Please note that what is posted on the college's official channels is determined by the Office of Communications and Marketing.

QR Code Request

The Office of Communications and Marketing can generate a limited amount of QR codes for social media purposes. We will do our best to accommodate each request. Email marketing@qc.cuny.edu for more information.

Collaborations

The Office of Communications and Marketing is open to planning posts that will go on the official Queens College social media account(s) and your department's account(s). This includes working together on the overall message and content creation. Email marketing@qc.cuny.edu for more information.

Toolkits

Periodically, the college creates informational social media toolkits for various campaigns, such as Summer Session promotions. We then reach out to QC entities on social media to help spread the news.

Promotion on Official Social Media Accounts

Queens College's official social media accounts have over 100,000 followers, including current and potential students, alumni, community members, politicians, and more. We welcome the opportunity to work with your department or office to post content on your behalf on the college's official Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky, and @QCToday X channels.

Official Accounts



Bluesky

<https://bsky.app/profile/queenscollegecuny.bsky.social>



Facebook

www.facebook.com/queenscollege



Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/queenscollegeofficial>



LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/school/queens-college>



TikTok

<https://www.tiktok.com/@queenscollegecuny?lang=en>



X

@QC_News: https://x.com/QC_News

For external audiences, it highlights college initiatives and student, faculty, and alumni news.

@QCToday: <https://x.com/QCToday>

Highlights events and information for potential and current graduate students.

marketing@qc.cuny.edu

