

# Social Media Guidelines

for UVM Larner College of Medicine  
Medical Student Interest Groups & Leadership Groups

*Updated Tuesday, July 13*

## Disclaimer

This guide was created by the Office of Medical Communications in collaboration with the Office of Medical Student Education and medical student representatives.

Before reading through this guide, please take a moment to thoroughly review the [University of Vermont Social Media Guidelines](#).

The UVM Larner College of Medicine Social Media Guidelines are meant to expand upon, not replace, the advice, rules, and regulations presented in the UVM Social Media Guidelines document referenced above. This document is meant to provide details specific to the unique environment of the Larner College of Medicine and needs and requests of its medical students.

It is important that you read through both guides prior to creating your social media account for a Larner College of Medicine sanctioned Student Leadership Group (SLG), Student Interest Group (SIG), or other organization tied to the Larner College of Medicine.

UVM Larner College of Medicine medical students are responsible for adhering to the guidelines presented both within this document and within the University of Vermont Social Media Guidelines.

This guide does not pertain to your personal use of social media and your personal social media accounts. It does pertain to all accounts that are created with the purpose of communication with, too, and about UVM Larner Med medical students, grad students, and the UVM and UVM Larner Med community as a whole.

## Help/Contact Information

If you have additional questions or concerns after reading through the two guides, please contact:

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## Intro

Social media is a great way to keep your classmates and your parent national organization (if you have one) up-to-date about events your group is hosting, group elections, student-run or -led initiatives, messages from your national organization, interesting articles or media about the topic your group is focused on, scientific/medical advances in your group’s subject field, and more.

Social media is also a wonderful way for your group to reach potential future UVM Larner Med medical students and for your group to participate in the larger UVM and UVM Larner Med social media community.

A social media presence can keep all members of your Student Interest Group (SIG) or Student Leadership Group (SLG) relevant and connected.

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## A. Before you create an account

### 1. Does an account for my SIG, SLG, or group already exist?

Before you create a social media account for your SIG, SLG, or group, please make sure an account does not already exist. To do so, consider:

- Contacting former/current members of your group
- Doing a search on each social media channel you are intending to create an account on

### 2. What if an account already exists?

Per the [UVM University Sponsored Social Media Guidelines](#):

“If a social media account already exists for your unit, and you no longer have access, make every effort to regain access. This may include contacting the social media network, account creators, and/or those with prior access.”

If you cannot gain access, [contact Michelle Bookless](#) to discuss the best path forward.

### 3. Will social media account for our SIG/SLG meet a need that is not currently being served by other communications channels at the University and the College? Can I define that need specifically?

Remember that **your classmates and colleagues already have information coming to them from an endless number of resources** – UVM Larner Med official College social media accounts, emails, websites, newsletters, the Weekly Wire, etc.

Before you create an account, ask yourself (and your colleagues):

- Will this account serve a purpose that these other channels/modes of communication are not currently serving (or are not currently successful at serving)?

- Will your account be welcomed, or will your colleagues, classmates, and others feel burdened by having one more place to check for information?
- Is there another, similar group that already has an account that you could join forces with?
  - The UVM Larner Med Medical Student Council is in the process of creating an Instagram account. If your group determines it (a) does not have anyone to manage an account and/or (b) does not have enough content to post to the channel at least twice per week, you may consider reaching out to [the acting first-year Student Council Chair of Student Leadership and Chair of Communication](#) to see if they can post your content to their account.

## B. What social media platform should I use?

### 1. Overview

When you're trying to determine what social media platform to use, you should reference a brief description of what each social media platform offered in the [UVM University-Sponsored Social Media Guidelines document](#).

You can also:

- Research the platforms your national (parent) organization uses the most frequently.
- Poll your current members to see what platforms they use most regularly.
- Ask yourself which platform you or the other assigned social media content managers in your group feel most comfortable and familiar with.
- Ask yourself who your primary target audience is, and what their platform preferences are.
- Ask yourself what types of information/content you'll be posting most consistently.

**Note:** If you decide that you'd like to use multiple social media platforms, keep in mind that you'll have to develop specific content (often with different graphics and wording) for each platform. Re-using content from

one platform and posting it on another sometimes does not work due to the varying parameters, algorithms, and audiences associated with each individual platform.

## 2. Instagram

SIGs, SLGs, and other medical student groups are encouraged to create Instagram accounts before looking to other social media platforms.

Per ongoing social media analytics reviews, the Larner Office of Medical Communications has found that most medical students at our College utilize Instagram more regularly than other social media accounts.

Additionally, SIGs, SLGs, and other medical student groups will be able to capitalize on their post's reach by tagging a variety of similarly-minded UVM undergraduate groups, national organizations, UVM Bored (in case you want to promote an event to the entire UVM campus) and have your Instagram stories and posts highlighted on the UVM Larner Med Instagram account.

**Note:** We will, of course, update our recommendations as the social media landscape and the social media platforms UVM Larner Med officially uses continues to evolve.

## 3. Other Social Platforms

Twitter could be a good option for your group if your national organization utilizes Twitter regularly and/or the topic your group focuses on is frequently discussed on Twitter.

For the time being, the Larner College of Medicine medical student groups are asked *not* to create accounts on platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.

Based on our review of analytics, Facebook and LinkedIn tend not to get as many interactions from the medical student population as Instagram does. Additionally, the College does not have a presence on Snapchat or TikTok.

## C. Getting started

## 1. Before Creating an Account: Get Written Approval

Per the [UVM University-Sponsored Social Media Guidelines document](#), all groups must “...get written approval from a unit head or, in the case of a recognized student group or organization, faculty/staff advisor to create a university-sponsored social media account for your unit.”

When you request approval from a faculty/staff advisor, they should be aware -

“...they may share accountability should the account cause reputational harm or include content that does not conform to University policy.”

To get written approval from your faculty/staff advisor:

- a. Fill out the “UVM Larner MedMedical Student Interest Group & Leadership Group Request to Create New Social Media Account” form
- b. Email the form to your faculty/staff advisor for review and sign off
- c. When you receive the approved form back, send it to [the acting first-year Student Council Chair of Student Leadership and Chair of Communication](#)
- d. The acting first-year **Student Council Chair of Student Leadership** and **Chair of Communication** will be responsible for keeping these approvals updated in a Commons spreadsheet listing all student leadership groups and student interest groups.

## 2. Naming your account

Per the [UVM University-Sponsored Social Media Guidelines document](#), “Your name should be easily searchable and identifiable. Avoid insider acronyms or nicknames that may make it hard for users to find your account.”

When creating an account for a medical student group affiliated with the UVM Larner College of Medicine, you should use the following naming conventions:

*UVMLarnerGroupName*

**Examples:**

- UVMLarnerMedStudentWellness

- UVMLarnerMedStudentSocialJustice
- UVMLarnerMedStudentCouncil

To determine whether to use your full group name or an acronym, you can reference your national organization for direction. For instance, the Asian Pacific American Medical Students Association's national organization account on Instagram is @nationalapamsa. As such, the UVM Larner Med chapter might consider the account name UVMLarnerAPAMSA.

If you have a current account that does not follow this naming convention, please make every effort to update your account to follow these guidelines.

Remember, if you are creating an account that is specific to the UVM Larner College of Medicine **medical student** population, you should make that apparent in the naming of your account.

**Example:**

There is both a UVM Larner College of Medicine Graduate Student Council and a UVM Larner College of Medicine Medical Student Council. Therefore, you would not want to create an account named *UVMLarnerStudentCouncil*, because it would be unclear to users if this was for the graduate student council or the medical student council.

A clearer option would be for the two groups to create accounts named *UVMLarnerGradStudentCouncil* (or *UVMLarnerGradStuCouncil*) and *UVMLarnerMedStudentCouncil* (or *UVMLarnerMedStuCouncil*)

Instagram will allow account names up to 30 characters long including use of letters, numbers, underscores, and periods.

a. Why can't we use "LCOM?"

Although we tend to use the acronym "LCOM" internally, most UVM faculty, staff, and students outside of the Larner College of Medicine are not familiar with the term. Neither are prospective medical students, national organizations, or even, all employees of the College. As such, the use of such an acronym, particularly in the naming conventions of accounts which should be inclusive to all, can give the initial impression of unintentional alienation - i.e. "insider language."

b. What about “UVMMed” or “UVMMedicine?”

As you know, our College is closely affiliated with the UVM Medical Center, the UVM Health Network (UVMHN), and the UVM Health Network Medical Group (UVMHNMG). Use of “UVMMedicine” as the precursor of an account name would indicate to many in the public that your group is a part of the UVM Medical Center, UVMHN, or UVMHNMG rather than the College.

In fact, our College has been trying to work with Instagram for over three years now to change our account name from “UVMMedicine” to “UVMLarnerMed” (as it exists on all other channels), specifically due to this confusion. We have been regularly tagged and mentioned on posts and messaged regarding issues that have nothing to do with the College, but, rather, the medical center.

c. What about “LarnerMed?”

The Larner College of Medicine is a part of the University of Vermont. Just like the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, we are an affiliate and not a stand-alone entity.

By using the acronym “UVM” as a part of UVMLarner at the beginning of our account names, we associate ourselves with our well-known nationally and internationally recognized parent University. Additionally, as folks are more likely to conduct an account search start with “UVM” rather than “Larner,” our accounts are more likely to appear in search results if we include “UVM” in the account name - thereby helping us reach more potential audience members.

3. What email account/phone number is your account associated with?

It is important to ensure that your account is associated with your med.uvm.edu account (not a gmail, yahoo, etc. account)

When you are handing over the account to your successor, you'll want to make sure you update the email address and phone number associated with the account to their email address and phone number.

#### 4. Creating a bio for your account

The bio for your account should include the handle for the UVM Larner College of Medicine within it:

- Instagram: [@UVMMedicine](#)
- Twitter: [@UVMLarnerMed](#)
- Facebook: [@UVMLarnerMed](#)

If you have a national/parent organization, you may also consider adding the handle for that account as well.

Within your bio, you should write the full name of your organization and your purpose.

Instagram limits your account bio to 150 characters.

**Example:**

The UVM Larner Med chapter of the Asian Pacific American Medical Students Association. [@nationalapamsa](#) [@uvmmedicine](#)

#### 5. Accounts to follow

When you create your account, you should immediately follow any accounts your parent/national organizations have, the UVM Larner Med main account (*see list, above*), and the UVM main account. You will also want to follow national organizations specific to your group's interest/focus, UVM Medical Center residency programs or those at other institutions related to your group's area of interest/focus, etc.

## D. Inappropriate Content, University Policies, and More

It is important for medical students who create accounts for Larner College of Medicine-affiliated groups to understand that their commitment to professionalism and the student honor code applies to their presence on social media.

It is your responsibility to review and adhere to all information/rules regarding inappropriate content, policy considerations, and University policies outlined in the [UVM University-Sponsored Social Media Guidelines document](#).

Additionally, it is your responsibility to review and adhere to all policies outlined in the [UVM Larner College of Medicine medical student handbook](#).

The Office of Medical Communications and the Office of Medical Student Education will not be proactively reviewing your posts to ensure that you are posting appropriate content. However, should we be notified of inappropriate content, you may be required to meet with the Office of Medical Student Education to discuss the event and could face additional consequences.

Remember, if you're uncertain about posting something, err on the side of caution and request input and advice from your group's advisors, the Office of Medical Student Education, or the Office of Medical Communications.

## E. Training

The Office of Medical Communications will host an annual and compulsory social media training session for all medical student social media content managers.

If your medical student group has a social media account, it is imperative that at least one group representative in charge of your social media presence attends the training.

Failure to attend the training without written approval will result in the College requesting your account be suspended for 6 months or until you make up the training.