



SUTHANTHIRA THIRUNAL AMUDHA PERUVIZHA
TAMIL NADU

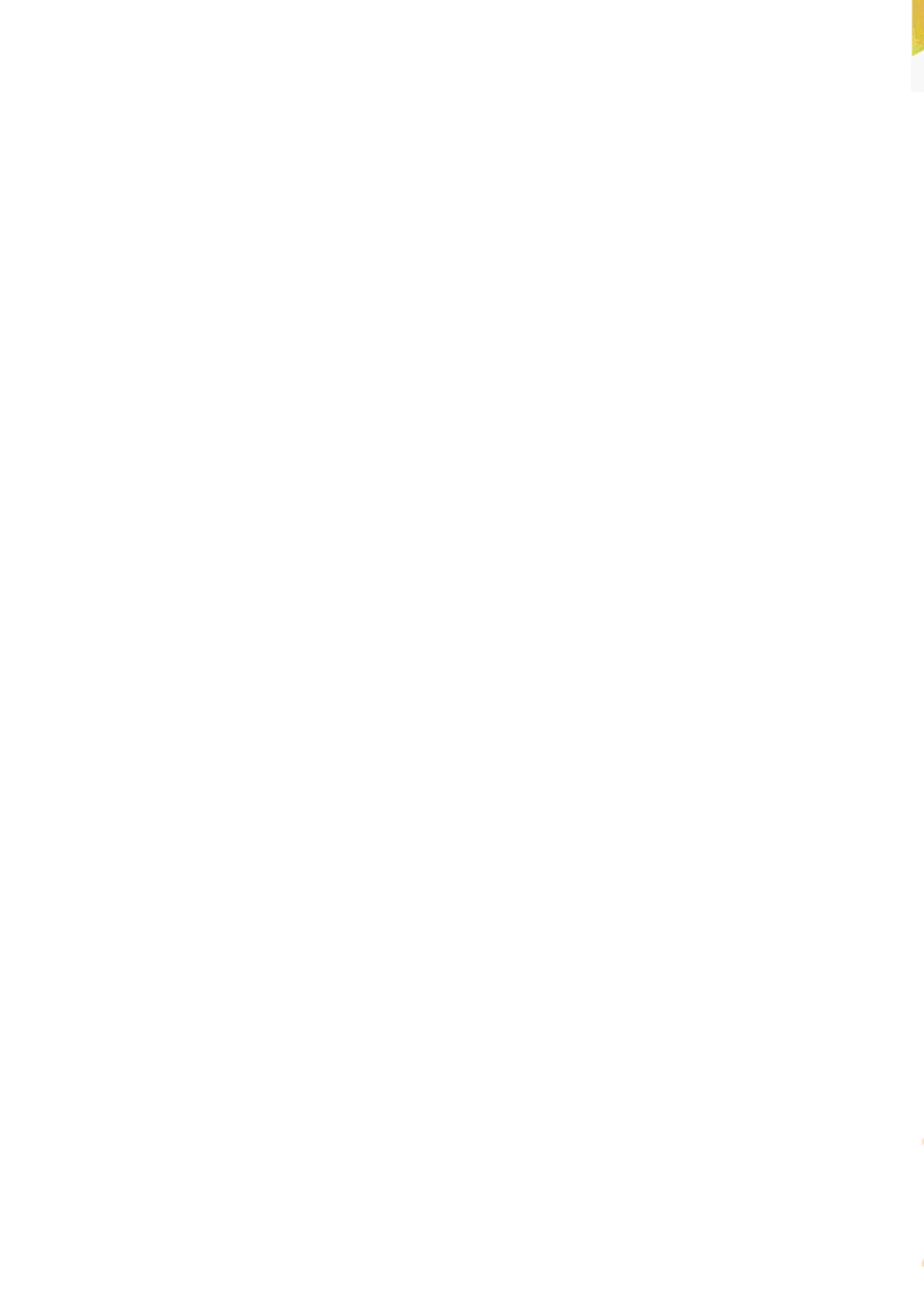


சுதந்திரத் திருநாள்
அமுதப் பெருவிழா



TNOU Social Media Policy 2021

தமிழ்நாடு திறந்தநிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம்
Tamil Nadu Open University
Chennai – 600 015





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TAMIL NADU



Tamil Nadu Open University

[A State Open University established by Government of Tamil Nadu, Recognized by UGC-DEB,
Member in Asian Association of Open Universities and Association of Commonwealth Universities]

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Prof. K.Parthasarathy
Vice Chancellor

Foreword

01.10.2020

My Dear Stakeholders,

Greetings! I am with pleasure to present this policy document viz., "TNOU Social Media Policy 2021" in your hands for making optimum use of social media for all fruitful mass communications related to activities of the Tamil Nadu Open University.

We all know that social media has become a part and parcel of our life for accessing information often easily and more conveniently. Around 4.55 billion people are social media users across the world in October 2021, equating to 57.6 percent of the total global population. In India, there are 448 million social media users, and 624 million internet users i.e., about 45 percent of the total population of our country. So, social media has become one of the most essential parts of daily internet usage.

Social media is any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public in real-time. A centum of social media tools is available now and goes on adding regularly. This social media not only helps for official communication but also for wider usage in education. Teachers and learners can be connected to each other and can make good use of these platforms for the benefit of their teaching and learning.

This social media policy of TNOU specifies its objectives; focuses who will be benefitted; lists out types of social media groups, clarifies dos and don't; cautions violation and its consequences; pinpoints the roles and responsibilities of admin; announces its regulation under social media law; and declares composition of monitoring committee. Of all, this regulation is brought out to widen the scope of maximizing the utilization of available social media tools for providing academic and administrative communications to the stakeholders in faster and accurate manner.

As we live in a digital ecosystem, it is inevitable that educational institutions should adapt the social media tools to share and gain the knowledge. If we are not up to date in technology, we will be outdated. In that way, TNOU wanted to have clear social media policy for its stakeholders, for which the committee constituted worked well and my appreciations are due to them.

I would appreciate if all our stakeholders of TNOU are acquainted with this social media policy thoroughly for interacting with each other for the benefit of learning community.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

(K.Parthasarathy)



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Preamble

The advent of social media is transforming the way in which people connect with each other and the manner in which information are shared and distributed. It is different from traditional media such as print, radio and television in two significant ways – first, the amount of content that can be generated by the users themselves far exceeds the content generated by news/opinion makers, and second, its “viral” ability for potential exponential spread of information by word of mouth and interlinking of the various social media platforms, thereby considerably reducing the control over spread of any such information. Social media is redefining the way people communicate with one another.

In order to encourage and enable the University to make use of this dynamic medium of interaction, a Framework and Guidelines for the use of Social Media by stakeholders of Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) have been formulated. These guidelines will enable to create and implement strategy for the effective use of social media. The document will help the stakeholders to aware of what to do and what not do regarding the sharing of information in the official social media platform.

Short Title, Application and Commencement

- ❑ These regulations shall be called “TNOU Social Media Policy, 2021”.
- ❑ They shall apply to the students, researchers, faculty and staff of Tamil Nadu Open University. This is also applicable to all the Academic Counsellors, Programme Coordinators, and Coordinators of all type of Learning Study Centres of Tamil Nadu Open University.
- ❑ These regulations shall come into force from 1st October, 2021.

Definition of the Key Terms

In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires

- ◆ “Social Media” means any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public.
- ◆ “e-governance” is the application of information communication technology for providing committed and transparent governance in the University.
- ◆ “M-governance” is the application of information communication technology services of e-governance through mobile phones which increases accountability, adaptability, and accessibility among the stakeholders.
- ◆ “Information Technology (IT) Policy” of the University defines rules, regulations and guidelines for proper usage and maintenance of these technological assets to ensure their ethical and acceptable use and assure health, safety and security of data, products, facilities as well as the people using them.
- ◆ “Stakeholders” include Faculty, Staff, Students, Directors of Regional Centres, and Coordinators of all types of study centres of TNOU.

Need for the Social Media Policy

This policy provides guidance for participation in online social networking sites, interactive forums, blogs, wikis, chat rooms, podcasts, video aggregation platforms or any other kind of social media platforms. It is expected from all who are engaging in social media whether on behalf of TNOU or otherwise, to understand and to follow these guidelines, as long as their action involves TNOU name or Information on TNOU in any manner. Failure to do so can put the future participation at risk. This policy will continually evolve as new technologies and social media tools emerge and shall continue to apply even if a person ceases to be a stakeholders of TNOU.

Objectives

The objectives of this Social Media Policy are as follows:

- To encourage the stakeholders of TNOU to use the social media in line with University / State / Central government laws and regulations from time to time;
- To secure the reputation of the University, each and every member of TNOU community in the Social Media platforms with all legal rights;
- To promote the creation and sharing of various learning information and activities of the University which are useful to the learners and community;
- To minimize the risk of the social media usage and to enjoy the benefits of the social media with decorum behaviour; and
- To ensure the productive, informative, respectful exchanges in the Social Media abiding the law.

- ❖ Given its characteristics to potentially give “voice to all”, immediate outreach and 24×7 engagement, Social Media offers a unique opportunity to engage with their stakeholders in real time. Many governments / Universities across the world as well many government agencies in India are using various social media platforms to reach out citizens, business people and experts to seek inputs into policy making, get feedback on service delivery, create community based programmes etc.
- ❖ However, many apprehensions remain including, but not limited to issues related to authorization to speak on behalf of department/agency, technologies and platform to be used for communication, scope of engagement, creating synergies between different channels of communication, compliance with existing legislations etc. It was therefore felt that Guidelines for the use of Social Media required would enable for the effective use of the platforms.

Purpose for Social Media Guidelines

Benefits and Beneficiaries

- ❑ The University reserves the right to monitor use of social media platforms and take appropriate action to protect against any misuse that may be harmful to the University, in accordance with the IT regulations and where the law permits.
- ❑ This Social Media Policy is applicable to all its stakeholders irrespective of any cadre and all forms of social media where there is potential impact on the University, whether for work-related or personal use, whether during working hours or otherwise, whether social media is accessed using the University's IT facilities and equipments, or equipment belongs to stakeholders of TNOU or any other third party.

Scope

- TNOU wants to use emerging technologies in an effective way to disseminate the information as quick as possible. As social media is essential for fast sharing of information, TNOU intends to regulate such media for proper use by its stakeholders.
- As the University implements e-governance and M-governance for its functions, social media is also a part of service delivery mode. The social media policy is a regulation for using such social media mainly for the official transaction of information sharing following certain prescribed norms.

Types of Social Media Groups / Accounts and its Maintenance

There are three types of usage of Social Media which can be used by the stakeholders of the University. They are:

- i. Social Media Groups created by the University.
- ii. Social Media Account created in the Name of University Department/ School/ Centre/ Division/ Cell etc.
- iii. Social Media Account created by the Individual for his/her own purpose, which also reflects on University Functions.
- iv. The stakeholders should carefully adhere to the social media policy for each and every type of accounts.

- All stakeholders can join in social media created by the University for a specific group for sharing official and useful information.
- All the stakeholders ensure whether the information is reliable and reasonable enough to share.
- All the stakeholders of TNOU should aware of this social media policy thoroughly.
- All the stakeholders are expected to use the social media effectively because most of the official communications are shared through social media.
- All the postings and communications in the Social Media should be polite and with respectable manner. The University reserves the right to accept or not accept, and delete any comments any posting without giving any details and explanation to the any member of the group.
- The Admin has to post any of the information shared by the stakeholders with approval of the authorities to members included in social media.
- The admin is only responsible for maintaining the discipline of the group. He/she is given responsibility to add and delete the members and also to modify/add/delete the information to be shared in the group.
- The stakeholders can give the information to the Admin for publishing in social media by specifying all details - to whom the information to be shared, its impact, time of publication, how long to be retained etc.
- The University Stakeholders should only pass the information and comment within their own area of expertise to provide individual perspectives on non-confidential activities of the University.

Social Media Groups Created by the University

Social Media Account Created in the Name of University Department/ School/ Centre/ Division/Cell etc.

- ◆ Any social media account in the name of the University / institution / school / center / department / cell / division / regional center / programme are to be created only with the prior approval of the competent authorities.
- ◆ If any social media account created before this social media policy coming existence, that social media account be regulated based on this policy.
- ◆ The Admin will post any of the information shared by the stakeholders after the approval of the authorities.

Social Media Account Created by the Individual for his/her own purpose

- ❖ The Individual may have their own Social Media account for their personal views and endorsements. University will not interfere in their own personal views and ideas at the same time it should not affect the integrity of the University at any circumstances.
- ❖ The individual should not criticize the functions of the University / authorities of the University and the University Administration directly or indirectly or tagging the Accounts of the University/ institution/ school/ center/ department/cell/division/regional center/ programme at any circumstances.
- ❖ The University encourages faculty members to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media; however, wherever and whenever the faculty members do this, they must be aware of the potential impact on both themselves and the University.
- ❖ While using the social media any individual who is directly or indirectly connected with the University should adhere to the Social media rules, regulations and guidelines issued by the Union and State Governments and the University.

Information Sharing

The employees should be cautious to handle the social media in order to share the correct information in a right way. While creating and/or sharing of information the stakeholders should follows the dos and don'ts:

DOS

- The members of the social media group should follow the common courtesy in the Social Media and think twice before supplying information for posting.
- The members of the social media group should seek guidance before participating in social media when the topic being discussed may be considered sensitive (e.g. a crisis situation, intellectual property, issues which may impact on the University's reputation).
- The members of the social media group should ask permission to publish the internal and private matters.
- The information supplied by the stakeholder is not properly taken care of by the Admin, such grievances be brought to the knowledge of the Authorities without any argument with the Admin.

Don'ts

- The University's privacy, confidentiality and legal guidelines for external communication should not be violated by an employee.
- University employees will not post / share / endorse / comments that include:
 - Harassment or personal attacks toward specific individuals or groups
 - Profanity and vulgar or abusive language
 - Threats of physical or bodily harm
 - Sensitive information (for example, information that could compromise public safety or intellectual property)
 - Offensive terms
 - Vendor/commercial promotions that are not officially sanctioned by TNOU
 - Confidential official communications/files etc.
 - Documents/Files related to third party or not related to the individuals concern
 - Morning / Evening / Night / Birthday Wishes
- The members will be held accountable for if any activities that harm TNOU reputation. Any deviation in any point of social media policy leads to punishable actions. Therefore, unauthorized sharing information through social media by the members is not acceptable.
- University Stakeholders should never represent themselves or the University in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.

Violation and Consequences

- ◆ All the stakeholders of the University should adhere to the Social media rules, regulations and guidelines issued by the State and Union Governments and the University.
- ◆ These regulations help them for proper usage and maintenance of social media ethics, social etiquette, and acceptable usage, assure health, safety & security of data and information sharing in the social media.
- ◆ The stakeholders should not engage in illegal activity through social media or engage in any activity that promotes terrorism. The very fact of possessing or disseminating terrorist material may be sufficient to warrant an investigation by the police and a member of staff would be put in the position of having to advance a credible defense.
- ◆ If the Social Media used by the stakeholder is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, creating legal liability for the University, bringing the University into disrepute, breaching the Dignity and Respect policy or outside the scope of the Agreement on Academic Freedom or any other University policy or procedure then the University may take action under the staff disciplinary procedures. This may include adverse comments, videos, or photographs, which have been posted on social media sites about the University, students, work colleagues or other stakeholders.
- ◆ Where employees access social media for work-related purposes or personal use using the University's IT facilities and equipment, the University's IT regulations will apply.
- ◆ Social Networking Sites (SNSs) may be referred to when investigating possible misconduct/ gross misconduct.
- ◆ Employees should be aware of security threats and be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks can also be used to distribute spam and malware.
- ◆ The University may require employees to remove social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of these standards and failure to comply with such a request may, in itself, result in disciplinary action.
- ◆ It can be used to share news, information and successes, keep stakeholders of TNOU up to date with important developments and promote healthy academic knowledge sharing.
- ◆ There is, however, an inherent risk involved in using social media, in that, it is an instantaneous and far reaching form of communication and inappropriate use can impact upon stakeholders and the reputation of the University.
- ◆ Violations of this policy are viewed seriously and that will lead to take suitable disciplinary proceedings against the erring members by the University with its rules and regulations.

Monitoring Committee

A monitoring committee is constituted by the authorities with the following compositions to monitor the various activities pertaining to social media at group and individual level. The period of the committee and members of the committee would be decided and announced by the authorities of the University from time to time. This committee regularly monitors the activities of social media tools used by the stakeholders and reports to the authorities of TNOU periodically. If any deviation/violation in using social media is found, it is immediately to be brought to the knowledge of the authorities for further course of action.

Chair person	Secretary	Member	Member	Member
Teaching Faculty not below the Rank of Associate Professor	Teaching Faculty in the Rank of Assistant Professor and above	A Member who is well aware of the Technical aspects	A Member who is well aware of the Legal aspects	A Member who is well aware of the Social aspects

Roles & Responsibilities of Admin

- ❖ The Vice Chancellor nominates the Admin / Co-Admin.
- ❖ The Admin creates the specific group and individual account including stakeholders of TNOU with the approval of the authorities of TNOU.
- ❖ The regular circulars, notification of admission, examination and other administrative & academic related activities approved by the University are posted through social media.
- ❖ The admin receives information supplied by the stakeholders and that information is edited/validated/rejected (specifying reasons) by him/her.
- ❖ The admin should get clarified with the authorities for any doubt or controversies of information to be posted in social media.
- ❖ The Admin keeps filing of information shared in social media for verification and retrieval.
- ❖ The Admin in his/her absence of duty, inform to the staff under his/her office to receive the information and directs how to process it.
- ❖ The Admin should follow for gaining authenticity/verification of accounts from the social media service providers.

Social Media Law

- Social Media Law India is regulated by the Information Technology Act which was enacted in the year 2000 to regulate, control, and deal with the issues arising out of the IT. Social Networking Media is and “intermediately” within the meaning of Indian Information Technology Act 2000 (IT Act 2000).
- Any Act related social media passed by the Union and State governments will be coming into enforcement.

Amendments

The changes and additions in the present Social Media Policy are done from time to time with the approval of the Vice Chancellor of TNOU. The amended matters would be published in the TNOU website also.

Drafting Committee

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தமிழ்நாடு திறந்தநிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் Tamil Nadu Open University

(மாநில திறந்தநிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம், தமிழ்நாடு அரசால் நிறுவப்பட்டது.
பல்கலைக்கழக நிதிநல்கைக் குழு & தொலைநிலைக் கல்வி மன்றத்தின் அங்கீகாரம் பெற்றது.

ஆசிய திறந்தநிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகங்களின் கூட்டமைப்பு &
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