

Integrity Guidelines for University of Toronto Communications

Introduction:

The purpose of this guideline is to help the U of T community understand the principled approach used to uphold content integrity on the university's institutional communication channels and in its publications. It is offered as a resource to all areas of the university who may wish to consider following the same approach in their local areas.

U of T Context:

The University of Toronto is an internationally recognized research university, with undergraduate, graduate and professional programs of excellent quality.

U of T's statement of institutional purpose commits the university to "fostering an academic community in which the learning and scholarship of every member may flourish" and notes that within the university context, "the most crucial of all human rights are the rights of freedom of speech, academic freedom and freedom of research."

As a broader public sector organization in Ontario, the university also receives public funds and is committed to accountability and transparency and to serving the public interest.

UTC Context:

University of Toronto Communications (UTC) builds and shares the university's brand and communicates what makes us unique and worthy of support to generate awareness, excitement and trust. Our work fuels the university's reputation for excellence and creates the conditions for success that help build and sustain relationships with current and future students, employees, donors and industry partners, while also driving others to share our story.

UTC considers its owned-media channels and publications (e.g. U of T/UTM/UTSC websites, social media accounts and news sites, The Bulletin Brief, Express [UTM's newsletter], the UTSC newsletter and U of T Magazine) to be a critical part of this work. These channels and publications are part of the public record, and as such, we strive to maintain the highest standards of accuracy, quality and transparency.

UTC adheres to the principles of practice established by the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS), the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) and the Arthur W. Page Society (AWPS). These bodies recommend that institutional communications should be:

- aligned with the vision, mission and values of the institution
- created to support corporate strategy/business goals

- centred on building lasting relationships with stakeholders
- focused on bridging the needs and interests of key constituents with the institution
- evidence-based and measurable
- two-way communications
- professional and ethical
- authentic and transparent

Content Integrity:

UTC's principles of practice guide our approach to content integrity. UTC sets stringent standards to ensure our content is consistently of the highest quality, accurate, professional and trustworthy. Our standards are articulated in the university's [brand guidelines](#) and in the following practices:

Fact-checking: UTC verifies the factual accuracy of all content it produces before publication. UTC will take reasonable steps to contextualize content and confirm its veracity while securing permission from the content creator prior to publishing. UTC will check U of T attribution/connections prior to publication.

Correcting errors: UTC will correct errors promptly, with notifications if applicable.

Modifying content: New information may be added to update content at the discretion of the content owner/publisher/editor.

Removing content: UTC reserves the right to delete and unpublish content. These situations are typically restricted to egregious errors (e.g. a breach of ethics, the discovery of fabricated information), a situation in which there is a demonstrable threat to the safety or reputation of an individual or group and other special circumstances. Editors and/or channel managers will consult with an AVP and/or the VP, Communications prior to taking any action. In the event of safety or life-threatening concerns, UTC will contact search engines such as Google or Bing to request that the content be cleared from search caches.

Retention schedule: Content on institutional social media accounts is subject to the retention schedule of the platform. Content on a website, including U of T News, is retained as per University of Toronto standards.

Offensive/objectionable material: While UTC upholds the institution's commitment to free speech, published content should not be gratuitously offensive, profane or sensationalized. UTC content is not intended to create shock in order to draw attention. Humour is used judiciously and with care and intention.

Attribution/credit: UTC will give credit where it is due. UTC will provide photo and authorship credit to content appearing in its newsroom. If images or video are created exclusively by AI, credit should be attributed to the tool used. For social media content, UTC will tag authors/photographers/creators when possible or practical.

Contact:

If you have any questions about the information contained in this guideline or seek further guidance, kindly email: vp.communications@utoronto.ca

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