

Privacy Statement: VU Communication and Social Media Use

Date: 1 September 2026

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (hereinafter: 'VU') attaches great importance to protecting your privacy and keeping your personal data secure. This privacy statement covers the communication activities of the Communication & Marketing Department of VU (hereinafter: 'C&M') and the use of social media by VU. Examples include:

- the university's social media channels, such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, X, TikTok, YouTube and any other platforms;
- online advertising campaigns on, among others, Google (Search, Display, YouTube), Meta (Facebook/Instagram), LinkedIn, TikTok and similar platforms;
- newsletters, digital mailings and online forms created by C&M;
- image and video material created and published by or on behalf of C&M.

This statement describes which personal data we process, for what purpose and on what legal basis, with whom we share data, how long we retain data and what rights you have. This privacy statement supplements the [general VU Privacy Statement](#), which covers the processing of data when you visit one of the VU's websites, and the associated cookie statement.

We process your personal data in accordance with applicable legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (hereinafter referred to as 'GDPR') and the Dutch General Data Protection Regulation Implementation Act (UAVG).

1. Who is responsible for processing my personal data?

The VU Foundation is responsible for the data processing described in this privacy statement. VU Amsterdam is maintained by the VU Foundation in its capacity as a special institution within the meaning of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW).

The VU Foundation has its registered office at De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, and is registered with the Chamber of Commerce under number 53815211.

2. What does this privacy statement cover?

This privacy statement is intended to inform the following persons about the protection of their personal data during communication and social media use by VU Amsterdam:

- visitors to the VU social media channels;
- followers, 'friends' and subscribers of our social media pages;
- individuals who respond to, or interact with, our posts and advertisements;
- recipients of newsletters, emails or targeted online advertisements;
- participants of online campaigns, competitions, surveys or C&M forms;
- individuals who are identifiable in photos or videos published by C&M.

Social media platforms and advertising partners also process users' personal data independently, without VU having any

control over this processing. To learn more about these processing activities, we hereby refer you to the privacy statements of these parties.

3. Which (categories of) personal data are processed, for what purpose and on what legal basis?

3.1 Visiting our social media channels (web analytics)

When you visit our social media pages, we process the following data (partly through cookies and similar techniques; see Chapter 6):

- your IP address (usually pseudonymised/anonymised);
- your device, browser and operating system information;
- your browsing behaviour: pages visited, clicks, referring website and the duration of your visit;
- if you are logged into a platform: your username/profile on that platform (e.g. for follower statistics).

Purpose: measuring and improving the reach and performance of our website and channels and optimising content.

Legal basis: legitimate interest and/or consent.

3.2 Social media interaction (comments, messages, likes, DMs)

If you respond to our social media pages, send a message, follow us or share/like a post, we process:

- your publicly visible profile data (name, username, profile picture);
- the content of your comments, messages or questions;
- metadata, such as the time of your response and the platform on which you responded.

Purpose: maintaining contact, answering questions, moderating our channels and monitoring our service provision (customer contact via social media).

Legal basis: legitimate interest

3.3 Participation in campaigns, forms, prize draws and newsletters

When signing up for a newsletter or prize draw or filling in a form or survey organised by C&M, we process the data that you provide yourself, such as:

- your name and student or work email address;
- your telephone number (if requested);
- your answers to the questions in the form/survey;
- for prize draws: your address details for sending a prize.

Purpose: sending the requested information, running the campaign or prize draw and, with your consent, sending newsletters or similar communications.

Legal basis: consent.

3.4 Image and video material

At events, open days, during recordings and at other activities, C&M takes photographs and makes videos that may be published, in whole or in part, on our website, social media channels or in other printed materials. Individuals may be recognisable in these images and videos. For portrait photographs or interviews, we obtain consent in advance (for example, by means of a consent form); for general footage of larger groups at publicly accessible events, legitimate interest may serve as the legal basis, and you can always object.

Purpose: providing an impression of VU for use in VU communications, recruitment or reporting.

Legal basis: consent and/or legitimate interest.

3.5 Online advertisements (Google, Meta, LinkedIn, TikTok and other platforms)

C&M uses online advertising to reach current and prospective students, staff, alumni and other target audiences through advertising networks including Google Ads (Search, Display and YouTube), Meta Ads (Facebook/Instagram), LinkedIn Ads, TikTok Ads and similar platforms. The following data may be processed in this context:

- online identifiers such as cookie IDs, mobile advertising IDs and similar technical identifiers;
- (hashed) email addresses or telephone numbers, for example when building 'custom audiences' based on existing contact lists (exclusively with a valid legal basis);
- interaction and click behaviour on our advertisements and website (conversion tracking, for example via Meta Pixel or Google Tag);
- estimated interest categories and demographic characteristics as derived by the platform.

Purpose: displaying relevant, targeted advertisements (audience targeting and lookalike targeting), measuring campaign effectiveness (conversion tracking) and optimising the advertising budget.

Legal basis: consent.

4. Who can access my personal data?

We work with various external parties for our communications. Depending on their role, these parties either qualify as a processor, as a joint controller or as an independent controller.

4.1 Social media platforms — joint controllership

For our official pages on social media platforms (known as business profiles), VU and the platform itself (e.g. Meta for Facebook/Instagram or LinkedIn Corporation) are generally joint controllers for the processing of visitor statistics ('page insights'). This means that:

- the platform itself is responsible for technical processing, data security and facilitating the exercise of your rights insofar as these relate to the platform's core functionality;
- VU is responsible for the use we make of the statistics and for the content we post;
- you can generally turn to the platform itself in the first instance to exercise your rights (such as access to or the deletion of your account and profile data) via the settings of your own account.

Further information about the processing of personal data by the platforms themselves can be found in their privacy

and cookie statements (see the overview in Section 4.3).

4.2 Advertising and marketing partners

For displaying and measuring online advertisements, we use advertising networks such as Google (Google Ads, Google Analytics, YouTube), Meta (Facebook/Instagram Ads) and LinkedIn Ads. These parties process data partly as processors (on our behalf and under our instructions) and partly as independent controllers, insofar as they also use data for their own purposes (for example, to improve their own services or combine data across their platforms). For the latter processing operations, you must contact the relevant platforms themselves to exercise your rights.

4.3 Overview of important external parties

The overview below lists the main external parties with which VU collaborates in the field of social media and online marketing.

Party	Role	Used for	More information
Meta (Facebook, Instagram)	Joint controller (page insights)/independent controller (advertisements)	Management of company pages, Meta Ads, retargeting via Meta Pixel	Privacy Statement of Meta
Google (Google Ads, Google Analytics, YouTube)	Processor (Analytics, if correctly configured) / independent controller (Ads, YouTube)	Website analytics, search and video advertising, conversion tracking	Privacy Statement of Google
LinkedIn Corporation	Joint controller (page insights)/independent controller (advertisements)	Management of company page, LinkedIn Ads (primarily aimed at professionals/alumni)	Privacy Statement of LinkedIn
TikTok	Independent controller (advertising) / joint controller (account statistics)	TikTok Ads, reach among younger target audiences	Privacy Statement of TikTok

We have concluded data processing agreements with processors that process personal data exclusively on our behalf and under our instructions (such as our social media, marketing or web agencies and providers of mailing or survey tools). These include agreements on the purpose and duration of the processing, security measures, confidentiality, (sub)processors and the manner in which you can exercise your rights.

5. Will my personal data be transferred to international organisations or countries outside the European Union?

A number of the parties mentioned above are established outside the European Union. We only transfer your personal data to countries outside the European Union if the European Commission has recognised the country as providing an adequate level of protection, the transfer is subject to appropriate safeguards under the GDPR, or the GDPR provides a specific ground for the transfer.

6. How long will my personal data be stored?

We retain your personal data for no longer than is necessary to achieve the predetermined purposes or for as long as required by law.

7. Does VU Amsterdam use automated decision-making or profiling in its communication and social media?

No, VU Amsterdam does not engage in automated decision-making or profiling. In the context of online advertisements, the platforms we engage may make use of profiling. The advertisements you see are determined on the basis of (inferred) characteristics and behaviour. This only affects the advertisements you see and does not result in automated decisions that have legal consequences for you or otherwise significantly affect you. We do not ourselves take decisions about individuals based solely on automated processing.

8. How will my personal data be secured?

We take appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data against loss or unlawful processing, including:

- encrypted connections (SSL/TLS) on our websites and forms;
- access security and authorisation based on role ('need to know');
- contractual agreements with processors regarding security measures (processor agreements);
- periodic assessment of the necessity and privacy impact of the tools, plug-ins and tracking technologies used (including a DPIA where relevant).

9. Who can I contact if I have questions about the processing of my personal data?

If you have any questions about how your personal data are processed, you can email campaigns.cm@vu.nl.

10. How do I exercise my privacy rights?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provides you with the right to access your processed personal data and, under certain conditions, the right to rectify your personal data if they contain factual errors, the right to erase your personal data, the right to restrict the processing of your personal data, the right to portability of your personal data and the right to object to the processing of your personal data.

If you wish to exercise these privacy rights, you can notify the Data Protection Officer (DPO) of VU Amsterdam at the following address:

Data Protection Officer
De Boelelaan 1105
1081 HV AMSTERDAM
functionarisgegevensbescherming@vu.nl

In order for us to process your request, you may be asked to identify yourself by means of additional personal data that VU Amsterdam will process. If this is not possible, then you may be asked to verify your identity by presenting a valid identity document. This is to verify that the request has been submitted by the right person.

If you are not satisfied with how we handle your personal data, you also have the right to submit a complaint to the Dutch Data Protection Authority (Dutch DPA) at all time.