The first AMS Brand & Communications Guide was created by Niki Boytchuk-Hale (Director of Marketing) and Cassie Luk (Director of Communications) in 2022-2023.

This document was last revised in April 2023.
Providing students with a recognizable brand that is engaging, professional, and dependable.

The Alma Mater Society of Queen’s University (AMS) believes that the creation of a strong and consistent brand is integral to the communication and promotion of AMS initiatives, opportunities, and services within the Queen’s University and Kingston communities. It is the Society’s belief that a positive experience at a clearly identifiable AMS event or service will encourage individuals to take advantage of other AMS opportunities. As such, the aim of the Brand and Communications Guide is to create and enforce a consistent brand across the Society to encourage a strong and recognizable AMS. This guide is written to benefit those who may utilize the AMS brand by understanding its values and fully maximizing its use.

Within this guide, you will find newly updated standards and recommendations to maintain a consistent AMS brand, including our visual identity standards, communications standards, digital applications, social media best practices, as well as accessibility and representation to reflect the Society’s commitment to Indigenization - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility.

Please note that the Brand and Communications Guide must be carefully adhered to across the organization. All assets referenced in this guide can be found and downloaded by employees on the Microsoft Team’s page “TEAM AMS!”.

For questions and approvals, please contact marketing@ams.queensu.ca and communications@ams.queensu.ca.
The Alma Mater Society logo is the official visual representation of the organization and is available in various formats in print and digital environments.

The logo consists of two elements – the icon and the wordmark.

The updated icon contains a modified Palatino, which is the only acceptable use of this font. The updated wordmark now reads “Alma Mater Society,” followed by “Queen’s University,” which clarifies our organization’s name and distinguishes the AMS beyond just being a student government. The wordmark features increased letter spacing and a heavier weight sans serif typeface for better alignment.

Clear Space and Minimum Size must be maintained around the AMS logo at all times in order to preserve its impact and integrity.

The clear space for the logo is defined by the height triangle within the “A” of the wordmark, extending from the furthest edges of the logo on the top, bottom, and sides.

The minimum sizes have been established to maintain the legibility of the AMS logo. The logo should be no smaller than 1.5” or 108 pixels wide. For sizes less than 2.5” or 108 pixels wide, drop the wordmark.
Correct Logo Application

Primary Use - Full colour for white and light backgrounds.

Primary Use - Full colour reverse for black and dark backgrounds.

Secondary Use - All white for blue and red backgrounds.

Secondary Use - All black for yellow backgrounds.

Alternative Use - All white, drop wordmark for smaller applications.

Alternative Use - All black, drop wordmark for smaller applications.

Incorrect Logo Application

DO NOT use only half of the wordmark.

DO NOT overlap or touch graphics and text.

DO NOT rotate, distort, or alter length and width ratio.

DO NOT change colours.

DO NOT place on backgrounds with low colour contrast.

DO NOT place on busy backgrounds.
Executive Logos
The Executive follow the AMS visual identity standards, including fonts and colours, and their unique logos. The AMS logo should regularly be used in conjunction with the executive logo to support instant brand recognition.

Office Logos
The Offices follow the AMS visual identity standards, including fonts and colours, and their unique logos. The AMS logo should regularly be used in conjunction with the office logo to support instant brand recognition.
Commission Logos

The Commissions follow the AMS visual identity standards, including fonts and colours, and their unique logos. The full wordmark logo should be used in all print and unbranded digital environments to support instant brand recognition.

Service Logos

The Services have visual identity standards, featuring a unique logo, colours, and fonts that represent its services. It is the responsibility of the management team to maintain a strong brand for their service by following these approved visual identity standards and the Marketing Office will offer support when corrections are required.
The official AMS colours are modeled after the Queen’s Tricolour. Reproduction of the AMS logo and the colours must use these exact values and specifications. Use of the full colour scheme, rather than one or two of the three colours, is preferred but not necessary. When a plain colour scheme is required, or for certain visual elements, the specified shades of black and grey have been found to work well with the tricolour elements or on their own. Additionally, plain white works well with these colours for either negative space or text in visual pieces, as exemplified in the AMS logo. Finally, various levels of transparency - within moderation - when using these colours, may prove useful for further creative freedom. There is an additional green and purple in the AMS colour palette, created for the Social Issues Commission and Environmental Sustainability Commission. While its primary use and purpose is for these commissions, these colour codes should be applied when using purple or green on any AMS departments.

# EC1E2B
# FFC713
# 0453A2
# 833B96
# 039447
# 000000

Accessible Colour Contrast
To maintain accessibility, it is recommended to use black font on top of AMS yellow, while all other AMS colours work best with white. When creating digital or print media, the Adobe Colour accessibility tool can assist in flagging colour contrast issues.
Fonts

Consistent application of typography is required to maintain the AMS brand design style. AMS fonts support our digital first approach and help ensure accessibility.

Open Sans is our sans serif typeface, Volkhov is our serif typeface, and Lemon Days is our display typeface.

To preserve the uniqueness of the AMS logo, do not use Palatino, the serif font used in the AMS icon.

For instructions on how to download and install these fonts, refer to the directions provided by the AMS IT Help Desk.

Open Sans

Used for all levels of typographic hierarchy in websites and business applications (Microsoft PowerPoint and Word), and body copy in designed applications (brochures, advertising etc.). Extrabold weight should only be used for small amounts of text, like an individual word or character, and at a larger size. Semi-bold and Bold weights are easier to read and more accessible for emphasized text like headings.

Volkhov

An alternate title and heading font which provides brand users with the flexibility to give a distinctive character to or create emphasis in design applications, like brochures and advertising.

LEMON DAYS

A playful display font that can be used minimally in print and digital headings to add a lighthearted touch.
Graphic Icons

Icons

Graphic icons are available to download for print and digital environments. Each icon is available as a vector and transparent PNG in each approved AMS colour. The purpose of these icons is to aid in the efficient creation of professional and consistent content.
Media Relations

The Communications Office is responsible for developing strategies for increasing positive media coverage of the AMS; preparing employees and volunteers for interviews, liaising with media and Queen’s University Communications, and tracking all coverage of the AMS in campus, local and national media outlets.

Media requests

Media Request: Inquiry from a news outlet, including but not limited to requests for interviews, quotes statements, comments, appearances, and more.

All media requests must go through the Director of Communications.

All AMS employees and volunteers are expected to notify the Director of Communications before contacting, or upon being contacted, by the media. If a media request is received directly by anyone other than the Director of Communications, whether from an internal or external news outlet, the request must be forwarded to the Director of Communications before further replying or accepting the request. The Director of Communications will further facilitate all correspondence between both parties going forward and is responsible for scheduling, inviting, and coordinating all media relations for the AMS.

If you wish to highlight or feature the work being done in your department to the media, please contact the Director of Communications, who will facilitate this connection. The Director of Communications will work with you to create a story pitch and send it to various media contacts.
**Mass Communications**

Mass communications are reserved for higher level staff members (Managers and up) within the AMS looking to reach an intended audience of 50 (or more) recipients (either internal or external) with important information. All mass communication requests will be fulfilled using Constant Contact, unless specified otherwise.

To submit a mass communications request, contact the Director of Communications at communications@ams.queensu.ca for the official Communications Request Microsoft Form. Please note that all requests must identify an AMS Executive sponsor who has approved the request.

Once your request has been accepted, the Director of Communications will work with you to create a communications plan and identify the targeted audience. The Director of Communications will then send you a completed draft of the mass email for final edits and review before it is sent out.

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**Media Training**

All AMS employees and those communicating on behalf of the AMS are responsible for accurately representing the values, opinions, and mandate of the Society. Representatives are thus expected to act in a professional and thoughtful manner when interacting with the media and/or in any public setting in which the media is present.

If you are unsure how to handle a media interaction or respond in certain scenarios, please contact the Director of Communications for further guidance.
I-EDIAA Standards

Pronoun Usage

While it is not mandatory for AMS employees/volunteers to disclose their personal pronouns (e.g., email signatures), it is still critical that inclusive pronoun usage is implemented across the Society to cultivate a safer space for 2SLGBTQI+ people and demonstrate allyship.

Assuming someone’s gender identity can often lead to exclusion and harm.

Please refer to the following tips regarding proper pronoun usage:

• Use the gender-neutral pronoun set: they, them, theirs, when referring to or addressing anyone whose pronouns you do not know. This prevents assumptions about a person’s gender based on perceptions of them.

• If you are unsure of or forget someone’s pronouns, always ask for a reminder and confirm if you may use these pronouns in front of other people.

• If you accidentally misgender someone, even if they are not present, simply correct yourself and demonstrate a genuine commitment to getting it right.

For more information, please refer to Pronoun Usage Guide - Egale.

Language

To facilitate I-EDIAA-appropriate communication with the student body, it is important to utilize vocabulary and terminology that is respectful, empathetic, and values diversity. Therefore, all AMS employees are encouraged to use the following guidelines for accurate, respectful, and inclusive language in all texts, publications, and other communications.

• When using language to identify different diverse groups, always ask first and respect how a group or individual identifies themselves regarding their preference for terminology.

• Be flexible and mindful: Inclusive language, vocabulary, and terminology constantly evolve over time. It is important to stay updated on the most current recommendations for inclusive language.

• It is critical to be mindful of certain terms that have been used to belittle, oppress, and erase the contributions of Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, disabled people, and other racialized, marginalized, and/or excluded groups. Thus, avoid using language that is harmful, exclusionary, and/or inaccurate.

• Be mindful of unconscious bias, which can influence and impact communications. It can be helpful to invite others with diverse backgrounds to review your work in order to help eliminate biases and gaps.

If you are unsure of using certain language, writing about sensitive topics, want your work reviewed, or more, please contact the Social Issues Commission for further guidance.

I-EDIAA Standards

It is important that all departments at the AMS prioritize Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (I-EDIAA) during programming and communications. The Social Issues Commission and Communications Office should be used as resources to review all equity-related materials that are beyond the scope and specialty of any given position or department at the AMS. Thorough consideration by multiple people of diverse backgrounds should be prioritized to ensure that events and content are inclusive and support a positive student experience.
Land Acknowledgement

A territorial land acknowledgement is a traditional Indigenous practice to express deep gratitude and serves as a sign of respect to acknowledge the land on which a group or individual is being allowed or welcomed.

Land acknowledgements can be displayed in a variety of ways, such as in your email signature, a physical land acknowledgement in an office/store front, and during a meeting or event.

Refer to the Alma Mater Society's land acknowledgement below as a template, and feel free to write your own personal land acknowledgement that reflects your positionality or relates to the operations of your department.

Refer to the following steps to help guide your land acknowledgement:

1. **Research** who the first and most recent Indigenous peoples are on this land.
   - Which languages do they speak? What treaties are they part of? What cultural practices do they engage in? What traumas have they faced?

2. **Reflect** on what you just learned and your own positionality.
   - How do these findings make you feel? When did you or your family come to Canada? How has generations of Indigenous peoples made it so you have the life you have today? Where are you at on your own journey?

3. **Consider** how your department specifically benefits from operating on Native land.
   - Can you make a connection to the centuries of work by Indigenous peoples that supports our organization?

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Official Land Acknowledgement

Katarokwi, or Kingston as we understand it today, is abundant in history and modern-day traditions of many First Nations and Metis. In particular, the Alma Mater Society (AMS) would like to acknowledge the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory which Queen's University resides on. These lands surrounding the Great Lakes are immersed in thousands of generations of Indigenous history, including language, art, celebrations, and resilience.

We recognize that it was within the Crawford Purchase (1783) that these lands were made available for settlement. The agreements made were upheld by the First Peoples, but not by the British Crown or later Canadian Government. While we work on these lands as uninvited guests, we actively benefit from the oppression of Indigenous peoples.

Because of our settler positionality, we have an obligation to listen to Indigenous voices. We must act in ways that will condemn past and ongoing violence against Indigenous peoples and support positive change. Founded in 1858, the AMS at Queen's University is the oldest student government in Canada. With that, we recognize that the AMS history has been intertwined with settler colonialism since its inception. It is now our collective responsibility to continuously reflect on and acknowledge the impact of this institution on Indigenous peoples. We understand that as a society that represents over 19,000 students, we have the capacity to educate our members on the deep-rooted impact of settler colonialism in Katarokwi. It is part of the AMS mandate to cultivate a sense of social awareness and responsibility by fostering ongoing conversations within our membership.

This Land Acknowledgement is the first step towards constructive dialogue. In order to uphold our mandate, we must make ongoing efforts to foster these conversations within our membership. The endurance of Indigenous peoples and their traditions should be applauded and inspire strength and kindness in us all. The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant should be used as our compass as we navigate our journey of reconciliation with the Indigenous people of Canada. The Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples had a mutual understanding to share the land and resources peacefully with one another. By living on the land, we must also abide by the values that the Dish with One Spoon holds.

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Email Signature

To create and ensure brand consistency in our email communications, use the provided email signature templates to create your personalized signature.

Two versions of the email signature are provided. The mandatory elements of the full email signature are a name, job title, department, Alma Mater Society, email address, the AMS logo, and the land acknowledgment.

The reply/forward signature is shortened to reduce signature length within a string of emails. It includes a name, job title, department, Alma Mater Society, website, and social media handle.

You can choose to use the AMS website and social media handle or your department’s, if it has its own. You can add your department logo, in addition to the AMS logo.

Email body text and signatures are to be set in the default email program font, Calibri.

Full Signature

Firstname Lastime (Pronouns)
Job Title | Department | AMS
www.myAMS.org | @queens_ams

Alma Mater Society | Queen’s University
146 Stuart Street, Kingston, ON K7L 2V8
000 000 0000 ext. 0000 | your.email@ams.queensu.ca

The Alma Mater Society acknowledge that Queen’s University is situated on traditional and current Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory, which we are an uninvited guest on. Katarokwi is abundant in history and modern-day traditions of many First Nations and Métis peoples. It was within the Crawford Purchase (1783) that these lands were made available for settlement. The agreements made were upheld by the First Peoples, but not by the British Crown or later Canadian government. While we work on these lands as uninvited guests, we actively benefit from the oppression of Indigenous peoples. These lands surrounding the Great Lakes are immersed in thousands of generations of Indigenous history, including language, art, celebrations, and resilience.

Reply/Forward Signature

Firstname Lastime (Pronouns)
Job Title | Department | AMS
www.myAMS.org | @queens_ams

Digital
Automatic Responses

During any AMS-wide break, holiday or during personal time off, set your email to automatic response during the allotted time. Use the two provided templates, replacing information within the brackets.

**AMS-Wide Break/Holiday**

Hello,

Thank you for reaching out! The AMS is currently closed for the (holiday/event) from (Starting Date) until (End Date). All inquiries will be responded to upon our return on (Date of Return). Thank you for your kind understanding.

(Personal Signature)

**Out of Office/Vacation**

Hello,

Thank you for reaching out! I will be out of office from (Starting Date) until (End Date) and will respond to all inquiries upon my return on (Date of Return). For urgent matters, please contact (Contact Person) at (Contact Person's Email).

(Personal Signature)

Profile Picture

Outlook accounts can be set to use the AMS logo, assigned department logo, or a business appropriate headshot of the individual who holds the position.
Presentations

Approved AMS PowerPoint templates can be downloaded and customized for presentations. The minimum body copy text should be in Open Sans regular and 18 point, while it is preferred to use 24 point for readability.

Letterhead

The AMS letterhead can be downloaded and customized, including a version with the AMS address and without for circumstances that require AMS branding but not the address. The minimum body copy text should be in Open Sans regular and 10 point, while it is preferred to use 12 point for readability.

Alma Mater Society of Queen’s University
LaSalle Building
146 Stuart Street
Kingston, ON K7L 2V8

Lorem ipsum, dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam ac enim interdum, tincidunt sapien eu, tempor ante. Aliquam hendrerit tortor vel tincidunt hendrerit. Duis id purus in nisl pulvinar rutrum ac a purus. Sed orci risus, porta at laoreet vitae, mattis non ipsum. Mauris consectetur nulla ac ipsum malesuada oranye. Fusce vitae ligula eget orci dignissim semper vitae dignissim arcu. Praesent semper pottor nulla, sed met ut ullamcorper sapien commodo non.


Social Media

Representing AMS Values

Any activity and communication from an AMS outlet or on behalf of the organization must accurately represent and reflect the Society’s values, opinions, and mandate. All messaging must be free from oppressive and/or discriminatory content to ensure that all students are included and accepted. Any promotional materials containing messaging that is racist, sexist, queerphobic (homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, etc.), classist, or religiously discriminatory will not be accepted.

Similarly, any activity from an AMS-branded account supporting content that does not reflect the position of the organization is prohibited. Consider carefully who your account engages with, the accounts followed, the posts liked or reshared, etc. If material or certain activity is found to be in violation of our equity standards, the Marketing and Communications Offices will request immediate removal or modification upon further review and discussion.

In addition to an absence of outright oppressive content, all content should strive to be representative of a diversity of student experiences. It is important to recognize that systemic barriers to equity exist and can greatly impact the experiences and opportunities of different communities. Avoid assuming or normalizing specific shared lifestyles and experiences, as this can be exclusionary to students from diverse backgrounds who feel unseen or misrepresented. Similarly, materials that do not take into account the fact that Queen’s students observe a wide variety of cultural and religious holidays will be asked to be altered.

If you are unsure about handling and engaging with sensitive topics, please reach out to the Marketing and Communications Offices, the Social Issues Commission, or your respective Executive.

Social Media

Accessibility

To ensure that all users can participate and engage with our content, please refer to the following tips for social media accessibility:

- Add alternative text: a descriptive caption allows users to visualize images they cannot see.
- Use subtitles: adding captions to videos can help users with hearing challenges, different first languages, and more, follow along easier with video audio.
- Include image captions: any text written in a graphic must be included in the caption description as well.
- Write accessible text: avoid using abbreviations, fancy fonts, alternating caps, etc.
- Create accessible visuals: be mindful of colour contrast and avoid placing text over images which can cause difficulty reading.
Social Media

Account Security and Safety

Always monitor any suspicious login activity and do not assume it is the Marketing, Communications, or Information Technology Offices unless you have been informed prior.

When to change a password:

- During transition when a new team is onboarded
- After a takeover, when someone who is not typically managing the account logs in.
- After an unauthorized login.

The Marketing, Communications, or Information Technology Offices are responsible for keeping a secure record of all social media accounts and passwords to ensure accounts are accessible in the event that they require immediate access. Any password changes should be notified immediately to the Director of Marketing or Director of Communications.

For questions regarding account security and safety, please contact the AMS IT Helpdesk.

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Social Media

Managing Comment Sections

Given the nature of public comment sections on social media, it is critical to manage comments prudently and equitably. Social media can encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. As an administrator, it is up to your discretion when choosing to respond. However, it is critical to consider how your response will reflect on the AMS.

Comments should only be deleted (or comment sections should be turned off) if a comment is crude, offensive, inappropriate, or contains sensitive content that could spark harm and/or unproductive discussion. Otherwise, any comments that demonstrate healthy criticism or students engaging in healthy discussions should not be deleted. If a comment section must be turned off, it is important to provide an outlet (e.g., Microsoft Forms, email address, etc.) for students to provide feedback or share their opinions so they do not feel silenced.

As an effort to demonstrate full transparency, consider using the caption below for sensitive posts that may evoke comment sections:

“Comments will not be deleted on this post, with the exception of crude, harmful, and/or inappropriate comments.”

For guidance managing sensitive comments, please contact the Marketing and Communications Offices, the Social Issues Commission, or your respective Executive.

Social Media

Posting Times

The AMS is an organization which operates primarily during the weekdays of 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM and thus it is ideal to limit forms of communication to the operational hours of each department, to the best of your ability. To take advantage of optimal posting times when audiences are most active online, avoid posting any later than 8:00 PM. It is also important to be mindful of posting time-sensitive content to effectively reach your audience.

Automatic Replies and Response Times

To ensure that messages and inquiries are being consistently monitored and answered, automatic replies can help maintain audience expectations and boost response times. Automatic replies should provide an email address contact and a standard period of time that users can expect a response by, with a maximum of three business days. This standard reply time can be decided amongst the management team based on capacity and is subject to change during different periods.

General auto-reply:
“Hello! Thank you for reaching out. Please expect a response within (insert response time here) during business days. For urgent inquiries, please contact (insert contact info here).”

Accounts that are not actively monitored:
“Hello, thank you for reaching out! This account is not monitored. To contact us, please email (insert contact info here).”

High-volume periods:
“Hello! Due to a high volume of messages, responses during this time may take longer than usual. We have received your message and will get back to you at our earliest convenience. Thank you for your patience.”

Social Media Management – Best Practices

Posting Times

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High-volume periods:
“Hello! Due to a high volume of messages, responses during this time may take longer than usual. We have received your message and will get back to you at our earliest convenience. Thank you for your patience.”

For guidance managing sensitive comments, please contact the Marketing and Communications Offices, the Social Issues Commission, or your respective Executive.
Photography and Videography

Photography and videography are primary ways to document the work being done by the AMS and connect with students on campus. The AMS strives to produce high-quality content to uphold professionalism.

Photography and videography can be done in-house by the department or outsourced to the AMS Media Centre through a commission contract. The Director of Marketing can be contacted to borrow photo and video equipment from the Marketing Office.

It is important to capture content that is reflective of the diverse student body and features individuals that are not known to defy the AMS values.

Photographers and videographers must obtain explicit written consent or acquire a media pass from any location (e.g., Queen’s Athletic and Recreation Centre) that requires it.

Photography and Videography

Media Consent Form

For all photo, video, and audio recording purposes, a media consent form must be signed first. All offices, services, and commissions should distribute this form when photographing or videotaping individuals that are identifiable.

How to use the media release consent form:

1. Have the individual(s) sign the form digitally or print it off for them to sign with a pen. This form can be signed during the days leading up to the planned photo/video/audio shoot or during.
2. Upload forms to your personal AMS OneDrive for reference and email them to marketing@ams.queensu.ca, where records will also be kept.

When the media release consent form is needed/not needed:

• Expectation of privacy is a relative term. If taking photos in residence or a classroom there would be some expectation of privacy from media/outsiders taking their photo. This is an example of when you would need to get a consent form signed. Recordings of students while in school during class would be another instance where the individual may have some expectation of privacy and therefore, a consent form should be used.
• When taking photos, videos, etc. of a public event or in a public setting where individuals would not normally have the ‘expectation of privacy,’ no consent is required to be used in these instances. Examples include at a football game, election debates, any public location.
• There is no section for parental consent as most students are of the age of 16 or above. Please notify the Director of Marketing if a situation arises where you would need photo/video/audio material of a minor.
• Consent is not required in instances where you are taking pictures or recordings of employees in their role as an AMS employee and describing what they do.
Photography and Videography

Public Media Notice

In instances where obtaining individual consent for group shots may not be practical, such as large events or gatherings, a public media notice should be posted to alert attendees that they may be photographed or video recorded. The notice can be posted online in advance of the event and can also be posted in a prominent location at the event as well.

Refer to the template below to create your own public media notice:

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY IN PROGRESS

Please note that photography and videography are taking place for promotional and archival purposes. The photographs and recordings may be used in applications including but not limited to print, broadcast, electronic, digital, and social media, for promoting, publicizing, or explaining the Alma Mater Society. If you would prefer not to be photographed or recorded, please let the photographer/videographer know.

For further information, contact (insert contact info here).