



## Social Media Policies and Guidelines

### Major Topics

---

[Definition of Social Media](#)

[Best Practices](#)

[Policies for All Social Media](#)

[University Social Media](#)

### I. Introduction

---

Social media are powerful communications tools that have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Because the use of social media may blur the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, the University of Kentucky (“University” or “UK”) has established the following policies to clarify how best to enhance and protect the University, as well as personal and professional reputations, when participating in social media.

Both in professional and institutional roles, employees are expected to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in the real world. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, patients, alumni, donors, media, and other University constituents apply. Employees are accountable for any institutionally related content they post to social media sites.

### II. Entities Affected

---

This regulation applies to all employees and units of the University.

### III. Definition

---

Social media are defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques online. Examples include but are not limited to: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, iTunes U, Second Life, and MySpace.

## IV. Best Practices

---

These guidelines apply to individuals posting on behalf of the University or an official University unit, though they may be helpful for anyone posting on social media in any capacity.

- A. Think twice before posting. Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the University. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you would not say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the Office of Public Relations and Marketing.
- B. Strive for accuracy. Check your facts before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the University in any capacity. (See Section IV: Institutional Social Media)
- C. Be respectful. Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the University and its institutional voice.
- D. Be active. Social media presences require diligent care and attention. An effective social media site requires regular updates and fresh or engaging content.
- E. Consider your audience and its potential reaction to your content. Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, patients, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.
- F. On personal sites, identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as a UK faculty or staff employee online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution.

## V. Policies for All Social Media Sites

---

- A. Protect institutional confidential and proprietary information. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the University, its students, employees, patients, or alumni (see GR I.D.2(b,c)). Employees must follow applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to:
  - FERPA
  - HIPAAEmployees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.
- B. Adhere to all applicable University regulations, policies, and procedures. Use Social Media in a manner that complies with University regulations, policies, and procedures, including but not limited to:
  - Governing Regulations
  - Administrative Regulations
  - Human Resource Policies and Procedures
  - Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct;
  - Policy Governing Access to and Use of University Information Technology Resources
  - Policy on Discrimination and Harassment.
  - UK HealthCare Code of Ethics
  - Behavioral Standards in Patient Care
  - UK Hospital Policy on Photography and video of patients and employees

- C. Adhere to copyright and fair use law. When posting, be aware of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the University. Questions about fair use or copyrighted material should be directed to the Office of Legal Counsel.
- D. Do not use University logos or trademarks without permission. Any use of UK logos, trademarks or other images must have prior approval. Do not use official logos, trademarks, or any other University images or iconography on personal social media sites. Do not use UK's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- UK Web Graphic Standards: <http://www.uky.edu/Graphics/WebGraphicStandards.pdf>
  - Official UK Graphic Standards Manual: <http://www.uky.edu/Graphics/GraphicStandards.pdf>
- Questions should be directed to the Office of Public Relations and Marketing.
- E. Do not announce University news. Do not be the first to announce University or departmental news on a social media site unless pre-approved by the Office of Public Relations. The Director of Public Relations is the official spokesperson for the University (See AR 1:1). Only WUKY is authorized to announce University news without prior approval from the Office of Public Relations.
- F. Respect University time and property. University computers and time on the job are reserved for University-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with Governing Regulation I.D.2(d), University Resources and Administrative Regulation 10:1, Policy Governing Access to and Use of University Information Technology Resources.
- G. Be aware of terms of service. Comply with the Terms of Service of any social media platform used.

Note: Posting of University-related content to personal accounts on social media sites may also be subject to this policy.

## VI. Institutional Social Media Policies

---

If you post on behalf of an official University unit, the following policies apply, in addition to all policies and best practices listed above:

- A. Notify the University. Departments or University units that have a social media page or would like to start one should contact the Office of Public Relations and Marketing to ensure all institutional social media sites coordinate with other UK sites and their content. All institutional pages must have a full-time appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for content. Ideally, this should be the unit head of the department.
- B. Acknowledge who you are. If you are representing UK when posting on a social media platform, acknowledge this.
- C. Use approved photos and University logos. Your University social media presence must use photos that accurately depict your department or unit, and approved logos for your area of the University. Public Relations and Marketing provides approved photos and logos for various areas of the University. To receive logos in a downloadable format, contact UK Public Relations and Marketing.
- D. Have a plan. Departments should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date. The Office of Public Relations and Marketing can assist and advise you with your social media planning.
- E. Link back to the University. Whenever possible, link back to the UK website. Ideally, posts should be very brief, redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the UK Web environment. When linking to a news article about the University, check first to see whether you can link to a release on UKNow, the

official UK news website instead of to an external publication or other media outlet.  
(<http://uknow.uky.edu/>)

- F. Protect the institutional voice. Posts on social media sites should protect the University's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual unit should construe its social media site as representing the University as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post. Names, profile images, and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

## VII. Non-Compliance

---

Non-compliance with this policy may result in any or all of the following:

- A. Limitation or revocation of individual or unit rights to use or participate in University-related social media;
- B. Removal of posts or social media accounts; or
- C. Corrective or disciplinary actions and sanctions, as defined in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures, Governing Regulations, Administrative and Governing Regulations, Rules of the University Senate, or Code of Student Conduct.

## VIII. References

---

GR I The University of Kentucky (Definition)

AR 1:1 Administrative Organization

AR 10:1 Policy Governing Access to and Use of University Information Technology Resources

## Revision History

---

This is a new regulation.

For questions, contact: [Office of Legal Counsel](#)