



Document History

Responsible Administrator: Sr. Director of Marketing and Communication

Responsible Office: Marketing and Communication

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Social Media Policy

Policy Statement

This policy establishes governance guidelines for University social media accounts and employee social media usage.

Purpose of Policy

A standardized set of guidelines for University social media usage allows for the adherence to federal, state and local, legal, regulatory and statutory requirements (e.g. HIPPA, FERPA, GLBA), as well as minimizes University risk for inconsistent, negative or otherwise inappropriate social media usage.

Applicability

This policy applies to all University employees.

Policy Procedure

Social media will be generally monitored on an ongoing basis by University Marketing & Communications staff. Anyone can report concerns to the office at umc@southeastern.edu.

Section I: Introduction - Social Networking on Southeastern's Campus

Southeastern Louisiana University is committed to making the best use of all available technology, including all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve communication and interaction with the individuals and communities we serve. Social media has emerged globally as a significant means of communicating across all populations. It has also blended personal information, views and communications with official communications in ways not seen in earlier generations of communications media. Therefore, this policy has been created to encourage the use of social media sites within guidelines that maintain the University's reputation and avoid any misuse, legal, or ethical issues.

Social media from Southeastern is intended to supplement, not replace, the channels currently in place for press, news, events, announcements and student communications.

To avoid major mistakes, misinterpretations, or inaccuracies which could result in reputational, legal, and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of social media relationships, potential risks must be managed through a common-sense approach and framework and the proactive monitoring of the development of such applications.

Importantly, employees and student representatives of the University are responsible for the posts they publish to social media sites, up to and including being held personally liable.

Section II: Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of these guidelines, social media is any type of interactive online medium that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes e-mail, online social forums, blogs, video and image-sharing websites and similar platforms.

There are many more forms of social media than could be listed here as this is a constantly evolving area. Employees and students should follow these guidelines in relation to any university-affiliated social media that they use.

Section III: Legal Issues

The use of social media must follow all applicable federal and state laws as well as UL System and university regulations and policies. Laws such as FERPA and HIPAA must be followed along with all applicable NCAA regulations. Any content and/or online activity created by an individual or site moderator that violates these ordinances or contains/leads to the release of a student's private personal information is strictly prohibited and will be removed.

FERPA:

"The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education."

Employees and contractors of Southeastern Louisiana University may not engage in course correspondence or post any information regarding student records on social media. Examples of student records include, but are not limited to, names, admission status, GPA, Social Security number, Student ID number, and any/all other information that would be covered by FERPA.

HIPAA:

Employees must protect confidential medical records as specified by HIPAA. HIPAA states, "The Privacy Rule protects all 'individually identifiable health information' held or transmitted by a covered entity or its business associate, in any form or media, whether electronic, paper or oral." Examples of protected information include, but are not limited to, "...the individual's past, present or future physical or mental health or condition, the provision of health care to the individual, or, the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe can be used to identify the individual."

NCAA:

The world of social media has changed the face of communication and recruitment in collegiate sports and all Southeastern employees must abide by NCAA regulations when interacting and communicating on social media platforms. Employees must refrain from knowingly contacting prospective student-athletes on social media platforms.

Confidential Information:

The university does not endorse or use any social network communication service or media sharing service as a secure means of communication for online business transactions or matters involving personal information. The university will not ask for, nor should an individual send, credit card or payment information, classified information, privileged information, private information or information subject to non-disclosure agreements via any social network Internet communication service.

Defamation:

Be aware of your words and the law. Laws regarding slander and libel (false or unjustified injury of the good reputation of another in speech or in writing) extend to the Internet as well as into the social networks as do a myriad of laws covering divulged trade secrets and other legal matters. Err on the side of caution if you are uncertain of legal ramifications.

As a site administrator or user of any type, Southeastern employees and students are required to obey the terms of use of all social media platforms and comply with applicable university policies as well as federal and state laws.

Section IV: Guidelines for Social Media Engagement on behalf of Southeastern

These guidelines apply to all types of use of social media on behalf of Southeastern.

Social media accounts created to promote the university, or any of its programs, divisions, offices, departments, colleges, etc. must be registered with the Office of University Marketing and Communications.

Employees or students managing or officially posting for a registered social media account should remember that they are representing the entire university by their words. All posts, comments and actions have the ability to affect the reputation of Southeastern, its employees and students. It is vital to always ensure that all posts or communications are upholding Southeastern's brand, mission and values.

Key Elements of Social Media Posting:

Protect the institutional voice:

Posts on social media sites should protect the University's institutional voice. No individual unit of Southeastern should purport to represent the university as a whole in its social media posts.

Be reflective:

No post should convey any discrimination, bullying or harassment; including but not limited to, offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, nationality, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. No image should be posted that may be considered discriminatory and/or offensive.

Be civil:

Discussions, even heated discussions, must not degrade into name calling, accusations, profanity and the like. Postings using such language or posting defamatory statements are prohibited and can result in disciplinary measures being taken.

Strive for accuracy:

Before posting on social media, be sure the facts are correct. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.

Exercise good judgment:

Individual actions and statements have the ability to impact others at Southeastern and the University as a whole. Once words or images are posted to a social media site or service, they can be passed around from person to person ad infinitum and will last forever. Before posting something, do your best to ensure it is worded so that it will not have negative repercussions.

Maintain confidentiality:

Do not disclose, post or share proprietary information, data, or communications. This includes, but is not limited to, intellectual property, operating plans, vendor communications, financial data, internal presentations and correspondence (especially with students). Once posted, there is no such thing as confidentiality. The best policy is to not post anything you believe, or others may reasonably believe, should be held in confidence.

Be professional:

Employees posting via an officially sanctioned social media account must avoid making even generic negative statements about the institution, its students or other groups of employees. Bear in mind that posts on social media may be replicated quickly, be taken out of context, and will remain public for an indeterminate amount of time.

Photography/copyright:

Copyright protection of personal images, text and other intellectual property extends to the Internet and must be respected. Just because an item is easy to download and repost does not mean that it may be done. As a rule of thumb, to avoid any copyright infringement, receive permission before reposting any image or text found on the Internet or create the image or text yourself.

Section V: Guidelines for Departmental Use of Social Media

The following are guidelines to follow for a position that posts on behalf of Southeastern Louisiana University. Overall, be thoughtful about each post you make and know that words will remain posted long after they are written.

Notify the university:

Units that have a social media presence or would like to start utilizing social media networks should contact the Office of University Marketing and Communications at umc@southeastern.edu to ensure all profiles and/or pages meet university guidelines and related policies. All units should have a designated individual who is responsible for the unit's social media postings.

Acknowledge who you are:

When officially representing Southeastern on a social media platform, clearly state your role, your department, or your office.

Be strategic:

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 Marketing and Communications can assist and advise with social media planning.

Link back to the university:

Posts should be brief, providing the needed information and directing a visitor to related Southeastern web sites, as needed, for more information.

Keep current:

Always ensure that information posted, logos, images, contact information, etc., is up to date. Outdated information signals to the reader that the social media account is of no value.

Remove dormant social media accounts bearing Southeastern's name:

If a department has created a social media account that bears the university name or markings that is no longer "active," the account should be removed from the relevant social network.

Do not connect university social media accounts to personal accounts:

With staff turnover, connecting administrative abilities to personal accounts can cause significant issues with access and content.

Protect confidential and proprietary information:

Maintain confidentiality and proprietary information about Southeastern, students, employees, or alumni. Postings must follow applicable federal requirements (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA, NCAA regulations) and adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies.

Section VI: Guidelines for an Employee's Personal Use of Social Media

Even when you are personally engaging on social media, a Southeastern Louisiana University affiliation on your profile has the ability to affect the university as a whole. If you identify your affiliation with Southeastern in your profile or comments, other users will naturally associate you with the university. Be mindful of the associative properties of your personal social media presence.

Because of the high level of campus and community visibility afforded to them by virtue of their University leadership roles, some individuals such as the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Athletics Director, Communications Spokespersons, etc., are generally presumed to be speaking on behalf of the University, and this presumption will extend to personal social media accounts. For this reason, individuals in these roles must exercise an added level of discretion when posting on social media.

Employees should not blend University business with personal social media accounts. Having a social media audience that includes students, especially if the employee/faculty member directly interacts with students, on a personal account of an employee is problematic in that it blends professional and personal arenas in a way that many cannot separate. It is best to have separate personal and professional social media accounts if an employee intends to post professional information.

You are responsible for what you post on your personal social media accounts. Unless your job duties entail the use of your personal media accounts on behalf of the University and such use is explicitly authorized, an employee's personal use of social media is deemed not in furtherance of their employment responsibilities on behalf of Southeastern. Consequently, Southeastern will not be liable for and will not indemnify an employee for any liability that results from postings on personal social media accounts.

Be truthful about who you are. Post as an individual, not as a representative of Southeastern Louisiana University. You may denote that you are an employee or student of Southeastern but, unless given specific authority to do so, may not state that you speak on behalf of or for the University.

Employees who discuss their opinions related to Southeastern on social media should include a statement along the following lines:

"The (following/preceding) text represents my personal views and does not necessarily represent the views of Southeastern Louisiana University."

Employees can also refer to the [policy regarding media inquiries](#) for further information regarding commentary made to mass media outlets.

Southeastern strongly advises that the communications which employees make using personal social media follow all of the guidance of all other applicable components of this policy.

Section VII: Usage of Southeastern Logos and Icons

Southeastern owns the rights to the use of its trademarked logos and marks. To strengthen the identity of the university, use of the logos or marks on accounts or pages that represent an official university program, department, or entity is allowed; however, the following standards should be adhered to if they are used.

Naming:

Southeastern Louisiana University should be referred to in full as "Southeastern Louisiana University" or in short as "Southeastern." Athletic teams may use "SLU" on a limited basis. Never use the initials "SELU" or the terms "Southeast Louisiana" or "Southeastern Louisiana" to refer to the University on any officially-sanctioned Southeastern social media pages.

In no case should Southeastern's name, its marks or identity be used to promote a commercial product, cause, political party or candidate.

Logo:

Southeastern's logo may only be used on officially sanctioned social media accounts.

The construction of the logo may not be changed by an individual unit within the university. When enlarging artwork, care should be taken that the proportions (ratio of height to width) are not altered. It should never be altered, re-drawn, or augmented with additional type. It should only be reproduced from original artwork available from the Office of University Marketing and Communications and should use only approved Southeastern colors. Professional photography to help illustrate a department's profile or page is also

available from Marketing and Communications.

Any questions about use of logos or name of the university should be addressed to the Office of University Marketing and Communications (umc@southeastern.edu).

Do not use Southeastern logos for nefarious purposes. Southeastern offers logos for profile pictures in order to show school spirit, not to sell a product or attack another school or to make inflammatory statements against another group. Use Southeastern logos for purposes that show the university in a positive light which demonstrates the University's mission and brand.

Section VIII: Links to Existing Southeastern Internet and Media Policies

The following links are official Southeastern policies and as such should be seen as part of this Social Media Policy. The content contained in the policies identified below should be used to answer any questions not directly addressed in this document.

Web Policy:

http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/assets/web_policy.pdf

Harassment:

<http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/assets/harassment.pdf>

Violence in the Workplace:

http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/assets/violence_workplace.pdf

Copyright Policy:

http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/assets/copyright_policy.pdf

Responsible Computing Policy:

http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/assets/responsible_computing.pdf

Fraud Policy:

http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/assets/fraud_policy.pdf

Media Inquiry, Advertising and Public Records Requests Policy:

http://www.southeastern.edu/resources/policies/policy_detail/media_inquiries.html

[End of Policy]