

**University of Kentucky  
Office of Public Relations and Marketing  
Social Media Approval Policy  
Effective Date: 9/1/2010**

I. Purpose

The University supports the official use of social media to reach audiences important to the institution, such as students, potential students, employees, physicians, patients, customers and potential customers, visitors, etc. This policy establishes the criteria and procedure for creating a University presence or participation on social media sites on behalf of the University.

University presence or participation on social media sites includes: 1) media sites established by the University on University-owned domains; 2) accounts on external sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, etc. on behalf of the University; and 3) personal accounts on external sites that are approved for use or participation by University employees as part of their job duties.

This policy applies to faculty and staff, including student employees, who engage in internet conversations for work-related purposes or who are asked by supervisors to use or participate in social media as part of his or her job responsibilities.

II. Definition

Social media - includes but is not limited to blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, on-line collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences (i.e., Wikis), RSS feeds, video sharing, and social networks like MySpace and Facebook.

II. Criteria for Approval of Social Media Initiatives

A. The following criteria shall be considered when there is a request to establish a University-hosted social media site, or to participate in internet discussions or social media on behalf of the University:

1. Whether or not the University's involvement can be carried out in such a manner that positively supports the institution's values, missions, and goals;
2. Whether or not the engagement with the audience adds value to both the University and the audience;

3. Whether or not the approach is as effective or efficient as other approaches that might be used (i.e. would an existing UK social media initiative or the UK Web site accomplish the same goals);

4. Whether or not the use of social media enables the University to offer services it might not otherwise be able to offer; and

5. Whether or not sufficient resources exist to appropriately manage the interactions.

B. At least one faculty or staff person shall be designated to monitor the medium, identify problems that emerge, and take action when necessary.

C. The appropriate contributor(s) and/or a sufficient number of contributors with appropriate expertise shall be identified to ensure timeliness and currency of content.

D. Any use of University marks, such as logos and graphics, shall comply with the University of Kentucky's Trademark Licensing Policies (For more information please Contact Jason Schlafer at (859) 257-8022 or [jmschl1@uky.edu](mailto:jmschl1@uky.edu) or visit <http://www.ukathletics.com/athletic-dept/licensing.htm>) and Graphic Standards (found at [www.uky.edu/graphics](http://www.uky.edu/graphics)).

### III. Approval Process

A. A request for University presence or participation on social media sites on behalf of the University shall be approved by the Provost or appropriate Executive Vice President, or designee.

B. Once approved by the Provost or appropriate Executive Vice President, the request shall be forwarded to the appropriate Public Relations and Marketing department for approval. If applicable, the appropriate IT department shall also be consulted (e.g. Campus, UKHealthCare, Sports Marketing, etc.)

C. The level of editorial control that will be enforced for University presence or participation on social media sites shall be identified and agreed upon with Public Relations and Marketing during the approval process.

### IV. Updating and Monitoring

A. Pages shall be updated on an ongoing basis by the departments or units that create them to enable rapid response to any problems that may arise and to ensure an engaging, interesting environment for visitors. To be effective, pages must be dynamic and will require updating more frequently than a Web site. A stale page may cause more damage to the image of the University than having no page at all.

B. For every social medium in which the University hosts or is actively engaged there shall be at least one faculty or staff person in the area sponsoring or participating in the social media initiative designated to monitor the medium, ensure that the criteria of II.A are still applicable, identify problems that emerge, and take action when necessary.

C. Faculty, staff, and student employees who participate in approved social media on behalf of the University shall comply with the *Social Media Use Policy* (Link).

D. Public Relations and Marketing is charged with the responsibility to monitor the University's social media initiatives, counsel those who represent the University online on adherence to these policies, and take action to restrict or remove an employee's ability to "publish" should efforts to correct the situation fail. If disciplinary action seems necessary, UK Human Resources shall be consulted and will determine an appropriate course of action for staff employees. For faculty, the appropriate dean or the Associate Provost shall be contacted and will determine an appropriate course of action.



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Social Media Use Policy  
Office of Public Relations and Marketing  
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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide faculty, staff, and student employees with guidelines for participating in approved social media on behalf of the University. It also applies to the personal use of social media sites, when the employee's University affiliation is identified, known, or presumed. It does not apply to content that is non-University related.

II. Definitions

A. Social media - includes but is not limited to blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, on-line collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences (i.e., Wikis), RSS feeds, video sharing, and social networks such as MySpace and Facebook.

B. University-hosted and Approved Sites – include:

1) sites established by the University on University-owned domains or on external domains such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc. on behalf of the University; and

2) sites on external domains which are approved for use or participation by University employees as part of their job description.

III. Using or Participating in University-hosted and Approved Sites

While each approved social media initiative may have its own specific procedures and guidelines for operation, all University employees when using or participating in social media shall observe the following:

A. Employees shall obtain approval in accordance with the *Social Media Approval Policy* (<http://www.uky.edu/Graphics/SocialMedia.doc>) prior to establishing or participating in a social media initiative on behalf of the University.

B. University-hosted and approved sites shall focus on subjects related to the University and its mission, vision, and values. University-hosted and approved sites shall only be used in a way that furthers the University's mission, vision, and values, and complies with University regulations, policies, and procedures, and state and federal laws.

- C. When using or participating in University-hosted and approved sites, employees shall adhere to all applicable University regulations, policies, and procedures, including but not limited to: Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (*Governing Regulations, Part 1*); Policy Governing Access to and Use of University Information Technology Resources (*Administrative Regulation 10:1*); and, Policy on Discrimination and Harassment (*Administrative Regulation 6:1*). For employees in clinical areas, additional policies include, but are not limited to: UK HealthCare Code of Ethics, policies related to the use of computer resources, electronic data security, e-mail and internet communications, behavioral standards in patient care, photography and video of patients and staff, release of patient information, and patient confidentiality.
- D. Employees shall not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, inappropriate, confidential, or embarrassing to another person or entity when posting to University-hosted or approved sites.
- E. Employees shall identify themselves by actual name and, when relevant, position or role with the University when blogging or posting statements about University-related matters.
- F. Posts and content shall be written by the person whose name is presented as being the author (editing and proofing by a second person is acceptable). If necessary or desirable that others become involved in the social media initiative, they shall be identified publicly and their role.
- G. Employees responsible for or participating in University-hosted or approved sites shall delete spam and off-topic comments from the site.
- H. Employees shall not announce University news on a social media site unless pre-approved by the Office of Public Relations. Release of information about University operations and activities to the media and the general public is the sole responsibility of UK Public Relations. Only those individuals officially designated by the University have the authorization to speak on behalf of the University. After UK Public Relations has released information, an employee may post that information on a social media site.
- I. Blog posts and comments shall be accurate and factual to the best knowledge of the poster. Posters shall link directly to online references and original source materials to ensure credibility and educational value. Posters shall acknowledge and correct mistakes or misinformation promptly.
- J. Employees who see misrepresentations made about the University in the media or by other bloggers should alert the Office of Public Relations and should not attempt to engage directly with the media or other bloggers.

K. Employees approved to participate in social media shall reply to e-mails and comments in a timely manner. The definition of timely in each case will be agreed upon with UK Public Relations and UK Marketing or UK HealthCare Marketing during the approval process.

L. Employees should always use their best judgment when blogging and posting comments related to the University. When uncertain whether a proposed post is appropriate and in conformity with University regulations, employees should discuss the proposed post with their supervisor before posting. Ultimately, however, employees are solely and individually responsible for what they choose to post to a blog or express online.

M. Employees shall abide by the copyright laws by ensuring that they have permission to use or reproduce any copyrighted text, photos, graphics, video or other material owned by others.

N. In online discussions or postings, employees shall not identify another employee, student, patient, visitor, or vendor by name without their express written permission. Employees may discuss general details about projects or their work for the University, so long as only non-identifying pseudonyms (e.g., Patient 123) are used and the information provided does not make it easy for someone to identify the person or entity.

O. Obtain prior written permission (i.e. a release) from individuals whose images are identifiable prior to posting the individual's image on a site. Additionally, always take special care when dealing with images of "special populations" such as minors, health care patients, or research subjects. Stringent legal requirements apply. For that reason, it is always best to use photographs or videos provided by UK Public Relations specifically for this purpose. Assistance with releases, or answers to questions about exceptions to the requirement for a release, can be obtained from the Office of General Counsel Office or Office of Public Relations.

#### IV. Using or Participating in Sites that are Not University-hosted or Approved

When using social media that is not University-hosted or approved, whether at work or away from work, if the employee's University affiliation is identified, known, or presumed, employees shall observe the following:

A. In personal posts and on personal social media sites, employees may identify themselves as a University employee, but should not represent that they are communicating the views of the University, or do anything that might reasonably create the impression that they are communicating on behalf of, or as a representative of, the University.

B. Employees should use a disclaimer when publishing a blog, posting a comment, or sharing an image on a non-University hosted or approved site if it has something to do with the work he or she does at the University. Whether publishing a blog or participating in someone else's, employees should make it clear that what they say is representative of their views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of the University. At a minimum, employees should include the following standard legal disclaimer language:

DISCLAIMER: The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the views, positions, or opinions of the University of Kentucky.

Note: This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt University employees from responsibility when blogging. Employees should consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing University positions. Supervisors should assume that his or her team will read what is written. A personal blog or social media site is not the forum to communicate University policies to employees or to conduct University business.

C. University employees are urged to treat the University, their fellow employees, students, patients, visitors, and vendors with respect in communications and statements even when made in the confines of private blogs or chat rooms.

D. Employees should refrain from posting material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, inappropriate, confidential, or embarrassing to the University, fellow employees, students, patients, visitors, or vendors, even when using or participating in non-University hosted or approved sites.

E. Employees shall not create social media sites or web pages that give the appearance of official University-hosted or approved sites, or that give the appearance of representing the University in an official capacity.

F. Using the University's official logos, graphics, or images on personal social media sites is strictly prohibited. Likewise, significant use of University-related content that creates an appearance that the site is University-hosted or approved is also prohibited.

V. Participating in any Social Media or Internet Site (Whether or not University-hosted or Approved)

A. Employees shall not disclose any confidential or proprietary information of or about the University, its affiliates, or its employees, students, patients, or vendors, that he/she collected, received, created, transmitted, or maintained in connection with his/her status as an employee.

B. Employees shall not use or disclose any patient health information (PHI) protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). PHI includes any individually identifiable information (oral, written or electronic) about a patient's physical or mental health, the receipt of health care, or payment for that care. In order to comply with HIPAA, social media sites shall not be used when communicating about an issue involving a specific student.

C. Employees shall not use or disclose any student information protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Generally, the university must have written permission from a student in order to release any information other than directory information about a student. In order to comply with FERPA, social media sites shall not be used when communicating about an issue involving a specific student.

#### IV. Sanctions

Violation of this policy may result in:

A. Limitation or revocation of right to use or participate in University-hosted or approved social media and reimbursement to the University for the technology and personnel charges incurred in detecting, proving, and correcting the violation of these rules.

B. Corrective or actions and sanctions, up to and including termination, as defined in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures, Governing Regulations, Administrative and Governing Regulations, and Rules of the University Senate.

C. Referring the violation to the appropriate state or federal agency, and may include any combination of disciplinary action, or civil or criminal liability.