



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, DC

Responsible University Official:
Executive Director, Communications
Responsible Office: Office of Online
Strategy
Last Revised Date: August 7, 2013

SOCIAL MEDIA

Policy Statement

Social media provide opportunities for members of the university community to share information and knowledge and to foster learning, innovation, collaboration, and research. It is the policy of the university that the use of social media be consistent with its commitment to academic freedom and university values and promote thoughtful discourse on appropriate matters. This policy applies to all social media use on behalf of the university; social media content created or posted on university-sponsored websites and social media accounts; and social media content created or posted by members of the university community in a personal capacity, if that content incorrectly creates an appearance of an endorsement by the university or violates applicable law or university policies.

Reason for Policy

Use of social media takes a number of forms including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn Snapchat, as well as blogs (university as well as personal) and online encyclopedias (e.g., Wikipedia). This policy provides information for members of the university community using social media.

Who is Governed by this Policy

Faculty, staff, and students.

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Policy

Social media provide opportunities for members of the university community to share information and knowledge and to foster learning, innovation, collaboration, and research. The university recognizes the value and importance of diverse opinions and encourages responsible and respectful social media use that is consistent with its commitment to academic freedom and university values.

The university also recognizes that social media content has the potential to affect the reputation of the university and members of its community. All data and files, including social media content, on computers owned or operated by the university or transmitted using university computer systems are subject to applicable university policies. Social media content that is not created or posted using computers owned or operated by the university or transmitted using university computer systems may nonetheless be subject to appropriate action by the university under applicable local, state or federal law, or university policies.

The university is committed to promoting, regulating, and protecting the integrity of its identity and its trademarked names and identifying marks. The university may pursue all available recourse to block, remove, or delete a social media communication that incorrectly creates an appearance of an endorsement by the university or makes an inappropriate or unauthorized use of any intellectual property held by the university.

Guidelines for Social Media Content

Social media content created or posted on behalf of the university must:

- Comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and university policies, including, but not limited to, those addressing harassment, privacy of student and health records, confidentiality, copyright, trademark,

- computer usage, and information security;
- Comply with the terms of use for the social media platform used;
- Clearly identify its affiliation with the university (which can be provided within the social media account profile or similar account description); and
- Use university marks, symbols, and logos only in accordance with university policies and standards, including the [University Licensing and Trademark Policy](#), [George Washington University Name, Wordmark, Seal, and Color Usage Policy](#), and [Identity Standards & Guidelines](#).

Social media content created or posted on behalf of the university, or in response to university posts, must not:

- Disclose any regulated, restricted, or otherwise non- public information. More information about data classification is available in the [Information Security Policy](#); and
- Be abusive, threatening, defamatory, obscene, harassing, or create a hostile work or learning environment.
- Negatively impact the university's image or the image of a member of the university community. Members should consult the [online strategy website for social media best practices](#) if they have questions about the impact of a post. For additional guidance on appropriate use of media, consult the [Media Policy](#).

If content or responses conflict with any of the above requirements, the content may be moderated or removed.

Members of the university community may not:

- Create or post personal social media content that implies that the content is on behalf of or is endorsed by the university; if a university affiliation is identified in such content and this could incorrectly create an appearance of an endorsement by the university, members of the university community should include a disclaimer that the views expressed are personal and are not necessarily those of the university;
- Use the university name, marks, symbols, and logos to promote a product, service, cause, political party, or candidate on a personal social media account or platform; and
- Post information protected by applicable law or university policies or non-public information about the university, its students, faculty, staff, or alumni. Information about data classification is available in the [Information Security Policy](#).

User-Generated Content on University-Sponsored Websites or Social Media Accounts

The university sponsors websites and maintains social media accounts that allow members of the university community and non-affiliated users to share comments and other user-generated content. Such websites and accounts must contain a disclaimer stating that any such user-generated content does not reflect the opinions or views of the university, its trustees, officers, or employees. The university reserves the right to delete content that is defamatory, obscene, threatening, or harassing; targets or disparages any ethnic, racial, religious, or gender group; advocates illegal activity; infringes copyrights or trademarks; contains spam, junk mail, or unauthorized solicitations; or violates any applicable local, state, or federal law, or university policies.

Violations and Enforcement

Suspected violations of this policy should be reported to the Office of Online Strategy in the Division of External Relations. The Division of External Relations will coordinate review and investigation of the possible violation, and, when appropriate, transition the review and investigation to the Division of Student Affairs, University Human Resources, Office of the Provost, or other units as needed. In accordance with the [Non-Retaliation Policy](#), the university prohibits retaliation against a member of the university community for making a good faith report of a potential university-related legal or policy violation. Violations of university policies may result in discipline, up to and including termination or expulsion, or sanctions in accordance with applicable university policies, guidelines, and codes.

Definitions

Social media account: an identifiable profile or online identity that is attributed to a particular individual or organization on a social media platform, which often permits a certain amount of control to the individual or organization over the account.

Social media content: user-generated content or communications, including but not limited to text, photographs, or video. Examples of social media content include commentary, blog posts, and events.

Social media platform: the mobile or web-based application that allows the creation and exchange of social media content, such as a blog, wiki, social network, and other interactive websites. Examples of social media platforms include, but are

not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, Foursquare, Myspace, and Instagram.

Social media content on behalf of the university: social media content that is created or posted by faculty, staff, or students in the university's name within the scope of the individual's responsibilities or position at the university. Examples include department Facebook pages or Flickr accounts. Social media content created or posted by individuals with academic appointments is not included if the content is published in their own names and is not attributed to the university, even if created as part of their academic activities.

Supervisor: a faculty or staff member who is responsible for overseeing and monitoring a social media account that is registered with the university. For registered student organizations, the supervisor will be the staff advisor for the organization.

Related Information

[Employee Handbook](#)

[Faculty Code](#) [Faculty Handbook](#)

[George Washington University Name, Wordmark, Seal, and Color Usage Policy](#) [Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[Identity Standards & Guidelines](#) [Information Security Policy](#)

[Media Policy](#)

[Non-Retaliation Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy Statement](#)

[Residential Community Conduct Guidelines](#)

[Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures](#)

[Threats and Acts of Violence Policy](#)

[University Licensing and Trademark Policy](#)

[Use and Reproduction of Copyrighted Materials](#)

Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email
Online Strategy	202-994-8788	onlinestrategy@gwu.edu
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Document History

- **Last Reviewed Date:** April 25, 2017
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Who Approved This Policy

Sabrina Ellis, Vice President for Human Resources
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Steven Lerman, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic
Affairs Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel
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This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance and Privacy's](#) home page.