

Guidelines for the Use of Social Media

General Guidelines

Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of this document, social media should be understood to include any website or forum that allows for open communication on the internet including, but not limited to:

- Social Networking Sites (LinkedIn, Facebook);
- Micro-blogging Sites (Twitter);
- Blogs (including company and personal blogs);
- Online Encyclopedias (Wikipedia); and
- Video and photo-sharing websites (YouTube, Flickr, Instagram)

Think Before You Post

In general, employees should think carefully before posting online, because most online social platforms are open for all to see. Despite privacy policies, employees cannot always be sure who will view, share or archive the information that is posted. Before posting anything, employees should remember that they are responsible for what is posted online. Employees should carefully consider the risks and rewards with respect to each posting. Employees should remember that any conduct, online or otherwise, that negatively or adversely impacts the employee's job performance or conduct, the job performance or conduct of other co-workers or adversely affects staff, students, customers, colleagues or associates of the University's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If employees have any doubt about what to post online, it is probably better not to post, since once something is placed in cyberspace; it is often difficult to retract the information. Employees should use their best judgment and exercise personal responsibility when posting to any social media websites.

Maintain Confidentiality

Employees should aim to protect the University's private, confidential and proprietary information. Employees should make sure that online postings do not violate any non-disclosure or confidentiality obligations and disclose the University's confidential and proprietary information about Wake Forest University, its students, staff, faculty, or alumni.

Maintain Privacy

Employees should not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in a public forum.

Respect University Time and Property

Employees should attempt to limit their personal use of social media during working hours or on electronic devices provided by the University unless such use is work-related or authorized by a supervisor. Employees should avoid using Wake Forest provided email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other websites for personal use. Employees should note that this provision is not meant to prohibit employees from engaging in concerted protected activity which is lawful under Section 7 of the NLRA.

Act Appropriately

Employees should act appropriately when posting online. Any online behavior should be consistent with the University's policies and practices with respect to ethics, confidential information, discrimination and harassment. Because online tone can be interpreted in different ways by readers, employees should not engage in any online conduct that would not be acceptable or appropriate in the workplace; including derogatory, discriminating or stereotypical remarks, threats, intimidation, harassment, insults, slander, defamation or pornography.

Be Aware of Liability

Employees should use good ethical judgment and follow University policies and federal laws. Employees should be careful to comply with all copyright, trademark and intellectual property laws. Employees are responsible for what is posted on the site and on the sites of others.

Maintain Transparency

The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred. Employees should be thoughtful about the posting's content and potential audiences. Be honest about your identity. If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the University, clearly state your role and goals. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a WFU student, staff or faculty. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of WFU. Keep in mind that if you are posting with a University username, other users do not know you personally. They view what you post as coming from the University. Be careful and respectful. What you say directly reflects on the University.

Be Accurate & Honest

Employees should always be accurate and honest in posting any news or information to social media and quickly correct any mistakes or errors. Employees should never post any information which is known to be false about WFU or any co-workers, clients, customers, colleagues or other individuals that work on behalf of or are associated with WFU.

Demonstrate Respect

When posting anything online, employees should always be fair, courteous and respectful to co-workers, clients, customers, colleagues and other individuals who may work on behalf of WFU. Employees should demonstrate proper respect for the privacy of others. If an employee decides to post a complaint or criticism, the employee should avoid using any statements, photographs, videos or audio that may be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, harassing or abusive of co-workers, clients, customers, colleagues or other individuals that work on behalf of or are associated with WFU. Employees should refrain from engaging in offensive postings that may create a hostile and abusive work environment based on race, sex, religion or any other protected class.

Safety & Privacy Tips for Social Media Networking

Other WFU Policies that may relate to use of Social Media

- <http://compliance.wfu.edu/files/2012/08/Conflict-of-Interest-Policy-8-16-12.pdf>
- http://groups.wfu.edu/CIT/ethical_use_policy.html
- <http://social.wfu.edu/>