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Policy Information

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Responsible Unit:
Human Resources
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Policy

Social media offer opportunities to interact, build relationships, and enhance interpersonal and professional connections. As members of the University of Arizona (hereafter "University" or "UA") community, we must be aware of the ways social media content may affect our personal and professional reputation and credibility and the way others perceive the University. The following guidelines have been established to protect your interests as well as the University's interests when members use social media for either professional or personal purposes.

1. PROTECT YOURSELF

1. Use appropriate privacy settings to reduce the chances that your personal information and the content you post are accessible to unintended audiences.
2. Consider the safety risks of tagging your location.
3. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched and may be required to be saved and retrieved under certain circumstances.
4. Review and comply with the user agreements of the social media you use, with particular attention to directives that prohibit harassment, threats of violence, discriminatory statements, and personal slurs or attacks.
5. Regularly monitor social media sites to ensure that others have not included you in images depicting unprofessional conduct. If you discover such images, make reasonable efforts to remove them. Typing your name into a search engine ("Googling yourself") is an easy way to see what others can see about you.
6. Consider the impression that may be created if you post content frequently during the workday.

2. PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF OTHERS

1. Use sound judgment when using social media to forge connections with members of the UA community. It is generally best to connect with students on sites such as Facebook only after they are no longer members of your class or under your direct supervision. Likewise, consider the potential impact of having access to personal information about your employees through certain social media venues.
2. If you wish to communicate professional content through Facebook, consider creating a professional page or a fan page rather than asking individuals to link to your personal account.
3. Ensure that student privacy rights are protected as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Do not describe student behavior, report grades, or provide personally identifiable information.
4. It is never appropriate to use social media to engage in personal communications with individuals with whom you are currently involved in a healthcare provider-patient relationship. Unless specifically permitted by a research sponsor, it is never appropriate to use social media to engage in personal communication with individuals who are in a researcher-patient or researcher-research subject relationship. This caution applies also to those who are being recruited to participate in research.
5. In order to protect the privacy rights of patients and research subjects as required by state or federal privacy laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and its amendments, do not discuss or describe patients or research subjects or share content that might be personally identifiable.
6. Protect confidential or personal information you may have acquired as part of your work as a University employee and abide by University policies regarding confidentiality of personnel information.
7. Request permission before posting photos of work friends or colleagues.

3. PROTECT THE UNIVERSITY'S ASSETS AND REPUTATION

1. While you have rights of free expression as a private citizen, remember that others view you as a member of the UA community. Before posting social media content, consider the impact it may have on the University's reputation.
2. When your online posting suggests that you are affiliated with the UA, include a statement that the content of your posting reflects only your personal views and not those of the UA or its colleges or affiliates.
3. Remember that state law prohibits University employees from using their UA affiliation to influence electoral and legislative outcomes. If you use social media to express a political position, make sure that you do so as a private citizen rather than as a UA representative. Failure to make this distinction may violate University policy and state law and trigger a host of consequences for the University if the comments are deemed to be lobbying under federal and state statutes. See the University's Political Activity Fact Sheet [2] for more information.
4. Use a personal e-mail address to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal purposes.
5. Respect intellectual property rights—including copyrights, trademarks, trade names, and trade secrets—of others and of the University. Always give other people proper credit for their work, and make sure you have the right to use something with attribution before you publish.
6. Adhere to all University policies regarding the use of computers and other technology.
7. Remember that use of University- or college-owned logos requires written approval by the University's Office of Trademarks and Licensing.
8. Keep in mind that established workplace channels are available (and often superior to social media outlets) for resolving work-related complaints.

Revision History*

12/01/2023: Updated responsible unit email address.

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Source URL:https://policy.arizona.edu/employment-human-resources/social-media-guidelines

Links
[1] mailto:hradmin@email.arizona.edu [2]
https://policy.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Political-Activity-Fact-Sheet.pdf