SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

The Office of Compliance at Oklahoma State University has drafted the following policy. Social media are powerful communications and marketing tools that may have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Because there is not always a clear distinction between personal voice and institutional voice, the Oklahoma State University has crafted the following policy to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media.

Social media are defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter and YouTube.

Both in professional and institutional roles, employees should follow the same behavioral standards online as they would elsewhere. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, research participants, parents, alumni, donors, media and other university constituents apply online and offline. Employees and student-representatives of the school are personally liable for anything they post to social media sites.

Policies for Social Media Sites, Including Personal Sites

1. Protect confidential and proprietary information: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the Oklahoma State University students, employees, or alumni. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA, HIPAA, and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulations and must also adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination. Students may also be subject to risk of disciplinary action.

2. Respect copyright and fair use: When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university.

3. Using confidential or privileged information acquired in connection with a research project is not acceptable, unless the participants consent is documented to do so. (e.g., sharing nonpublic information through a university or personal social media profile)

Best Practices
This section applies to those posting on behalf of an official university unit, though the guidelines may be helpful for anyone posting on social media in any capacity.
1. Think twice before posting: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on the poster and the university. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or in a publication, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the Office of Compliance.

2. Photography: Photographs posted on social media sites easily can be appropriated by visitors. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at 72 dpi and approximately 800x600 resolution to protect your intellectual property. Images at that size are sufficient for viewing on the Web, but not suitable for printing.

3. Private or Confidential Information - Please do not provide any personal identifiable information (PII) related to research participants when posting comments or individual posts. The _only_ acceptable time to post is when the participant(s) have consented to disclose this information.

Social Media Policy Notification
Social media sites each have their own terms and conditions and/or policies, all university employees must adhere to these policies if they choose to use social media platforms. Not following these policies/terms may lead to the removal of your social media account and may adversely affect or reflect poorly upon other areas of the university. Please keep up to date on social media platform policies/terms.

Disclaimer: *Employees and student-representatives of the University are personally liable for anything they post to social media sites.*