

Best Practices for University Employees’ Personal Social Media Accounts

The following best practices applies to all employees of the University of Mississippi who maintain personal social media accounts. This document does not speak to how university employees express personal opinions in keeping with our institutional commitment to freedom of expression. The purpose of this document is to offer guidance designed to distinguish clearly between professional and personal social media activity. Employees who wish to launch Official University Social Media Accounts should refer to guidelines for university employees who run those accounts (LINK TO GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES THAT RUN OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS).

Before launching your personal social media account, be sure to familiarize yourself with the official University of Mississippi policies below and [all other related Human Resources policies](#).

[IT Appropriate Use](#)

[Information Confidentiality/Security](#)

[Official Web Pages](#)

[Privacy in the Electronic Environment](#)

[Employee Conflict of Interest](#)

[Media Relations](#)

[Sexual Harassment](#)

[Non-Discrimination & Complaint Procedure](#)

[Permission Required to Use University Trademarks](#)

[Political Activities and Public Office](#)

[Code of Ethics and Conduct](#)

[Copyright \(Intellectual Property\)](#)

[Social Media \(INSERT LINK HERE TO SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY\)](#)

1. **Protect institutional confidential and proprietary information.** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the university, its students, employees, patients or alumni. Employees must follow applicable federal requirements, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ([HIPAA](#)). All University of Mississippi employees should also abide by all NCAA regulations governing interactions between the institution and its employees and prospective student-athletes. All employees should refrain from contacting prospective student-athletes prior to the student-athlete signing a National Letter of Intent to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Please visit the [Ole Miss Compliance website](#) and consult with officials if you have questions about content before posting.

Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action, including and up to termination.

2. **Adhere to copyright and fair use law.** When posting, be aware of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university. Please refer to the UM policy on [Copyright \(Intellectual Property\)](#). Questions about fair use or copyrighted material should be directed to the [Office of General Counsel](#).
3. **Be aware of terms of service.** Comply with the terms of service of any social media platform used. Please see terms and conditions for major social media platforms below:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Snapchat](#)

[Flickr](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

[Wordpress](#)

[Pinterest](#)

[Tumblr](#)

4. **Do not use university logos or trademarks on personal social media accounts without permission.** All employees should refer to the [University Marketing & Communications Creative Toolbox](#) for questions about university marks, logos and images.
5. **Be sure to link to official content to ensure accuracy.** It's important to be accurate when posting on social media. When possible, link back to original source material on olemiss.edu websites. When linking to a news article about the university, check first to see whether you can link to a release on [Ole Miss News](#), the official UM news website, instead of to an external publication or other media outlet. If you must link to an external original source of information, outside of the university website, be sure to verify and confirm its accuracy.
6. **Identify your views as your own.** As employees at the University of Mississippi, the things we say and do reflect directly upon not only our personal reputations but also the university's. It is sometimes difficult for external audiences to distinguish the difference between an individual's opinion and an official position of the university, especially when we identify ourselves as UM employees. On your personal accounts, please be clear in declaring your views as your own if you identify yourself as an employee of the university. A simple disclaimer should suffice.
 - a. **Ex:** "The views expressed on this {blog, social media page, account, etc.} don't reflect those of The University of Mississippi."
 - b. **Ex:** "Views are my own, not necessarily those of my employer."
 - c. **Ex:** "Opinions are mine."
 - d. **Ex:** "All views, posts and opinions are my own."

7. **Be respectful.** Be constructive and respectful when discussing differing opinions online. We should strive to uphold the [UM Creed](#), and our voices on social media should reflect those values.