

Social Media Policy

Social Media Policy PDF Download

Subject:	Social Media
Poicy:	Social Media Policy
Effective Date:	October 4, 2023
Review Date:	October 4, 2026
Responsible Party:	University Communications

Table of Contents

[100.00 Introduction and Purpose](#)

[200.00 Definitions](#)

[300.00 Policy](#)

[400.00 Applicability](#)

[500.00 Procedures](#)

[600.00 Compliance](#)

[700.00 Related MSU Policies](#)

100.00 Introduction and Purpose

Montana State University's Social Media Policy establishes the standards for creating and distributing official university information and conducting university business on any online social media platform by any administrative, academic, research or outreach unit or subdivision within the university.

Social media provides an avenue of communication to connect and engage directly with students, faculty, staff, alumni and the general public. This policy is intended to ensure that university-affiliated social media accounts comply with relevant university policies and uphold the brand image of Montana State University.

200.00 Definitions

Account administrators, Posters or Users are any person creating and publishing content to any approved MSU social media account.

Administrative, academic, research or outreach unit or Subdivision includes examples such as colleges; departments; offices; programs; centers; laboratories; MSU sub-brands, such as Museum of the Rockies, Bobcat Athletics, Montana PBS; and other units that represent more than one person. It does not include the individual, named accounts of faculty or staff. For example, it does not include the LinkedIn account of

Joe/Jane Smith.

MSU primary social media accounts are those MSU social media accounts directly overseen and maintained by University Communications, and which are marketed on the MSU homepage.

MSU social media accounts are those created and/or operated by administrative, academic, research or outreach units or subdivisions, as defined above, used for creating and distributing university information and conducting university business on any online social media platform by any administrative unit or subdivision within the university.

Social media is a website or app through which users create and share content. Popular platforms include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Flickr and YouTube. This can also include discussion forums and other online publishing systems.

Social Media Terms and Conditions are the rules imposed by social media websites on their users as a condition for having an account and access to use the social media site.

300.00 Policy

All MSU social media accounts, whether existing or subsequently created, must go through an official review to be either approved or denied through a process managed by University Communications. Administrative, academic, research or outreach units or subdivisions must seek this review prior to creating a new MSU social media account.

Account administrators must complete regular social media training as prescribed by University Communications.

400.00 Applicability

1. This Policy applies to:
 - a. Any university employee or other person using MSU social media accounts within the scope of their job duties, with the exceptions provided below. This includes, but is not limited to, faculty, staff, graduate students, student employees or students with authorization from a university employee.
 - b. All MSU social media accounts, whether existing or subsequently created, regardless of whether its administrators or supervision unit has completed the application and review process described in this policy.
2. This policy does not apply to:
 - a. The use of individuals' own personal social media accounts.
 - b. The use of social media by registered student organizations at Montana State University.
 - c. Accounts representing named individuals among the faculty and staff.
3. Employees, including student employees and graduate students are not acting in their individual capacity when they are using university social media accounts as part of their job duties. Questions regarding what constitutes an employee's job duties will be resolved by the employee's chain of supervision and Human Resources.

500.00 Procedures

1. Administration of this policy

- a. University Communication is responsible for administering this policy.
- b. University Communications will:
 - i. Provide input and assist in university outreach and training on this policy.
 - ii. Manage the application and review process.
 - iii. Maintain a list of approved MSU social media accounts
 - iv. Keep a record of log-in credentials for approved MSU social media accounts using password management tools recommended by University Information Technology.

2. Requirements for MSU social media accounts

- a. Each MSU social media account approved by University Communications must adhere to the following requirements:
 - i. MSU social media sites must include a disclaimer statement where applicable, to be prescribed by University Communications, regarding content and opinions contained on the site.
 - ii. Account Administrators
 - 1. MSU social media accounts must have, at minimum, two MSU employees designated as account administrators at all times .
 - 2. If a social media account administrator leaves their position or no longer wishes to be an account administrator, it is that administrative unit or subdivision's responsibility to
 - a. Designate another employee to be an account administrator.
 - b. Remove the former employee's administrative permissions.
 - c. Change the MSU social media account's login credentials and provide the new password to University Communications.
 - 3. Account administrators are responsible for managing and monitoring content of their social media accounts and for removing content that may violate this policy, university conduct policies, or the Social Media Terms and Conditions.
 - 4. Account administrators are also responsible for maintaining account security by using different, strong passwords for each account, keeping passwords safe, using the password tools and applications provided by University Information Technology, changing passwords when necessary to respond to security concerns and immediately reporting any account being hacked or compromised to University Communications at socialmedia@montana.edu.
 - 5. The use of two-factor authentication is recommended where available. When possible, account administrators must use a campus phone number or official montana.edu email address for two factor authentication.
 - iii. MSU social media accounts must follow the MSU [Graphic Identity and Branding Policy](#).
- b. Each MSU social media account will be publicly listed by the university on the MSU [social media website](#).
- c. [Best practices for social media](#) should be followed.
 - i. Account administrators may contact University Communications at socialmedia@montana.edu at any time for a consultation of a social media account. Social media account administrators/posters/users should also use [montana.edu/ socialmedia](http://montana.edu/socialmedia) as a guide.

3. Content Guidelines

- a. Montana State University reaffirms its commitment to freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Accordingly , this policy is consistent with and

subject to the MSU Freedom of Expression policy.

- b. Montana State University social media account administrators, users, and/or posters are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct online as they would in the workplace, under the university's policies. Employees are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites.
- c. Employees must adhere to privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
- d. MSU's name or marks may not be used to endorse any product, private business, cause, or political candidate, or ballot/legislative issue.
- e. Account administrators, users and posters must comply with copyright and other intellectual property laws. By posting content to any social media site, the poster represents that the poster owns or otherwise has all the rights necessary to lawfully use that content. Any questions concerning the content's status regarding privacy or intellectual property laws should be directed to MSU Legal Counsel. Posters also agree that they will not knowingly provide misleading or false information.
- f. University Communications may review content posted by approved MSU social media accounts and may remove or cause the removal of any content for any lawful reason, including but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, a violation of this policy or other university policy, a violation of the Social Media Terms and Conditions.
- g. Account administrators should ensure that content remains current and useful and that comments and questions posted by others to the account are responded to in a timely fashion. University Communications reserves the right to retire accounts that are not regularly updated.
- h. Do not post content relating to emergencies, university closures, or dangerous situations affecting the university community, except by resharing messages from the university primary social media accounts.
- i. All account administrators must comply with Montana State University's [Web Accessibility Policy](#).

4. Guidance related to use of personal social media by employees

- a. Employees who maintain personal social media accounts, should avoid creating confusion over whether the account is associated with MSU. If the employee identifies themselves as a MSU faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed on that site are not those of the university and the employee is not acting in their capacity as a MSU employee.
- b. Faculty with individual accounts are reminded of Montana Board of Regents Policy 302 on academic freedom and Montana State University's academic freedom policy and to avoid postings that could be confused as speaking for the institution or the Montana University System.
- c. While not a requirement, MSU employees who choose to identify themselves as such on social media are recommended to add the following disclaimer to personal social media accounts: "While I am an employee at Montana State University, comments made on this account are my own and not that of the University."

600.00 Compliance

Compliance with this policy is required, failure to adhere to its guidelines could result in revocation of social media access and/or disciplinary action. For assistance with interpretation or application of this policy, contact University Communications.

700.00 Related MSU Policies

Social media users acting on behalf of the Montana State University must adhere to all MSU policies and procedures, including:

[FERPA](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

[Graphic Identity and Branding Policy](#)

[Freedom of Expression](#)

[Intellectual Property](#)

[Media policy](#)

[Student code of conduct](#)

[UIT appropriate use](#)

[Web Accessibility Policy](#)