Eastern University

Social Media Policy & Guidelines for Use

University Marketing and Communications

**<u>Table of Contents</u>**

**Eastern University and Social Media**

Social media tools allow us to communicate our Eastern University story and brand with the world, while allowing our community to reach us with what is important to them. These conversations are essential to helping us build and maintain strong relationships with fans and followers.

Eastern University was an early adopter of utilizing social media to directly interact with our community in new and fun ways. We've grown our online community so that it can serve as a resource to faculty/staff, current students, parents, alumni, and prospective students. Eastern University can be found on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and YouTube. These accounts are maintained by [University Marketing and Communications](). To help us share Eastern's story with others, we encourage you to interact with these accounts as much as possible and share its content with others.

**Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of using any of these platforms is to support the University's mission and goals and present the University in a positive way to our many constituents. This policy has been created to ensure that any account created in the University's name is used properly and to assist in the posting of content and managing of accounts. This policy applies to all University employees, departments, programs and locations.

**Personal Social Media Use**

We ask that employees engaging in social media for their personal use refrain from discussing, speculating, or giving personal opinions on anything related to the University that might be considered confidential or sensitive. We will not monitor personal accounts, but if needed, we will address any violations of this policy and any HR policy violations related to a personal social media account.

In order to be consistent with Eastern's mission as a Christian institution, University Marketing and Communications also reserves the right to remove any comments or posts on University accounts that include inappropriate, obscene, hateful, or slanderous language. For more information or questions regarding personal social media use, please consult the [Eastern University Student Handbook]() or contact the University Marketing and Communications Team.

**How to Get Started with your University Department Account**

The University already has established active social media accounts and communities with thousands of followers. Before you decide to start a new account for your department, please ask the following questions:

1. Does your department have the resources and capabilities to maintain this account forever?

2. Is use of the main University social media account a better option to reach a larger audience?

If you still feel that your department can and wants to maintain its own account long term, please consult University Marketing and Communications carry out the following steps:

### Step One: Strategize

It's important to understand what you are trying to achieve with your social media account, so establish goals. It's equally important to identify and understand the audience you are trying to reach. Spend time strategizing how you plan on reaching that audience and with what content. Finally, decide how you will measure your success and evaluate your efforts after 6 and 12 months. You may find that you need to adjust your strategy after your evaluation as things are constantly changing in social media. See *Appendix A* for a worksheet to assist you in your efforts to strategize.

### Step Two: Decide on a Platform

Deciding which platform will help you achieve your goals is the first step. Each of these platforms has its own style and rules. You should be familiar with them and consider how they fit in your overall strategy before you decide to engage. It's typically recommended that you launch only one platform at a time.

### Step Three: Assign Two Administrators

There should be at least two people assigned to maintain your account so there is always a backup. When creating a Facebook account, for example, you must create a profile using your Eastern email address, then create the Business page account. If you do not, the Facebook Business page will forever be linked to your personal Facebook account and if you should leave you will have to deactivate the Business page. Someone at Eastern should always be able to access and manage the account without entering any personal profiles.

A student is NEVER PERMITTED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATOR of a University social media account.  A student is permitted to *create* content, but may not post content without the supervision of a faculty or staff page administrator.

### *Step Four: Register Your Account*

Register your account with University Marketing and Communications. See *Appendix A* for the registration form and strategy worksheet. After the registration form has been received, official approval will be sent to the account administrators. All registrations MUST be received and approved before the account is created. University Marketing and Communications reserves the right to deny approval if the account does not support the overall social strategy of the University or adhere to the guidelines in this policy.

### Guidelines for Posting Content

- Keep in mind that social media is *constantly* changing. Try to stay on top of changes in platform policy or layout when managing your social account. There are many resources online that can assist with this sort of education/research. Any questions should be directed to University Marketing and Communications.
- Official University accounts must adhere to the [Eastern University Brand Toolkit](#).
- Remember that all who administer an officially-recognized account are representing Eastern University. Thus, your interactions should reflect the University mission statement and its values and should respect all audiences. All content is subject to review by University Marketing and Communications.
- Respond to comments and direct messages in a timely manner. Social media users expect to get an answer immediately.  Your account must be monitored daily and your users should get a response within 24 hours.
- Be respectful in your interactions. Do not engage in arguments or disagreements. Exercise discretion, thoughtfulness and respect for your colleagues, students, and your overall social media community.
- Discussing internal policies and operations is *not* permitted. Refrain from speculating or giving an opinion on University topics that are sensitive or confidential.
- Personally identifiable information that can be used to locate someone offline, including but not limited to phone numbers, home or local addresses, birth date, and email addresses, should *not* be posted. When trying to get a user in touch with an individual at the University, utilize private messaging on the social media platform to transfer that information.
- Remove only inappropriate or offensive comments. In most cases, negative comments should not be removed; if a response is necessary, comments should be responded to in a

professional manner. In some cases, no response is required at all (use discretion). If someone has a legitimate problem or question (as opposed to a personal opinion or complaint) and posts about it on a platform, find a solution for that user and post the solution publicly so that those who are part of our online community will feel they can come to us with their issues.

- Correct your mistakes if you make them. Be up front and quick in making your corrections. Proofread and review your content thoroughly before posting.
- Respect copyrights and fair use; always try to give people proper credit for their work. Photos or videos created by University Marketing and Communications do not need to be credited.
- Be thoughtful about how you present yourself on your social media accounts. What you put online is forever. It's also important to remember that the lines between private and public are becoming increasingly blurred, so proceed with caution when posting anything online.

**Types of Content**

*Photos*

- Approved University photos can be downloaded directly from the [University Photo Buckets](#).
- Photos taken specifically for your posts should be high quality. Visual posts usually generate the most engagement. Make sure your photo is both relevant to the post and professional quality.
- Photos with inappropriate content are prohibited.
- Consider everything going on in the photo and how it could be received (example: make sure nothing negative is going on in the background of a photo)
- Be mindful of your light. Bright, clean, natural light is usually best. Avoid harsh shadows or backlighting. Blurry or dark photos should not be used.
- Always give credit to the photographer unless the University photographer or someone in University Marketing and Communications took the photo.
- Certain platforms require certain image sizes. Review [this guide](#) to see the latest specs for social images in order to get the best result
- Review the University's [Photo and Video Policy](#) for more information

*Video*
- Always give credit to the videographer who filmed the video unless it was made by the University's Lead Videographer.

- It is suggested that videos remain brief for optimal viewership engagement, unless the video is a live stream. Vertical, short-form videos in the form of stories, reels, TikToks, etc. are currently favored by platform algorithms.
- Videos need not be of professional grade quality *IF* they are student-produced and meant to be viral videos. Videos produced to promote a program, school or department must be of professional grade quality. Blurry or dark videos with poor sound quality are not permitted.
- Program videos must receive prior approval from University Marketing and Communications before being posted.
- Links to published and approved University videos can be found on the University's [Youtube channel](#).

*Web Links*
- Linking your posts to additional long-form written content (such as a blog post, press release, or news article) is a great way to extend the levels of engagement with your posts and share more complex ideas with your audience.
- In order to keep content consistent with our messaging and branding standards, we strongly recommend linking posts to eastern.edu whenever possible.
- In the case of external links, please carefully review the source and consider whether or not it presents any PR concerns for the University.
- Understand that the things you say online can be perceived as representing the University. If you are identifying yourself as a faculty or staff member on your personal blog or website, please include a disclaimer that reads: "This blog reflects my personal views but not necessarily those of Eastern University." Otherwise, you should identify yourself as a "Higher Education faculty member" or "Higher Education employee."

- Student authors must agree to only write and share content that represents behaviors in compliance with Eastern Standards of Conduct.
- Content written by students and shared on social media must be reviewed by supervisors and is subject to change at the supervisor's discretion.
- Students must give credit or cite sources used when posting pictures, video or text that is not their own or not University produced.

**Facebook**

Facebook Business pages allow you to post text, photos, videos, events and links. You can have multiple administrators on a Business page so that any of the administrators can log in and make a status update. When a status update is made, it will appear in all of your followers' news feeds. Facebook Groups are also helpful resources for building community.

*Tips for Posting*

- Create a customized URL for your fan page so that your URL isn't a long list of numbers and letters.  For example, the main FB Business page URL is www.facebook.com/easternuniversity. Go to https://www.facebook.com/username/ for your customized URL.
- Avoid over-posting. Educate yourself on the current Facebook algorithm and how it distributes posts in the newsfeed.
- Don't just post news and events.  You want to encourage interaction, and it's hard to interact with a post about a press release.  Posting photos and videos or highlighting student/faculty accomplishments in your department will always result in more interaction than a news or event posting. Use your posts to tell a story.
- Always try to drive traffic to the Eastern University website whenever possible. Include a link to eastern.edu in the contact information portion of your page profile.
- Remember to check your page every day. Followers expect an immediate answer. All users should get a response within 24 hours.
- Delete posts that include personal attacks or are offensive. Don't delete comments just because they are critical; instead try to find a solution for the problem or an appropriate response that might diffuse the expressed anger or frustration. Use discernment when deciding to engage with a post.
- Utilize Facebook's tagging, sharing, and highlighting features on your posts. Interacting with other Eastern accounts will broaden your reach and help maintain connectivity.
- If your account should fall dormant (if there are not at least two posts per month or users are not getting a response from you) you will be asked to deactivate the account. Once again, all content is subject to review by University Marketing and Communications.  If the account is being misused in any way (inappropriate content that does not align with the University mission or conform to this policy) we will ask that it be deactivated.

**Twitter**

Twitter allows text-based posts of 4,000 characters or fewer. You can post links, photos and links to videos, all of which must be below the character limit.

*Tips for Posting*

- Your strategy should evaluate whether you have enough content to engage on this platform, as posting daily is acceptable and encouraged on Twitter. Try posting at least 1-5 times per day.
- It's good practice to retweet others and thank others for retweeting you.
- Don't just use this platform as a megaphone. News and events are great content, but you want to create two-way conversations, so tweet about things that may be of interest to your audience and that will encourage those conversations.
- You can schedule your tweets utilizing an app or online program like Hootsuite or Sprout Social.
- Respond to mentions within 24 hours.
- If your account should fall dormant (if you are not posting at least twice per week or users are not getting a response) you will be asked to deactivate the account. Once again, all content is subject to review by University Marketing and Communications. If the account is being misused in any way (inappropriate content that does not align with the University mission or conform to this policy) we will ask that it be deactivated.
- Utilize hashtags (#) to help categorize and organize your tweets and start conversation. Try to use no more than 1-3 hashtags in each post.
- Tag the main Eastern University account whenever possible by using #easternuniversity or @EasternU

**Instagram**

Instagram is a mobile app that allows users to take, edit, and share photos and videos with their friends and followers. It is a great tool to share unique and creative visuals of campus, curate student generated content, and connect with past, present, and future students. There is currently one main Eastern University Instagram account and several department accounts. If you have your own personal profile, we encourage you to interact with the Eastern account whenever possible by following @easternuniversity and using #easternuniversity or #MyEasternU in comments and photos. When running a University account:

- Be sure that your photos are of the highest quality possible.
- Remember that inappropriate content in both captions and photos/videos are prohibited.

- Always try to tag the main EU account (@easternuniversity) through mention or by listing Eastern University as the location.
- Utilize the bio section of your profile to describe your department and link to your department page on the Eastern website.
- Utilize Instagram stories to feature live content. This is especially helpful if you are trying to portray student life.
- Have fun! Instagram is heavily used by current undergrad students and prospective students. Feel free to use a more casual tone in your posts but be sure to maintain a certain level of professionalism since you're representing the University.

**LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site for making professional connections with colleagues and other professionals around the world.

- Include your employment at Eastern University in your profile and follow the Eastern University page so you can connect with colleagues/alumni and make connections with others who might be interested in the University.
- Please feel free to utilize the [University logo](#) on your LinkedIn account. All logos must be received from University Marketing and Communications.

**YouTube**

- YouTube is a video-sharing website that allows its hundreds of millions of users to upload, share, and view videos. Eastern University has one main YouTube account with multiple playlists that display videos for various departments.
- In order to be embedded to a page on the Eastern website, all videos should be uploaded to the University's main YouTube account. Contact University Marketing and Communications for assistance with this process.
- All videos must be approved by University Marketing and Communications before being posted to the Eastern University YouTube channel or embedded onto eastern.edu.

**TikTok**

Tiktok is a social media platform for creating and watching short-form videos. Tiktok shares videos through two channels: the "For You" page which generates video content based on your interests and viewing history, and the "Following" page which allows you to see videos from the profiles your account specifically follows.

*Tips for Posting*

- Unlike other platforms, the appeal of Tiktok is the authentic, low-production videos. Posting frequently will increase the chance of your video receiving views, but also means that there isn't enough time to curate high quality videos as often. This is the main reason that videos may be lower quality but can still perform well.
- The ideal video is 15-60 seconds long.
- Creativity is important on this platform. Keeping up with the trends is significant but the trends also run their course fast. Showcasing campus, extracurricular activities, student life, etc. through mobile videos in fun, unique ways is a great way to utilize Tiktok.
- Tagging the University's Tiktok account (@easternu) and including the hashtag #easternuniversity when sharing content helps unify our audience and share Eastern specific content with prospective students.

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*Appendix A*

## Social Media Account Registration and Strategy

[This form](#) will serve to register your account with University Marketing. It should also prove useful in helping you develop a strategy for your social media account. This form MUST be completed and reviewed by University Marketing before the account can be created. Please complete this worksheet, make a copy and send it to [socialmedia@eastern.edu](mailto:socialmedia@eastern.edu) . University Marketing and Communications reserves the right to deny approval to any account that does not fit the overall marketing strategy of the University. All accounts will be monitored by the Marketing Office. If an account falls dormant or fails to meet University standards, it will be deactivated.

Type of Social Media Account You Wish to Create (i.e. Facebook):

Name of Department:

Who will be responsible for maintaining the account? Please provide contact information for this individual.

Who is the 2nd administrator responsible for maintaining the account? Please provide contact information for this individual and any others who may be administrators on the account.

What audience are you trying to reach?




Define your goals:




How will you measure your success?

How will you communicate with your audience?

What type of content do you plan on sharing (i.e., photos, video, campus events, etc.)

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