

# Northeastern University

## GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL

Effective Date: July 31, 2014

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Supersedes: N/A

Related Policies: Code of Ethical Conduct; Policy on Appropriate Use of Computer and Network Resources; Professional Standards and Business Conduct Policy; Conflict of Commitment and Interest Policy; Policy on Endorsements and use of University Identifiers; University Social Media Guidelines; University Branding Guidelines

Responsible Office/  
Department: Marketing and Communications

Keywords: Social Media, Blog, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram

## Policy on Use of University Social Media Accounts

### I. Purpose and Scope

Social media is an ever-evolving community and communications network, valuable to spreading messages, connecting with audiences, and elevating brands both inside and outside the Northeastern community. The university supports use of social media, including blogging, in connection with university business, within legal and ethical bounds.

This policy applies to all members of the university community, including students, faculty, staff, volunteers in connection with university activities, and alumni groups. It applies to all uses of social media accounts registered in the name of the university or established to be used for university business. This policy applies to the use of any social media platform, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, and Instagram.

This policy does not apply to personal social media accounts or use of social media in a survey or other research protocol approved by IRB.

This policy is not intended to:

- restrict employee rights to engage in concerted, protected activity with fellow employees over the terms and conditions of employment <http://www.nlr.gov/>;
- abridge or otherwise restrict academic freedom.

## Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

**Copyright infringement** means the unauthorized use of copyrighted material that violates the copyright owner's exclusive right to reproduce or perform the copyrighted work, or to make derivative works that build upon it.

**Poster or User** means any individual within the scope of this policy submitting, sharing, consuming, or interacting with content on any social media site.

Social Media means online channels designed to use internet and web-based technologies to allow users to create and share content and ideas, engage with content and interact with others in virtual communities/networks.

**Social Media Presence** means the establishment and maintenance of an account, profile, hashtag, avatar or other identifying use of a social media site in the name or on behalf of the University, or a Department or Office within the University.

## II. Policy

### A. General Considerations

Northeastern encourages the use of a social media presence to enhance its educational activities and community standing through collaboration, communication, and promotion of research and programs. No information should be posted on a university social media account that is not appropriate and suitable for all ages, or that does not further the University's education and research mission.

Use of social media for University purposes, as well as use of the University's information technology services and computer networks to access social media for personal use, are governed by the same policies applicable to other electronic communications, including the Policy on Appropriate Use of Computer and Network Resources and principles of privacy and civility.

All content, domain and account names and account access information and passwords, as well as the audience built around any social media account (including subscribers, followers, etc.) established in the name of the university or for university business, are the sole property of the university and may not be used, changed, or transferred without written permission from the university.

### B. Marketing Considerations

Offices and departments must notify the office of Marketing and Communications before establishing a social media presence. Posters must follow University branding guidelines on the use of the University seal, logo and other graphic identifiers. For more information, consult:

<http://www.northeastern.edu/guidelines/web/socialmedia.html>

<http://www.northeastern.edu/guidelines/>

University resources may not be used for commercial or political endorsements.

### C. Legal Considerations

Posters or Users are personally responsible for content posted on social media sites. Where appropriate, include disclaimers.

All use of social media must comply with the Code of Ethical Conduct and Policy on Appropriate Use of Computer and Network Resources, as well as federal, state and local laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and NCAA regulations.

The university expects that posters will maintain the confidentiality of university records when posting, and will not post proprietary information.

Posters are expected to avoid copyright infringement and to obtain rights and permissions before posting copyrighted materials.

### D. Student Organizations

Recognized student organizations are encouraged to notify the office of Marketing and Communications before establishing a social media presence, and to adhere to the General Considerations and Legal Considerations above. It is appropriate in this context to include disclaimers regarding the non-affiliation with official business of the university.

## III. Additional Information

Hiring Units should not extend or communicate offers of employment through social media but must use existing and accepted processes.

Posters who do not adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action, up to termination or expulsion, or other appropriate action, which may include deletion of the social media account.

Users are encouraged to follow the Guidelines for Posting for Northeastern available at the Marketing and Communications Department website.

<http://www.northeastern.edu/guidelines/web/socialmedia.html>

## IV. Contact Information

Questions about social media best practices should be directed to the Office of Marketing and Communications, 617-373-5718.

Questions about technical issues should be directed to Information Technology and Services, 617-373-4357.

Questions about the application of this policy to alumni groups should be directed to the Office of Alumni Relations, 617-373-2656.