

<b>Governing Body:</b>	Southern Oregon University	<b>Date Approved:</b>	March 9, 2026
<b>Policy Contact:</b>	Marketing Director	<b>Approved By:</b>	President
<b>Custodial Office:</b>	Marketing		
<b>Related Policy:</b>	FAD.040, SAD.015		

## A. Description

This policy establishes the standards, responsibilities, and requirements for the creation, management, and use of Official University Social Media Profiles to ensure that social media communications align with Southern Oregon University’s mission, protect the institution’s reputation, and comply with applicable laws and University policies.

Southern Oregon University encourages the use of social media to connect with others, including students, employees, alumni, donors, and fans of the University. Social media profiles are excellent venues to communicate and encourage engaging discussions about University events, accolades, organizations, and people. Additionally, social media profiles and posts provide an important platform to reinforce the university’s brand, reputation, and messaging with external parties. This policy defines the use of Official University Social Media Profiles to ensure that University-sponsored social media profiles are both legal and in compliance with University policies.

## B. Definition(s)

### Social Media

Forms of electronic communication (such as websites and applications for social networking and microblogging) through which users create communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, photos, videos, and other content. Examples include but are not limited to Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, and similar platforms.

### Official University Social Media Profile

A social media profile, page, account, or community that represents a University college, division, department, program, or other official unit of Southern Oregon University. Any other social media profile, such as a student organization account, a student’s personal account, or an employee’s personal account, is not considered an Official University Social Media Profile.

### Administrator (or Profile Administrator)

A University employee who has been granted responsibility for managing, moderating, and posting content to an Official University Social Media Profile. Each profile must have at least two administrators, one of whom must be a permanent University employee.

### Business Owner

The academic or administrative unit that sponsors and takes responsibility for an Official University Social Media Profile, including ensuring compliance with University policies.

## **Confidential Information**

Any information protected under applicable laws or regulations including, but not limited to, student educational records (FERPA), medical records (HIPAA), or student-athlete information (NAIA). Confidential information also includes any non-public institutional data as defined by University policies.

## **Public Information**

Information that has been approved for release to the general public and does not violate privacy, confidentiality, or intellectual property laws or University policies.

## **Intellectual Property**

Creations of the mind, such as literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, images, and inventions, protected by law. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrights, trademarks, and patents.

## **Copyright**

A form of intellectual property law that protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works.

## **Records Retention**

The legal and institutional requirement to preserve certain information for a defined period of time. Social media posts created or received by an Official University Social Media Profile may be considered state records and are subject to Oregon Records Retention schedule requirements.

## **Accessibility**

The practice of ensuring that digital content and communications are perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust for people with the widest possible range of abilities, including compliance with SOU's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy.

## **Personal Social Media**

An individual's private use of personal accounts that are not affiliated with or managed on behalf of Southern Oregon University. Personal use is not subject to this policy except where such use violates University policies or Oregon law (e.g., violent or threatening content).

## **C. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 All Official University Social Media Profiles must adhere to state and federal laws and regulations and University policies. Only public information may be posted by Official University Social Media Profiles. Official University Social Media Profiles must not contain sensitive personal information or other confidential information. Any sensitive personal information or other confidential information posted by an Official University Social Media Profile must be removed by the profile administrator as soon as reasonably possible upon discovery.
- 1.2 All social media accounts must be registered and approved by the Director of Marketing and Communications, or their designee. Social media accounts must be registered via the SOU Social Media Registration Form.
- 1.3 The University is committed to fostering an educational environment that allows for freedoms of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, the University will not tolerate any activity or posting on an Official University Social Media Profile that is not protected by the First Amendment such as any unlawful, defamatory or obscene (as defined by Oregon and federal law) activity or posting. The University reserves the right to remove (or to direct the removal of) any such posting without notice.

Moderation of content on Official University Social Media Profiles shall comply with guidelines posted on the University's Social Media Guidelines website. The Director of Marketing may deny, suspend, and/or revoke administrative rights and/or remove or modify content that does not align with the social media policy and guidelines.

- 1.4 Profile administrators must consult with the Marketing and Communications Office before taking any action against content on Official University Social Media Profiles, including content that the First Amendment may not protect. The University also reserves the right to refer Social Media activity to the applicable Social Media platform and/or authorities for appropriate action.
- 1.5 Employee Use: when using Social Media as a part of their official duties and/or when presenting oneself in Social Media settings as a University representative, employees must comply with applicable University policies governing employee behavior and acceptable use of electronic and information resources.
- 1.6 Primary administrative rights for Official University Social Media Profiles will be assigned only to University employees. Official University Social Media Profiles will have a minimum of two administrators that have access to the profile's credentials to ensure that the profile is consistently managed. Should one administrator be unavailable, the second assigned administrator will manage the profile. At least one administrator should be permanent University employees.
  - 1.6.1 For Social Media platforms that do not have passwords for each profile, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, the Marketing and Communications office must be given administrative rights.
- 1.6. All content on Official University Social Media Profiles must comply with SOU's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy to ensure that the information is accessible and usable by people with the widest range of capabilities possible. Accessibility requirements apply to the content on the social media tool, not the features of the tool. It is the responsibility of the Official University Social Media Profile administrator to ensure social media content is fully accessible. Accessibility practices should comply with the guidelines posted to the Social Media Guidelines website.
- 1.7 Records Retention – Content posted by the University or the public on an Official University Social Media Profile is a state record and is subject to the Southern Oregon University Records Retention schedule requirements unless it is content duplicated from another source or transitory information of temporary usefulness. University profile administrators are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable record retention requirements for content posted on their profiles.
- 1.8 Do not make any statements via Social Media on behalf of the University. Only link to or share official University statements.
- 1.9 Employee Personal Social Media Use: Violent or Threatening Content: While employees' personal Social Media profiles are generally outside the scope of this policy, the University has an obligation under Oregon law to maintain a safe and respectful workplace. Employees are therefore prohibited from using any personal or official Social Media account to post statements, images, or other content that includes threats of violence, advocacy of unlawful violence, or other communications that could reasonably be perceived as intimidating, harassing, or creating a hostile work environment for members of the University community. Such conduct is not protected by the First Amendment, may violate University policy and Oregon law, and may be subject to review and action by the Office of Human Resources, up to and including disciplinary action. Reports of violent or threatening content may also be referred to law enforcement when appropriate.

Consistent with the Academic Free Speech policy, in the exercise of Personal Social Media, faculty, staff, and students should manifest appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they do not speak on behalf of the university in accordance with university policy.

Students who engage in this type of behavior on personal or official Social Media accounts may also be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities (SAD.015) and subject to disciplinary action under University procedures.

2.1. Branding for University Social Media: the branding, visual identity and configuration of all Official University Social Media Profiles must comply with the guidelines posted to the Social Media Guidelines website.

2.2. Content for University Social Media (does not include photo policies) must accurately represent the institution's values, brand, mission, vision, and values, maintain a professional and inclusive tone, and comply with all university policies and applicable laws.

2.2.1 Administrators of the profile, when in need to request authorization to hide or delete any material in violation of this policy, or to block a user from a profile, should contact the University's division or department of marketing and communication responsible for managing the institution's primary channels, who will consult with the Office of General Counsel.

2.2.2 Administrators should only use Official University Social Media Profiles for University purposes and should not engage in personal or private activity under the guise of any Official University Social Media Profile.

2.2.3 Only public information may be posted on Official University Social Media Profiles. Official University Social Media Profiles should not be used for the communication of business transactions, including credit card or payment information, educational records protected by FERPA, medical records protected by HIPAA, or any other confidential information.

2.2.4 Social media content on an Official University Social Media Profile may sometimes include photographs, audio or video. Profile administrators are responsible for ensuring that Social Media content posted on the profile is not infringing on the intellectual property and privacy rights of others. Intellectual property rights of content shared by the public will be governed by federal copyright law, the terms of service of the Social Media provider, and/or University policies.

2.2.5 Administrators are encouraged to link to source material whenever possible. This activity will reduce the spread of misinformation and drive traffic.

2.2.6 Administrators of University Social Media Profiles should adhere to the policies for the Social Media platforms in which they are participating. These policies are constantly changing, and it is the administrator's duty to stay up to date.

2.2.7 All graphics, images and videos posted by Official University Social Media Profiles must comply with any approved applicable University branding standards.

2.3 Photos depicting minors should have photo releases signed by parents or guardians.

2.4 Administrators will not share any restricted-use photos.

2.5 Upon separation of employment, administrators must coordinate the transfer of administrative access to a permanent University employee.

This policy may be revised at any time without notice. All revisions supersede prior policy and are effective immediately upon approval.

#### **D. Relevant Authority**

N/A

## **E. Other Information**

N/A

The Policy Contact, defined above, will write and maintain the procedures related to this policy and these procedures will be made available within the Custodial Office.