College of Health Sciences and Professions (CHSP) Social Media Guidelines

In addition to following the OHIO guidelines below, all official CHSP account owners should:

1. Send account passwords to the communications director at chsp@ohio.edu
2. Keep sites open to all. If you believe a user should be blocked, please contact the communications office for input.
3. Follow CHSP brand guidelines.

Any account that uses CHSP logos, CHSP school/department/program names or CHSP-owned photos is considered an official account and should follow the proper procedures.

If you are participating in or running a social media account for yourself or an organization (such as a student organization) that may reference CHSP, please remember these guidelines:

• Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the positions, strategies, or opinions of Ohio University’s College of Health Sciences and Professions.”
• Do not use the University logo on a personal site. Respect the University brand, trademark, copyright, etc. See University Policy 15.015 on Copyright, University Policy 91.003 on Computer and Network Use, Policy 31.010 on Publication of Periodicals distributed to Off-Campus Audiences, and Policy 31.001 on News Media Relations.
• Use good judgment regarding content. Do not relay confidential information or information about another employee, student or faculty member. Remember, you may be held personally responsible for content.
• Do not respond on behalf of the college or as if you are a spokesperson for the college. If needed, refer questions to comments to the appropriate CHSP department.

OHIO’s Social Media Guidelines

Social media and online outlets provide Ohio University an opportunity to engage with internal and external audiences in a nontraditional way. Using these mediums, we do more than push out a message; we contribute to communities, get feedback from our audiences, and create a meaningful connection to those who follow us or make comments. It serves all of us well to have a solid understanding of what it means to be part of the larger social media community and to join the global conversation about our institution and our work.
This document contains guidelines for employees of Ohio University who are creating or contributing social media content as an official representative of Ohio University and/or on their personal time in reference to Ohio University. It is important that everyone who participates in social media on the University’s behalf understands and follows the guidelines, which may evolve as new technologies and social networking tools evolve.

**University-Affiliated Sites**

If you are in charge of or participate in your department’s social media presence, please keep these guidelines in mind:

- Review and share this document with all of those in your area who are engaged in social media.
- If the site is new for your area, report it to University Communications and Marketing (UCM) which keeps a list of all social media related to the University. It’s a good idea to become familiar with the different sites throughout the University – it’s a great way to share content and extend the reach of your news.
- Brand the site with the University logo. UCM can help ensure you are conforming to brand and identity guidelines, which is required.
- Acknowledge that you work for Ohio University. State clearly in your profile or other prominent place that your views are your own and not necessarily those of Ohio University.
- Be careful about grammar and spelling errors; consider having someone else check over your posts.
- Be diligent about fact checking. Never spread false or inaccurate information or speculate about a situation or something else that could happen in the future. Do not comment on rumors.
- Repost, link to or retweet content that comes from other sanctioned Ohio University sites. It’s a good way for departments, colleges and schools to share great content and expand the content’s reach.
- Be engaging and authentic.
- When possible, pause and let the community police very negative comments; if necessary, contact University Communications and Marketing (UCM) if a situation gets out of hand. Don’t fuel fires or engage in a war of words with posters. (See moderation section below.)
- Stick to your area of expertise.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments.
- Always pause and think before posting, but reply to comments in a timely manner when a response is appropriate.
- Respect proprietary information/content and confidentiality—particularly if you are involved in sensitive research.
- When disagreeing with others’ opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- Know and follow University policy on electronic communications and privacy policies.
Engagement Guidelines

**Listen.** Don’t jump into social media without goals or a plan. Discuss options, ideas, and strategies before engaging. Having a goal related to social media will guide discussions regarding what elements should be included in the social media plan on a case-by-case basis. Everyone will have a different path involving social media. Decide which social media community best fits the needs of the department. Get to know the community you would like to engage, and be an observer. Then engage respectfully with purpose and direction as you become more comfortable and confident in the environment.

**Read.** If you are engaging in social media for marketing purposes, find books on the subject (even if the media changes, the principles do not), go to conferences or webinars, read articles and more—get to know the medium. Follow bloggers who write about social media (or your given topic) and learn from those who have more experience.

**Update often.** There is no reason to have a social media presence if content is not updated frequently. If your area does not have the resources to maintain fresh, lively social media pages, it is better to not have them. As an alternative, you could work with UCM and ask them to post, tweet, etc. your news through the University’s main social media sites.

**Have your own guidelines.** While we ask people to follow these University social media guidelines, it is a good idea for each department, college or school that engages in social media to have their own policies as well. These policies would include who can post, how often the sites will be updated, how quickly you respond, off-limit topics, how negative comments will be handled, etc.

**Be transparent.** Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are blogging about your work, use your real name, identify that you work for Ohio University, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out.

**Be judicious.** Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to Ohio University. When in doubt, always ask first. See University Policy 93.002 on Record Management and Archiving, Policy 31.010 on Publication of Periodicals distributed to Off-Campus Audiences, and Policy 31.001 on News Media Relations. All statements must be true and not misleading. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties we are in litigation with without the appropriate approval. Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy and any other confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.
Perception is reality. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as an OHIO employee, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the University by our stakeholders, students and the general public—and perceptions about you by your colleagues and managers. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with Ohio University’s values and professional standards.

It’s a conversation. Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. Don’t be afraid to bring in your own personality and say what’s on your mind. Consider content that’s open-ended and invites response. Encourage comments. You can also broaden the conversation by citing others who are writing about the same topic and allowing your content to be shared or syndicated. Also, respond to comments quickly when a response is needed.

Are you adding value? Social communication from Ohio University sites should help our audiences. It should be thought provoking and build a sense of community. In general, social media content adds value if it enhances readers’ knowledge or skills, including but not limited to helping them to perform their job duties more effectively; solving problems; or helping people understand Ohio University better.

Be a good leader. Try to frame what you write to invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, you can’t really get them back. And once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it’s hard to stop.

When we make mistakes. If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront, and be quick with your correction.

If in doubt. If you’re about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don’t shrug it off and hit ‘send.’ Take a minute to review these guidelines, and try to figure out what’s bothering you, and then fix it. If you’re still unsure, you might want to discuss it with your manager or legal representative. Ultimately, what you publish is yours—as is the responsibility.

Moderation Guidelines

Moderation is the act of reviewing and approving content before and/or after it’s published on the site. Ohio University does not endorse or take responsibility for content posted by third parties.

Ohio University strives for a balanced online dialogue. We strive to support a vibrant and meaningful platform for multidirectional communication. But when we do moderate the conversation, we use the following guiding principles:
• If the content is positive or negative and in context to the conversation we approve it, regardless of whether it’s favorable or unfavorable.
• If the content is ugly, offensive, racist, vulgar, denigrating, threatening, or completely out of context, we reject it.
• If the content is wrong or inaccurate, we correct it and the commenter quickly and publicly but in a cordial manner.
• The following guidelines may be helpful should moderation be needed:

  • **OHIO content.** We do not moderate content we publish. This means we allow our social media authors to post directly without approval. However, content authors should recognize that they represent the University at all times when publishing content on social networks. Content authors should be clearly identified by name in order to foster better communication between the University’s social media authors. Also, a name associated with all social media accounts will ensure both authenticity and accountability.

  • **Anonymous content.** Anonymous content is content submitted as a comment, reply, or post to an Ohio University social media site under an identity not recognizably tied to an individual. Anonymous content can be both harmful and beneficial to a discussion. Anonymous commenters may be more inclined to speak openly and freely, without the fear of retribution, thereby fostering a more genuine and meaningful dialogue. At the same time, anonymous commenting does increase the likelihood of negative comments that may be offensive and not contribute value to the conversation. Authors of the original content will need to decide how to moderate anonymous comments. It is far easier to remove or edit a comment before it is published through moderation than it is to delete a comment after it has been published.

  • **Registered content.** Registered content is content submitted as a comment, reply, or post to an Ohio University social media site from a user who is a Facebook friend, a follower on Twitter, or is otherwise tied to a known identity. We do not require moderation of registered content before the content is published to the site, since all posts from a registered account will be tied to an individual. Registered content is directly published and content is moderated post-publishing. If a registered user is making inappropriate comments that are offensive, the original content author may take action to correct the comments or remind the user to be more cordial. However, since registered users are not anonymous, the need for corrective measures or moderation should be minimal.
Personal or Organizational Sites

If you are participating in or running a social media account for yourself or an organization (such as a student organization) that may reference Ohio University, please remember these guidelines:

• Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the positions, strategies, or opinions of Ohio University.”
• Do not use the University logo on a personal site. Respect the University brand, trademark, copyright, etc. See University Policy 15.015 on Copyright, University Policy 91.003 on Computer and Network Use, Policy 31.010 on Publication of Periodicals distributed to Off-Campus Audiences, and Policy 31.001 on News Media Relations.
• Use good judgment regarding content. Do not relay confidential information or information about another employee, student or faculty member. Remember, you may be held personally responsible for content.
• Do not respond on behalf of the university or as if you are a spokesperson for the University. If needed, refer questions to comments to the appropriate Ohio University department.