

Social Media Policies, Guidelines and Procedures for Official Miami University Social Media Sites

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About Social Media at Miami

Social media refers to online communication sites and services that allow Internet users to create and publish content. Many of these sites use personal profiles where users post information about themselves. The “social” in social media comes in as these individuals find others with similar interests and interact with them through online communities, sharing information and knowledge, offering support and networking. Social media also allows for the easy sharing and re-purposing of existing content and back and forth interaction, expanding the reach of messages and enabling others to share them with their friends and networks. Popular social media services include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, Vine, and Snapchat.

Social media has changed and will continue to change the way organizations and individuals communicate. With tools such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, blogs, Vine, Snapchat and Flickr, anyone with an Internet connection now has the ability to create a dynamic web presence, update it from wherever they are whenever they want, and share their content instantly with friends and followers around the world. Social media has given Miami University the opportunity to engage in ongoing “conversations” with our students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, colleagues, fans and friends about what is most important to them, extending and connecting the community found on the Miami campus to the world.

Miami University supports the use of social media by employees as part of their official duties to connect and engage with students, parents, colleagues, alumni, fans, donors, prospective students and prospective parents and other audiences. This document contains policies, guidelines, recommendations and resource information to help employees in setting up, maintaining, managing, and monitoring official Miami sites in a way that encourages engagement while providing the parameters to protect and enhance Miami’s reputation.

Although some of these policies and guidelines are unique to Miami, Miami has modeled parts of them on what are considered the best practices of other institutions of higher learning. Many universities are working together in this way to provide consistency across the industry. Yet, just as social media is constantly changing, these policies and guidelines will also continue to evolve. It is important to refer to them frequently for new information.

Please direct questions, concerns or suggestions to Kelly.Bennett@MiamiOH.edu, who oversees Miami social media, in the Office of University Communications and Marketing, which has overarching responsibility for official Miami University social media sites.

Section I: Miami Social Media Policies

Overarching Miami Social Media Site Policy for creation of a social media site.

- 1) **Review and be familiar with** all policies, guidelines and procedures for Miami social media sites as outlined herein.
- 2) **Secure approval.** Fill out the social media application form found on the final page of this section and submit to socialmedia@miamioh.edu and include the names of the primary and backup site contacts.
- 3) **Determine type of site.** Decide if the social media site is a closed site (only members that meet a specific criteria are allowed access) or an open site (all members of the public are allowed access).

For specific questions contact Kelly Bennett (Kelly.Bennett@MiamiOH.edu).

Social Media Content Policies and Disclaimer

As a public university, Miami respects freedom of speech and will not violate First Amendment laws, so posts should not be removed unless they betray protected information, are spam or off-topic, or are otherwise illegal.

Under the First Amendment, posts on a typical, open social media site (i.e., the Miami Facebook page) cannot be limited based on the content of the speech/expression, with the exception of posts that break laws or that materially interrupt the work and discipline of the university or interfere with the opportunity of other students to obtain an education.

In a closed site (such as the Miami Class of 2018 site for accepted students) the site administrator cannot limit the content (what is said) of a post, but can determine:

- a) Who can post
- b) How long posts can stay up
- c) Number of times a person can post
- d) The topics discussed

Each Miami University Facebook site must contain the following disclaimer in the "About" section:

"We welcome your opinions, and encourage open discussion about the topics we post. If we become aware of messages that contain advertising, are off-topic, are intended to defame, infringe someone's rights, or are violations of the law, we reserve the right to remove them."

Social Media Policy for Crisis Communications and Major Announcements

In the event of a crisis situation, all official posts and tweets will come from the @MiamiUniversity twitter and/or Miami University Facebook pages. From there, other university social media sites may share that information. **Never post unapproved information or messages that are not issued by central university administration.** Doing so could jeopardize the safety of individuals or result in false information being attributed or disseminated.

In the event of a major announcement (not an urgent crisis), information should not be mentioned on social media until it has been made official and posted on <http://MiamiOH.edu/News> or on Miami's primary, central social media sites. Once official, information may be shared through other university social media outlets.

Social media is often the first source of major news; frequently, news or situations go "viral." Often, social media actual "creates" the news or makes a story more significant than it warrants. The instantaneous nature of social media also means audiences expect an instantaneous response from organizations during an urgent or crisis situation, often before the organizations themselves have the facts.

To maintain credibility in situations confirmed to involve Miami students or employees, Miami strives to post the information that is available and confirmed by authorities such as law enforcement. If there is not yet confirmed information, Miami will share that the university: 1) is aware of the situation, 2) will post accurate information on the homepage as soon as it is confirmed through appropriate authorities, and 3) will convey messages critical to the safety of the community. Until accurate information is available, the university will monitor its social media sites and other news and social sites to carefully correct misinformation.

University Policies & Protected Information Policies Related or Connected to Social Media

When engaging in any social media activity as part of official duties at Miami, ***employees are governed by the same policies that govern all other electronic communications. Employees must not violate university computing, privacy, IT,***

FERPA, NCAA, intellectual property, branding, freedom of speech or other state, local or federal policies and laws.

This section applies to disclosure of protected information while engaging in social media activity (1) during employment at or while conducting activities for Miami, or (2) as part of the employee's official duties. Such employees/individuals must follow all applicable state, federal, and local laws, such as FERPA, NCAA, and HIPAA, and policies found in university faculty and staff handbooks and the brand identification and standards manual. **Any content that violates any of these, or contains/leads to a student's private or personal information, is strictly prohibited** and should not be posted by employees or others using the site. Violations must be reported immediately to University Communications and Marketing.

FERPA. Protect confidential information covered by privacy laws, especially [FERPA](#): "The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education." (See link in previous section, above.)

Those who conduct social media activities for Miami must not engage in any conversations or post any information regarding student records. Some examples of student records include names, admission status, GPA, Social Security numbers, and any other information that would be covered by FERPA. If students request help, employees can direct them to a secure discussion platform, such as phone, email, or a link for more information.

HIPAA. Protect confidential medical records as specified by [HIPAA](#): "The privacy rule protects all '*individually identifiable health information*' held or transmitted by a covered entity or its business associate, in any form or media, whether electronic, paper, or oral." Examples of protected information include: "...the individual's past, present or future physical or mental health condition, the provision of health care to the individual, or, the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe can be used to identify the individual."

NCAA. Miami employees and individuals are required to abide by NCAA regulations when interacting and communicating on social media platforms. Employees may not contact (i.e., tweet or friend/like) prospective student-athletes on social media until after they have signed a National Letter of Intent with the school. Please contact Miami's Office of Intercollegiate Athletics for any clarification or questions in connection with this policy.

Personal Business Transactions. The university does not endorse or use any social network Internet communication service or media sharing service as a secure means of communication for online business transactions or matters involving personal information. The university will not ask for, nor may an individual send,

credit card or payment information, classified information, privileged information, private information or information subject to non-disclosure agreements via any social network Internet communication service.

Copyright and Fair Use. Respect copyright law. "Copyright, a form of intellectual property law, protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, such as poetry, novels, movies, songs, computer software, and architecture. Copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems, or methods of operation, although it may protect the way these things are expressed." ([read more](#)). Fair use allows portions of certain works to be used without consent under specific situations; however, "The safest course is always to get permission from the copyright owner before using copyrighted material." ([read more](#)).

Resources/Links for Internal and External Social Media-Related Policies

Employees whose official duties include social media monitoring, management, or content must be familiar with the following before engaging in any official social media activity:

Internal:

- Miami Branding: [Miami Identification and Standards Manual](#)
- Responsible Computing: [Policy on Responsible Computing](#)
- Privacy at Miami: [Privacy Statement](#)
- Information Technology: [IT Policies, Standards, Procedures and Guidelines](#)
- FERPA: <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/generalcounsel/ferpa/>
- Intellectual Property: <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/generalcounsel/intellectualproperty/>
- Employee Liability: <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/generalcounsel/employeeability/>

External:

- HIPAA: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/summary/>
- First Amendment: http://www.usconstitution.net/xconst_Am
- Copyright: <http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/>

Miami Social Media Branding/Identity and Official Site Name Policies

All official Miami University social media accounts must follow Miami identity standards, which are outlined in full in the Miami University Identification Standards Manual (online at www.MiamiOH.edu/ucm), of which this social media document is also a part.

Miami colleges, programs, departments and business units must use official Miami social media icons on official social media sites to visually connect with the university, differentiate from competing accounts, and establish uniform quality, credibility and user experiences. The simplest graphics that represent the Miami brand should be used so that sites can be readily identified at a glance. For example:

Yes:



No:



Facebook

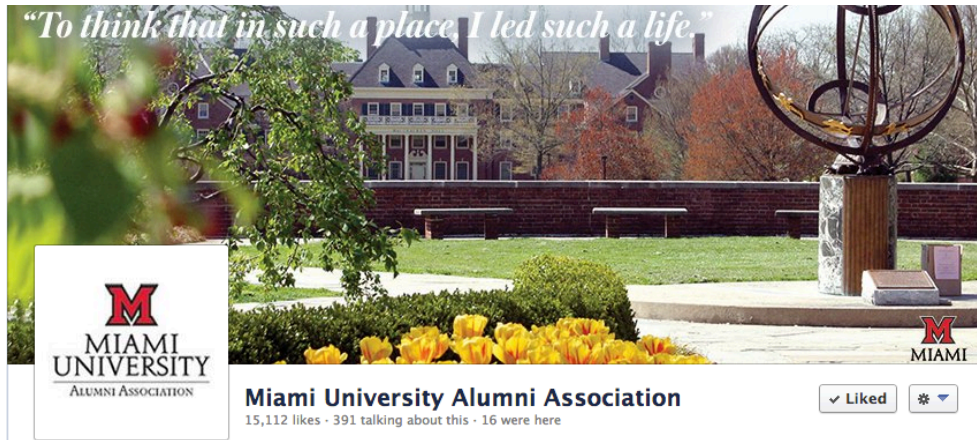
Fan Page Name: Must be titled "Miami University Name of Department or Organization". This will indicate the site is officially associated with Miami, enhancing its credibility. It will also help users find the page more easily and narrow the search.

Profile Picture: Miami Facebook accounts that represent the university should have the branded logo incorporated within the profile picture, with the specific department or organization listed beneath. The more branded the profile pictures that use the Miami University colors and font are, the more official the account looks and the more likely it is to be found and recognized.

Cover photo: Cover photos can be customized by department or area. If it's a school or college, it is suggested to use a "beauty shot" of the building that represents that division, as those are often instantly recognized. Every time a cover photo is updated, the new photo appears in the newsfeed of those who like the page, which can be a great way to promote an event. Photographs of individuals should be used with permission; photographs owned by Miami University (and available on the [WebDAM](#) site managed by University Communications and Marketing) may be used at any time. Copyrighted material can be used only with permission.

Note: Cover photos are 851 pixels wide and 315 pixels tall.

Examples of Facebook cover photos with required logo treatment:



Twitter

Profile Picture

Header

Background



Twitter Handle: In 2012 Miami University changed its website domain name to www.MiamiOH.edu. This change affected Miami social media, especially Twitter. For consistency with university brand standards, ease in finding the sites, stronger visibility due to the MiamiOH web domain name, and to officially connect an account to Miami, official Miami twitter handles should be named @MiamiOH_ followed by the name of the department or organization (or its acronym). Miami's central/main twitter account is the only one titled @MiamiUniversity.

Twitter Username: The username must be "Miami University Name of Department or Organization" and should be consistent with the Facebook fan page name.

Twitter Bio: The bio should include the phrase "Official twitter for Miami University _____", a link to your website, hashtag used (if any), information about your department, and/or reasons to follow you.

Profile Picture: For the purpose of not confusing followers, the primary Miami University twitter account @MiamiUniversity should be the only account to use the solo beveled "M" for the profile image. Other accounts should use their official logo, the M with a name beneath (see above), or an image to represent their account. See identity guidelines website for details <http://www.miamioh.edu/ucm> or contact University Communications and Marketing.

Example:



Header Photo: The header photo must appear behind the profile photo, as with the Facebook cover photo example shown in the previous section. If the account is for a school or college, it is suggested to use a "beauty shot" of the building that represents that division, but the department may choose to use this space as they wish.



Background Design: Since most people use mobile devices or third-party sites to view Twitter, a background is not always visible. However, using the default twitter background looks unprofessional and is likely to result in fewer followers. Use branded designs (the social media manager can assist you here) and colors such as those listed below to designate the account as an official Miami University site:

Default Twitter Background:



Miami University Branded Colors:



Section II: Keys to an Effective Miami Social Media Site: **Best Practices & Helpful Resources**

How Miami University is Using Social Media

Miami has been an early and enthusiastic adopter of social media. Used effectively, social media sites build reputation and are excellent tools for engaging audiences and enhancing a brand's image and awareness. These tools enable us to share what is happening on campus with the world, let us hear directly and immediately from the Miami community about what is important to them, and allows us to respond. This two-way "conversation" is what differentiates social media from traditional forms of communication. There is less "control" of message with social media, but more opportunity to interact with our constituents. Miami University's primary official social media presences are:

- <http://www.facebook.com/MiamiUniversity>
- <http://twitter.com/MiamiUniversity/>
- <http://instagram.com/miamiuniversity/>
- <http://pinterest.com/miamiuniversity>
- <http://www.youtube.com/miamiuniversity>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/edu/miamiuniversity>
- <https://vine.co/Miami.University>
- [Snapchat: MiamiUniversity](#)

Have a plan!

1. Define your goals

Before jumping into social media for a department, program or office, determine what the goals are for the site. Understanding the will help with choosing the best type of site and create relevant content to interact with an audience. For example: is the goal to engage a specific audience, or multiple audiences? Does the department want to seek input about programs or promote events? In some cases, determining goals can help discover whether a social media site is needed at all.

2. Create a strategy by defining:

- With whom the department wishes to engage
- What content the department wishes to share and which mediums will serve it best
- How the department will measure success

3. Listen & Observe

All social media platforms have their own styles and expectations. The best way to establish an effective site is to try out social media firsthand; visit other sites; maintain a personal account unaffiliated with the university; and in general become familiar with how social media is used before creating an official one at Miami.

4. Choose a (social media) platform and start small!

The short, 140-character “tweets” of Twitter may or may not work for a department. Rich content such as photos, videos and other well-developed assets might be best shared via a Facebook fan page. First, choose a single platform that best meets goals and focus on building a strong presence on one of them before offering more. Social media requires time and resources – don’t try to do it all at once!

Build out a blog, Twitter stream, Flickr profile, LinkedIn, Facebook page or whichever social media site is chosen and spend time populating it for several weeks and sharing it with a small group that can provide comments. Ideally, you will want to have members of your primary intended audience test it.

7. Launch and Promote

You’re ready for interactive communication! Use traditional means, such as email lists and notices on the department website to notify potential audiences that you have a social media presence. Also, notify others with similar social media presences that the site is live; one of the best ways to do this is to link to appropriate or relevant sites and mention them in posts. For example, the Miami Art Museum, in establishing a new Facebook page, might want to post on Miami’s Facebook site and perhaps the Miami LinkedIn page, where alumni can discover it. Include easy-to-find links/icons to your social media presence on the area’s website.

8. Stick to your strategy and look

There will be temptation, especially early on, to make changes to a social media presence. Resist the temptation, at least initially, and stay with the plan until the department can effectively determine whether the site is working well. Only once you have enough time, posts, data and metrics should adjustments be made.

9. Make adjustments as needed

Many social media sites come with easy-to-use tracking tools, so areas can see which posts are viewed and shared most, which generate comments, which are irritating, popular, or ignored. Be prepared to re-align strategy in response to who is viewing the site, using data and metrics to help drive decisions.

Be respectful

Employees should strive for accuracy, professionalism and respectfulness at all times on social media sites. Employees must not engage in arguments on sites; employees must share accurate information to avoid misinformation and rumors.

Be transparent

Employees should make it clear that they are blogging/tweeting/posting, etc. in their official role as an employee of Miami. One of the great benefits of social media is that the individuals maintaining social media sites personalize large and complex organizations. Employees should use their own “voice.” It is also best not to ghostwrite posts for supervisors. Users are savvy and can recognize an inauthentic response or message. However, employees should check with supervisors regarding messages and responses to be sure they are conveying appropriate and accurate information.

Remember: The Audience is Bigger Than You Think!

Although Miami’s primary audiences may be prospective students, parents, current students, colleagues, peers, donors, state legislators and alumni, social media content can instantly reach a national audience. **Employees should remember that anything shared within social media, even within a closed network, is not private.** It can be shared, stored and spread globally. Employees should not post anything online that they would not post on behalf of the university on the front page of a newspaper or broadcasted on television news.

Listen

Being a consumer of social media is essential to the ability to be a successful producer of social media content. Employees should “listen” to online conversations on preferred tools – be they blogs, Twitter, Facebook or anything else – to maintain a clear and current understanding of what is relevant and of interest to their

community. Sharing relevant information in response to what is trending enhances the site's credibility by informing community members.

Monitor Sites

Social media presence requires diligent “care and feeding.” If a department does not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day, and to post fresh content several times a week, it should NOT develop a site, as its image will suffer more harm from a neglected site than not having a site at all. Without regular monitoring, information that might be protected or even illegal might be missed. Miami is ultimately responsible for information that is posted, and in some cases may need to take action. If the department cannot make the time commitment, it should use already established Miami University social media sites for key messages and information, instead. UCM can help share information. Image-wise, a site is only as interesting as its last post – if that post is several months old, it will reflect poorly on the department.

Be Timely in Urgent Situations, Track Miami's Central Site

One of the great benefits of social media is the ability to share information almost instantly with a global audience. This timeliness is also one of the expectations of that audience. Be prepared to move quickly in response to emergencies or new developments by linking to any official information provided by central administration. **However, as outlined in the policies section, never post any unapproved, non-central information in a crisis or urgent situation affecting the university as a whole – link only to centrally approved announcements to protect individuals, ensure accuracy, limit liability, and quell rumors.**

Comment and Engage

As consumers and producers of social media, employees can offer comments on interesting posts relating to the topics relevant to their area – for example, The College of Creative Arts might share an article about careers available for music majors – and share the good work of students or professors. However, an employee must have any required permission before sharing, as privacy laws must be followed, and others may not want their photo or name used on the site. Personal information about others is not permitted. **If employees see a post that they think requires or would benefit from an official Miami response**, they should contact University News and Communications at newsinfo@MiamiOH.edu or 513-529-7592.

Monitor Comments, But Do Not Remove Posts

A social media site without comments isn't very social. An employee should be prepared to accept and respond to comments. As a public university, Miami must respect freedom of speech and not violate First Amendment laws, so posts should not be removed unless they betray protected information or are otherwise illegal. Even posts that appear to be offensive or threatening should not be removed, as they may, in fact, need to be investigated. Such posts should be reported as quickly

as possible to UCM for review. Respond to negative posts or misinformation respectfully, with correct information, or take a conversation “offline” by responding directly to the poster’s account, rather than using the open forum. Often, these actions will result in the poster voluntarily removing the post. If you have concerns or questions about comments, notify University Communications and Marketing. **If you see what appears to be a threat and have any concern about safety, contact Miami University Police.**

Separate Personal from Professional

Balancing a professional and personal social media presences can be tricky, particularly if a person is active in both arenas. Content that might be of interest to personal friends is not always appropriate or relevant to the audience(s) of a Miami site.

If employees maintain personal and work social media accounts, they should take care to *verify which account they are logged into* before posting. Many high-profile social media blunders have come from an individual making a post from what they thought was a personal account only to later discover it was posted to an official work account.

Be a Valued Source and Community Member

If a site is only used to promote, it will quickly lose credibility. Sites should share the helpful or interesting information from trusted sources outside of Miami.

Vary Posts

Keep sites exciting by using various forms of media including links, photos, and videos. Almost every post should include a visual of some kind. Posts result in much more engagement if there is something to catch the audience’s eye.

Expand the Impact: Tell UCM About Exciting New Content!

Miami has a broad audience of students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, sports fans and others keeping connected with the university via social media. Expand impact and reach of content by sharing it through other Miami sites and mediums. When a site is applied for/registered (which is required, see form at the end of this section), it will then be added to the [Miami University Social Media Directory](#) and site administrators will be invited to join the Miami Social Media Council.

Utilize social media site-specific terms of service

All social media sites have policies about how they will or will not use content, what is and is not allowed, etc. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these policies before a site is launched. Here are links to policies for some of the more popular platforms:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Flickr](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)
- [Wordpress](#)
- [Blogger](#)
- [Pinterest](#)

If you have any questions about social media best practices, or need guidance when problems or issues of concern arise, reach out to Kelly Bennett (Kelly.Bennett@miamioh.edu) in UCM.

Take Advantage of Social Media Branding Resources!

Using the Facebook Timeline for Brand Pages: New Feature Details

<http://techcrunch.com/2012/02/29/how-to-use-timeline-for-pages/>
<http://techcrunch.com/2012/02/29/how-to-use-timeline-for-pages/>
<http://techcrunch.com/2012/02/29/how-to-use-timeline-for-pages/>

Other Resources for Universities Using Social Media:

<http://mashable.com/2011/10/10/universities-social-media/>
<http://mashable.com/2011/10/10/universities-social-media/>

- [Twitter Guide](#)
- [Facebook Guide](#)
- [Google+ Cheat Sheet](#)
- [LinkedIn Blog \(Tips\)](#)
- [LinkedIn Groups "How-To Video"](#)
- [About YouTube](#)
- [Flickr Tour](#)

Contacts

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Miami Official Social Media Site

Application/Registration Form

University Communications and Marketing must receive an application for any requested official Miami social media site to catalog the site, include it in the directory, and officially connect it with Miami, which, in turn, helps the university promote the site. The process should begin by establishing objectives for the site and reviewing the information in this document. Consider:

What does the department or area wish to accomplish and how much time can be devoted to the site?

If you simply want to promote an event or share news about your department, a website or an e-newsletter, submitting content for Miami University's existing social media sites might be a better choice for you. Social media outposts such as those on Facebook and Twitter require daily maintenance and a desire to engage with others. Also, sites that exist merely to promote events or a specific agenda quickly lose credibility.

Whom do you want to reach?

Determine out the type of audiences you want to have a conversation to help determine which social media platforms are best for you.

Department/Office/Area _____

Primary Content Administrator, Name, Phone, Email:

Backup Administrator Name, Phone, Email:

Which social media platform(s) are you requesting?

Are you more interested in an ongoing interaction/conversation with your audiences, or in promoting events or messages about your area?

Please describe your experience, personal or professional, with the platform you are requesting: _____

With what audience(s) would you like to engage?

How much time can your department devote to maintaining the platform?

What is the URL of your current website? _____

What is the URL of your social media site? _____

In providing this form to University Communications and Marketing, the content administrator, back-up administrator and department head/supervisor agree to adhere to all social media policies as set forth in the Miami Identification and Standards Manual (www.MiamiOH.edu/UCM)

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