

UW Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices

- What are the University of Wyoming administrative social media accounts?
- What are the guidelines and best practices on social media?
 1. Rules and Regulations
 2. Best Practices
- How should I interact and respond to others?
 1. Dealing with Community Comments

What are the University of Wyoming administrative social media accounts?

UW Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uwpride>

UW Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uofwyoming/>

UW Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uwyonews>

UW YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/universityofwyoming>

UW LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-wyoming/>

UW TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@uofwyoming>

What are the guidelines and best practices on social media?

1. Rules and Regulations

- **Maintain Confidentiality**
Observe all state or federal regulations, such as [FERPA](#), [HIPAA](#) and [University Administrative Policy Statements](#). Do not post personally identifiable information or protected health information.
- **UW Core Values**
Communicators should be mindful of UW's Vision and Values. Do not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or entity. Individuals may be held personally liable for posting such material. For more specific guidance, see the [Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation Policy](#).
- **UW Brand Standards**
The [UW Brand Standards Manual](#) (BSM) provides institutional guidelines for use of the UW brand elements including the UW signature, colors, photography and UW brand bar. The scope of the BSM encompasses all UW academic and administrative units with operational monies administered by UW. To ensure the integrity of the university's brand, all units must adhere to the institutional policies and guidelines.
- **UW Regulations**
Adherence to the UW Regulations is also mandatory for employees of the University of Wyoming. There are policies concerning proper use of computing and data

communication facilities operated by the [Division of Information Technology](#) (which includes our connection to the internet and all UW-owned equipment).

- **Other Codes of Conduct**

Certain UW organizations may have additional codes of conduct or agreements signed between employees and UW. For instance, IT employees sign an IT confidentiality agreement that provides guidelines on the acceptable use of the technology and data to which they have access. For more information, students and employees may also refer to existing regulations outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Employee Handbook](#) (UW login required). Make sure to familiarize yourself with and adhere to [UW's privacy policies](#).

- **Copyright and Intellectual Property**

Be cautious when posting work that may still be owned by a third party. Types of work that may be copyrighted include books, articles, pictures, photographs, songs, videos, etc. If a work is owned by a third party, please contact the respective owner or the Copyright Clearance Center at www.copyright.com to obtain the necessary permissions. Employees of UW who have questions regarding copyright issues may consider contacting [UW's General Counsel Office](#). Don't use photos of people without their permission. Make sure you obtain a model release for individuals who appear in photos that you are sharing on social media sites. The UW Model Release form is available at <http://www.uwyo.edu/publicrelations/files/docs/model-release.pdf>. Always give credit to the original authors/creators and/or link to the original source when at all possible. Do not post or share work (videos, articles, writings, etc.) in a manner that construes your department or the university as the author/creator of such work.

- **Trademarks and Licensing**

University of Wyoming owns and controls its name(s) and other marks, logos, insignias, seal, designs and symbols. Unauthorized use of these trademarks is prohibited by UW trademark and licensing policies (see [University of Wyoming Trademark and Policies](#)) and is subject to civil and criminal penalties. UW reserves the right to assess financial penalties, issue cease and desist orders, or take other legal action. Using a company or third-party name, logo or other trademark in a manner that may mislead, confuse or deceive others as to an association or partnership when none exists may be considered an infringement. Be careful and thoughtful as to what the actual relationship is between the university and a third party. Understand your intent for including their mark on your site. Employees should contact [UW's General Counsel Office](#) if they are unclear or have questions relating to intellectual property.

- **Presidential Directives**

[Presidential Directives](#), similar to UW regulations, provide policies and procedures for UW personnel.

- **Terms of Service/Use**

Make sure to familiarize yourself with and adhere to each social media platforms terms of service/use (e.g., [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#)).

2. Best Practices

- **Be Thoughtful About Your Posts**

There is no expectation of privacy when using social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on both you and UW. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online.

- **Remember Your Audience**

A presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, patients and their families, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups.

- **Strive for Accuracy**

Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. Make sure your links work. These are especially important if posting on behalf of UW in any capacity.

- **Create Dialogue - Don't Just Push Content**

Give your fans and supporters something to respond to or act upon. Thank people for input and feedback, including negative feedback.

- **Be Human**

People prefer interacting with a human, even when you are acting for or representing an entity/organization rather than as an individual. Be relevant and timely and add value! That means being aware of conversations that are already going on without you.

How should I interact and respond with others?

By providing platforms for people who aren't UW employees to express themselves, the university is also inviting input of all types – including harsh criticism and false information. Therefore, UW employees involved in social media in their official capacities need to be prepared to respond to such postings. Such rules or guidelines could include:

- Keep it clean: Avoid language that is obscene, vulgar, lewd or sexually oriented.
- If the site is limited to specific topics, don't post off-topic.
- No postings encouraging illegal activity.
- Be truthful.
- Be nice: No racism, sexism or any other sort of -ism that degrades another person.
- No spam: No postings of a commercial nature.
- Comment is not directly related to the posted content

A standard disclaimer, such as the following, should be included within the “About” tab or other information area regarding the owner of the account, if such an area is provided:

As Cowboys, our grit, optimism, determination and curiosity are what drive the university to deliver social media content that educates, entertains and informs our Cowboy community at large. All viewpoints are welcome, and comments will not be removed based on the viewpoints expressed, provided the comments otherwise comply with this policy. However, the social media moderators of this official university channel reserve the right to remove any user content that is not directly related to the purpose of our social media content. Hate speech, discrimination, harassment, name-calling, bullying, profanity, and comments that threaten the safety of any individual or group will not be tolerated and may be removed. Any comments in violation of local, state, or federal law may be removed. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the University of Wyoming or its constituents.

Please note that this is an internet page on facebook.com [or twitter.com, Instagram.com, etc.]. The owner of the platform operates facebook.com [or twitter.com, Instagram.com, etc.] and has its own set of standards concerning what may, and may not, be posted and the actions that it may take regarding posts that violate those standards. The platform may apply its own standards to remove comments, and the University of Wyoming does not control or direct the platform's application of its own community standards.

1. Dealing with community comments

- **Should I respond?**

If there's a post about the university, evaluate it. If it's positive, you can either let it stand or concur with it, possibly providing additional insight. If it's negative, your decision about whether to respond should depend upon several factors:

- It it's a site dedicated to bashing and degrading others, it's probably best to avoid responding and simply monitor the situation.
- If the posting is a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature, it's probably best to avoid responding.
- If there is erroneous information in the posting, and the situation doesn't meet either of the above two criteria, you should probably respond with factual information.
- If the posting is a result of a negative experience from of UW's stakeholders, you should probably respond in an attempt to rectify the situation.

- **How do I respond?**

Be transparent and disclose your role at UW. Identify your comments as those of yourself only and not representing the university as a whole. Watch your tone and respond in a professional, respectful manner.

- **What are the consequences?**

If you find that a post violated the rules you have set, and you choose to remove it, be aware of some possible outcomes:

- **Trolling:** A member may become angry and post more negative comments in an attempt to undermine productive conversation. This can be eliminated by banning a profile.
- **Accusation of censorship or violation of First Amendment rights:** This can be a difficult situation to handle and should be taken on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes, if you ignore the poster and continue to remove unproductive or negative posts, the issue will resolve itself. Employees should also consider contacting [UW's General Counsel Office](#) for further advice when faced with accusations of violations of First Amendment rights.
- **Statement of Intent:** If you remove a post and feel the need to explain it, a general statement indicating the forum's purpose may be needed. This can help quell any disagreement, as well as spark conversation that will give insight into what your members want from the conversation.