Guidelines for University Employees Who Manage
Official University Social Media Accounts

The following guidelines apply to all employees of the University of Mississippi who seek to launch and manage Official University Social Media Accounts. Note that these guidelines do not apply to employees' create and use personal social media accounts. Click here for assistance and a list of best practices for employees' personal social media accounts (INSERT LINK HERE TO BEST PRACTICES FOR UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES' PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT)

1. **Notify the university.** Fill out the social media application (INSERT LINK HERE TO SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION INCLUDED AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS DOCUMENT) to add your Official University Social Media Account to the university's social media registry, which is managed by University Marketing & Communications.

2. **Keep your personal and UM accounts separate.** If you plan on posting to your department, school, or college's Official University Social Media Account using your personal cell phone, you must be extremely careful to separate your personal account from the official university account.

   All Official University Social Media Accounts should be registered to a shared or general email address that can be accessed by more than one person within the relevant unit or department. Previously established UM email addresses are preferred (ex: "getsocial@olemiss.edu"). This information should be submitted along with the Social Media Application (INSERT LINK HERE TO SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION).

   If you're expected to manage multiple accounts, social media management tools like Hootsuite or Sprinklr may be worth exploring. Feel free to reach out to University Marketing & Communications if you have any questions or would be interested in learning about our enterprise social media management account.

3. **Use conversational language on official UM accounts.** We're Southern and hospitable, and our social media outlets should reflect that. "We," "Our," "Y'all," etc. Throw out Associated Press Style and be friendly — especially if you're targeting current or prospective students.

4. **Establish guidelines on your platforms.** Folks with whom we're interacting on social have opinions (sometimes, lots of opinions!). Allow your followers to express their opinions freely, but they should understand community expectations. Map out guidelines in your "about" sections or by providing links on your social media platforms. Check out the official comments policy of the University of Mississippi Facebook page. It's quite similar to the official comments policy of the University of Mississippi Instagram account. If negativity becomes a real concern on one of your accounts, take a look at this document (INSERT LINK HERE TO DEPAUL SITE ON NEGATIVITY).

5. **Stay vigilant and monitor comments closely.** Social media, regardless of the platform, isn't a 9-to-5 job — it requires constant monitoring and never takes a break for the holidays. Your audiences expect a timely response if they have a question or an issue arises, so be prepared to devote resources to social media monitoring. If you see a post or a comment that you think requires an official response, please contact University Marketing & Communications at (662) 915-2101 or send an email to umpr@olemiss.edu (which will lead to a reply message within one business day).

6. **Identify a back-up.** Primary administrative rights for Official University Social Media Accounts should be assigned only to university employees. Official University Social Media Accounts should have a Primary and Secondary administrator to ensure that the site is managed consistently. Should the Primary administrator be unavailable, the Secondary administrator will manage the account to keep it current and monitor activity on the site. At least one of the administrators should be a permanent, full-time university employee.

7. **Think of social media as a conversation.** Talk *with* your audiences, not *at* them. Don't just talk about your respective department or organization, spark conversation. Keep in mind that the overall goal (INSERT LINK HERE TO SOCIAL MEDIA MISSION STATEMENT) is to build an online community. Show them that you care about them. Ask for their opinions and encourage the exchange of ideas. The ability to engage with your audience is what makes social media so unique — embrace it! Looking to generate some content ideas? Become a part of our Official Ole Miss Social Media Slack Channel (just for social media managers at Ole Miss).

8. **Be respectful.** Understand that the conversations you promote on any social media site could spark discussions of opposing ideas. Your responses to those ideas should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect not only upon your department or organization, but also the University of Mississippi. As a university, we strive to uphold the UM Creed and our voices on social media should reflect those values. If you are unsure how or whether to respond to a thread on your site, feel free to reach out to University Marketing & Communications to discuss how best to proceed.

9. **Strive for accuracy.** Check and double-check your facts before posting them on social media. Review your posts for grammar and spelling.

10. **Spread the love.** Creating your own content to sustain an official social media account can be demanding. We have hundreds of other official Ole Miss online communities (INSERT LINK TO OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT DIRECTORY) that do a great job of sharing content that would most likely be of interest to your audience. Follow those accounts and share the best of their content. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest (and plenty of others) support user tagging. Tag and mention other accounts when necessary. Not only is it proper social media etiquette, but you may find that they'll reciprocate the gesture. For example, if your department is hosting an event at The Inn at Ole Miss and you want to post about the event on your departmental Twitter account, find the Inn on Twitter (@TheInnatOleMiss) and tag them

in your tweet. They'll most likely retweet that message, thus sending out your initial tweet to all of their followers!

11. **Stay trendy**. What's cool with the youngsters these days? If you're trying to connect with current or prospective University of Mississippi students, be sure to stay abreast of online trends and current lingo.

12. **Be valuable.** Before posting, ask yourself whether the intended post will be of interest or add value to your community. Social media users are flooded with thousands of messages each day, so be sure you're providing stimulating content that is unique and relvant to your followers. Need a better understanding of what's important to your audience? Contact us.

13. **Develop a content calendar.** It's perhaps one of the best pieces of advice we ever received. Launching a social media account for a university entity demands a lot of care and feeding, but maintaining a high level of engagement is critical and can be tough if you don't know what you'll say each day. We have plenty of examples of content calendars at University Marketing & Communications, and we can even develop content that can be shared on your account. Help us help you!

14. **Evaluate regularly.** Review your account's effectiveness regularly. This practice will help you to learn more about your audience, and it may result in more followers down the road once you begin to understand the content they want to consume. Most platforms (like Twitter and Facebook) include native analytics and are easy to use.

15. **Be consistent.** In all posts (graphics, videos, images, etc.), be sure your design and distribution are consistent.

16. **Protect the institution.** Posts on social media sites should protect the university's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and good taste. No individual unit should construe its social media site as representing the university as a whole, nor should it criticize the university in any way. Consider this when naming social media pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post. Names, profile images and posts should be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than the institution as a whole. Need help creating a look for your social media sites? Click here (INSERT LINK HERE TO DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS).

17. **Do not use the university's name to promote a product, cause or political party or candidate**. University of Mississippi employees and departments are not authorized to enter into digital marketing and advertising agreements or sponsorships or without prior authorization and approval of the Office of Procurement Services. Any unit wishing to purchase advertising services from social media sites, or from any type of publication, must follow all applicable rules and policies governing both the public relations considerations and the procurement and contracting considerations related to such services.

Contact Us

To schedule a social media consultation with the Ole Miss Social Media team or if you have questions about how we utilize social media, contact Webb Lewis at (662) 915-5085.

To request a meeting about brand standards, marks and logos, contact Dennis Irwin at (662) 915-5079.

If you see something online that you think our team may need to know about, contact [University Marketing & Communications](#) at (662) 915-2101.

All students, faculty and staff have access to the [University Marketing & Communications Creative Toolbox.](#) (Note: This toolbox will be updated with new assets and resources in the summer of 2020.)

Social Media Application

Before launching your Official University Social Media Account, complete the social media application (INSERT LINK TO SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION FORM HERE). It's a simple form and is the first step to becoming recognized as an official university account.

Before completing the application below, consider the following questions:

1. Do we have the personnel available to maintain a social media account at a consistent, professional level of engagement? Does that person have the time to manage this account, and keep it timely? Who is responsible for keeping tabs on the account or posting content as needed on the weekends?

2. Who is our audience? What platform works best for our unit and our target audience(s)?

3. What kind of content will we share? Do we have enough unique content that will allow us to set our unit apart from any other similar accounts?

4. What do we hope to accomplish with this account?

5. How will we define success for this account?

6. What happens when the Primary administrator goes on vacation? What happens when the administrator leaves the university?

7. Who should we talk to before we launch a social media account?

8. What email account should be used to administer the account?

It's also important to clearly and concisely identify your unit when naming your social media presence. Do not name your social media page in such a way that it may be confused with a general social media page representing the entire University of Mississippi, or with any other UM unit. To make your social media page easier to find and to avoid confusion, add the institution name "University of Mississippi" or "Ole Miss" before your unit name. For example,

"University of Mississippi Office of Admissions," not "Admissions at the University of Mississippi." To be clear, here are a few examples:

- Ole Miss Admissions
- University of Mississippi Department of History
- University of Mississippi Financial Aid

Want to talk more about your ideas before you launch an account? Email us!

(INSERT FORM)