

Social Media Policy

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance concerning the use of social media through Austin Career Institute's (the "Institute's") network, systems or equipment and/or the use of social media to represent or discuss matters related to Institute and/or members of the Institute community. This policy is intended to supplement, not replace, other policies of the Institute, which remain in full force and effect and apply to the use of or participation in social media. This policy applies to all use of social media by Institute students, faculty, and staff to represent or discuss matters concerning the Institute and/or members of the Institute community, whether or not such use involves the Institute's network or other computer resources.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

"Social media" is a term used to describe tools and platforms that enable individuals to share ideas and content quickly and easily. Examples of popular social media include, without limitation, texting, blogs, and propriety platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, and WhatsApp. This Policy applies to social media that is currently available or emerging as well as all other online tools and/or platforms that may become available after the adoption of this Policy by the Institute.

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of social media has fundamentally changed the way we communicate as individuals and as an institution. The Institute recognizes and embraces the power of social media, and the opportunity those tools provide to communicate with the Institute community, including students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and other interested parties.

It is important to recognize, however, that laws and Institute policies governing inappropriate conduct such as sexual (or other) harassment, bullying, discrimination, defamation, infringement of copyright and trademark rights, and unauthorized disclosure of student records and other confidential and private information apply to communications by Institute students, faculty, and staff through social media. Even activities of a private nature conducted away from the Institute can subject you to disciplinary action if they reflect poorly on the Institute or interfere with the conduct of Institute business.



USAGE GUIDELINES FOR POSTING TO SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- Be careful what you post. Consider the clarity, length and tone of your comments before posting them. You are responsible for what you post. Remember, your post may last forever, even if you later try to modify or remove it.
- Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the Institute in any capacity.
- On personal sites, identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as an Institute student, faculty, or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Institute.
- Sign your post with your real name and indicate your relationship to Institute. Do not use pseudonyms or post anonymously.
- Respect the views of others, even if you disagree. Do not use profane, obscene, or threatening language.
- Be truthful, accurate and complete in describing the Institute's programs and services.
- Obey the Terms of Service of any social media site or platform in which you participate.
- Review the privacy settings of each social media site accessed or used to understand how the site uses the information that its users provide. Be careful about revealing excessive personal information.
- Whenever appropriate, link back to information posted on the Institute website instead of duplicating content. For assistance please contact the Campus President.
- Whenever, as a member of the Institute faculty, you utilize social media as a means of student participation in course work be sure to also provide a practical and appropriate alternative for students who may be unable or reluctant to utilize that social medium. For example, some students may not be comfortable with opening a Facebook account.

PROHIBITED SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

To the full extent permitted by law, the following conduct is specifically prohibited while participating in social media and constitutes a violation of this Policy. This applies with respect to posting to any Institute social media site, communicating with members of the Institute community, or discussing the Institute on any site, even through your own personal account or using your own device without using the Institute's network or equipment.

- Using social media to harass, threaten, insult, defame, or bully another person or entity; to violate any Institute policy; or to engage in any unlawful act, including but not limited to gambling, identity theft, or other types of fraud.

- Posting copyrighted content (such as text, video, graphics, or sound files) without permission from the holder of the copyright. Information that is widely available to the public and posted on the Internet may be subject to copyright restrictions that prohibit unauthorized duplication or dissemination.
- Using the Institute name, logo, or trademarks for promotional announcements, advertising, product-related press releases or other commercial use, or to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- Disclosing confidential Institute information, non-public strategies, student records, or personal information concerning (past or present) members of the Institute community without proper authorization.
- Posting content in violation of applicable laws, including without limitation posting content that includes education records in violation of the Federal Education Records Protection Act (FERPA).
- Posting content that is false, misleading, obscene, defamatory, libelous, tortious, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, racially or ethnically disparaging, inflammatory, offensive, fraudulent, discriminatory, invasive of the privacy or publicity rights of other, or otherwise injurious, unlawful, or illegal.
- Insulting, disparaging, disrespecting, or defaming the Institute or members of the Institute community.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

The Institute reserves the right, under circumstances it deems appropriate and subject to applicable laws and regulations, to impose disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal from the Institute or termination of employment, upon students, faculty, or staff who use private social media sites or communications resources in violation of this Policy. In appropriate cases, such conduct may also be reported to law enforcement authorities.