

SOCIAL MEDIA

GUIDELINES



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Overview and Purpose

The *Social Media Policy and Guidelines* document outlines online communication guidelines for Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) via social media. Social media is presently a mainstream method of communication and there is a high probability that employees use online social media tools for personal and/or professional purposes.

Social media guidelines set expectations, while empowering employees to tweet or blog. Using best practices in addition, guidelines educate faculty and staff on issues to avoid in both personal and professional status updates. To ensure that information shared is accurate representation of the institution and all employees, LIT faculty and staff must comply with institutionally uniform policies and present reputable image of the institution. These guidelines apply to employees participating in social media for LIT and during personal online activities that may appear that they are still speaking for LIT.

Blogs, social networks, and websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube are examples of social media. Each provides a unique channel to share knowledge and connect with others. They expose employees to the effective use of forums while protecting personal and professional reputations. Additionally, the guidelines improve the quality of communication.

Social media offers LIT the opportunity to engage in communicating and gathering feedback directly from those who care about LIT. Social media helps to initiate new conversations, respond to feedback, and maintain an active dialogue with a diverse audience. Involvement by LIT's Department of Communications and Marketing in social media allows for brand growth, stronger connections between the institution and the community that LIT serves and an increased awareness of LIT's reputation.

Policy

Communication among LIT employees and the community is diverse and varied. LIT employees who choose to communicate through social media must comply with the *Social Media Policy and Guidelines*. Employees who do not comply with the guidelines will be required to deactivate the LIT social media site and/or may be subject to the college's discipline processes.

Approval process

Individuals who wish to establish a LIT social media site/account must receive approval from their immediate supervisor and the Director of Communications and Marketing.

Approval Procedure

1. LIT discourages smaller units from setting up social media pages that provide little value. Units should consider setting up social media sites that represent a larger unit, such as a department or center, as opposed to a smaller unit, such as a program or individual initiatives.
2. Contact the Department of Communication and Marketing prior to creating a social media account for a unit within the college. Use a dedicated administrative account to create the social media site. An LIT sponsored social media site does not belong to any one individual in the college. Using the official LIT pages is recommended to drive traffic to one account instead of many.
3. The Department of Communication and Marketing will review sites periodically to ensure the institution follows the guidelines and the sites remain active. If social media sites become inactive or do not follow guidelines established by the institution, the administrator must deactivate the site.
4. If individuals choose to utilize social media tools it is critical to delineate between personal and professional initiatives.

An example of good practice is to:

- a) Obtain approval from the Department of Communications and Marketing.
- b) Think about searchability. Search engines such as Google and Twitter's own search engine will pull up accounts based upon key word relevance. Pick something obvious and relevant.
- c) Remember to use LIT in the name since it is the most frequently used term by individuals looking for the LIT website.
- d) Set clear guidelines for individuals who choose to become a member of the social network.

General Guidelines

1. **Be Responsible in your communications.**

The keys to success in social media are honesty, thoughtfulness, and awareness of the target audience. Communications must be professional and sensitive about linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement. Above all, exercise good judgment and common sense. Do not use profanity, slurs, or derogatory comments. Be civil. There is no such thing as a "private" social media site. Remember that a post has a longer shelf life than the individual posting the comments does. Archival systems save information even after deleting a post. Always post or communicate with a calm and clear head.

2. Be transparent and authentic.

Be honest about one's identity. If choosing to post about LIT on personal time, please identify yourself as LIT faculty or staff member when appropriate. Never hide one's identity for the purpose of promoting LIT through social media.

Never pretend to be someone else and post about LIT.

The essence of a community is that it exists so that employees can support others and they, in turn, can support the institution. Learn to balance personal and professional information and the important role that transparency plays in building a community.

A good resource about communicating with transparency and integrity is, "Communicating with Transparency and Integrity," by Student Affairs Lead Big UC Berkeley at <https://sa.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/images/communicatingwithtransparency.pdf>

3. Be accurate.

Ensure all the facts have been gathered before posting a comment or communication. Verify information with a source, rather than posting a correction or retraction later. Cite and link sources whenever possible, redirecting back to the LIT website. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly.

4. Respect copyrights and fair use.

Always give people proper credit for their work, ensure the right to use something before publishing. Only those authorized by LIT may use the institution's branding. Do not include LIT branding in personal posting.

5. Protect confidential & proprietary information.

Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about LIT, its students, its alumni or colleagues. Use good ethical judgment. Follow college policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA.

6. Productivity matters – respect institutional time and property.

LIT computers and employee work time are for college-related business. It is appropriate to post at work if instructed to or comments relate directly to accomplishing established work goals. For example, seeking sources for information or working with others to resolve a problem. Maintain personal sites on one's own time using non-LIT computers.

7. Endorsements.

Do not use LIT's name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party or candidate. Linking to other sites is occasionally acceptable. However, it is important to consider associations with potential applicants, donors and research-funding agencies. Share links appropriate and relevant to the institution.

8. Social media comments.

We encourage our LIT community to comment, post, share and interact while remaining respectful of others' opinions and rights. A page administrator must review comments for inappropriate content.

LIT reserves the right to block users or remove comments that (are):

- Unrelated to the topic of the post.
- Abusive, vulgar, profane, racist, sexist, violent or use hate speech.
- Obscene or contain sexually harassing content.
- Considered to be spam, advertisements or vendor promotions unrelated to LIT.
- Defaming, contain falsehoods or unsupported accusations of LIT students, employees, visitors or other individuals.
- Encourage illegal, dangerous or destructive activity.
- Threatening, harassment or personal attacks toward specific individuals or groups.

In general, if the content is positive or negative and in context to the conversation, then the content is approved, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to LIT. Be aware that any comment/post can be attributed to you in a news story.

9. Employees Personal use of Electronic Media

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram).

Think first, post second. The activity and behavior that is prohibited and may subject you to discipline in "real life" with the college can do the same in the realm of the internet and social media. Some examples include but are not limited to sexually harassing a colleague; inappropriate interactions with students; derogatory statements; threatening or intimidating others; violating privacy policies or laws; or defamation of the college.

Non-Compliance/Breach of Policy

Violations of this policy will result in a review of the incident and may include action under appropriate college discipline processes.

Lamar Institute of Technology Style Guidelines

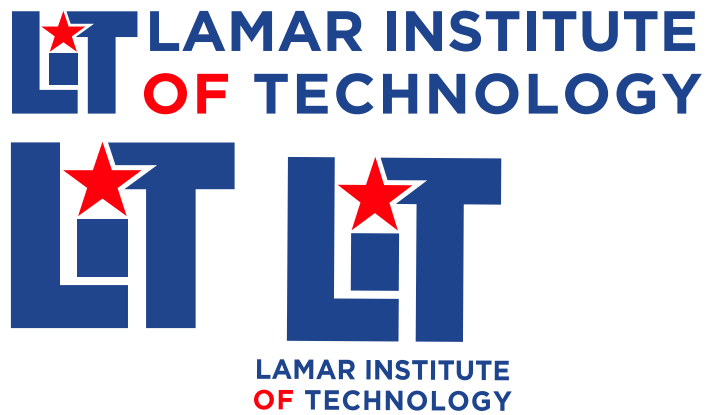
Proper Names

- Lamar Institute of Technology
- LIT

Colors

- #1e448d 
- #ec2027 
- #1c75bc 

Logos



For a complete style guide, [click here](#).