

Social Media Guidelines

LSUHSC School of Medicine in New Orleans

Employees and Students

At LSUHSC School of Medicine – New Orleans (SOM), social networking (both on LSUHSC-provided services and on commercially available services) can help support our mission of medical education, research, and service to the community. The SOM is committed to facilitating a successful social media strategy for its faculty, staff, and students..

The following guidelines are for all individuals affiliated with the SOM including but not limited to faculty members, residents, students, and staff employees who participate in social media. Social media includes personal blogs and other websites, including but not limited to WordPress, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. These guidelines apply to anyone posting to his or her own sites, university sponsored sites, or commenting on other sites.

General Principles:

1. Follow all applicable LSUHSC policies. For example, you must not share confidential or proprietary information about LSUHSC and you must maintain patient privacy. Among the policies most pertinent to this discussion are those concerning patient confidentiality; computer, e-mail and internet use; HIPAA and FERPA; photography and video; and release of patient or student information to media.
2. Be professional, use good judgment and be accurate and honest in your communications; errors, omissions, or unprofessional language or behavior reflect poorly on LSUHSC, and may result in liability for you or LSUHSC. Be respectful and professional to fellow employees, business partners, competitors, faculty, students, and patients.
3. Social media is “real life.” Behavior in social media is no different from e-mail, public speech, classroom lecture, conversation with friends, or a poster on a wall, with the exception that it is always available in cyberspace. Anything considered inappropriate offline is likely also inappropriate online. When in doubt, it is better not to share.
4. If you are a member of the SOM community, but acting in social media as an individual, make it clear that you are expressing your own opinion and not that of the SOM or LSUHSC.
5. Ensure that your social media activity does not interfere with your work commitments.

Responsibility to Patients and Trainees:

1. The SOM strongly discourages “friending” of patients on social media websites. Providers (faculty, house staff, or other staff) in patient care roles generally should not initiate or accept friend requests except in unusual circumstances such as the situation where an in-person friendship pre-dates the treatment relationship.
2. The SOM strongly discourages personnel in management or supervisory roles from initiating personal “friend” requests with trainees they manage. “Friend” requests may be accepted if initiated by the trainee, and if the supervising personnel do not believe such contact will negatively impact the work relationship or pose potential bias regarding the trainee.

Responsibility to Institution:

1. Write in the first person. Where your connection to the SOM and LSUHSC is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the SOM or LSUHSC. In those circumstances, you should include a disclaimer such as: “The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of the SOM or LSUHSC.” Consider adding this language in an “About me” section of your blog or social media profile.
2. If you identify your affiliation to the SOM or LSUHSC, your social media activities should be consistent with our high standards of professional conduct.
3. If you communicate in public about the SOM or LSUHSC or the SOM- or LSUHSC-related matters, you must disclose your connection with SOM and/or LSUHSC and your role at the institution. When acting as a representative of the SOM clearly identify you or your group’s relationship to the SOM and link back to the appropriate SOM or LSUHSC web page to reinforce the connection to the SOM or LSUHSC.
4. The SOM does not endorse people, products, services and organizations. On social media websites where your affiliation to the SOM is known, it should be made clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the SOM or LSUHSC when personal recommendations are made.
5. Unless approved, your social media name, handle and URL should not include the SOM or LSUHSC’s name or logo.
6. Represent yourself accurately and be transparent about your role at the SOM or LSUHSC. Consider that you are in an academic environment and the implications of utilizing a LSUHSC-provided platform that automatically identifies you in your role at the SOM or LSUHSC. If you present inaccurate information, correct it immediately.
7. When creating or managing a social media account for a SOM entity (such as a training program social network), ensure access credentials are shared by at least two people in case one team member is unreachable or no longer at the University.
8. When representing the SOM or LSUHSC, follow relevant style guidelines when creating profile/avatar images, graphics, or written content. Speak in accordance with your role at the university. If you have questions, contact the appropriate public affairs personnel.