General Regulations:

**Be Respectful.** The University is committed to respect for the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of opposing ideas. It’s okay to voice a complaint or disagree with another post, but please do so in a polite, constructive and respectful manner. Obscenities, profanities, personal attacks and defamatory comments will be removed.

**Be Accurate.** Have all the facts before you post. It’s better to first verify information with a source than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.

**Think Before You Post.** There’s no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied.

**Be Responsive.** Social media is about conversations and engagement. Like real life, people are happy to listen to you, but they also want to be talked to and listened to. Strategic content should be your mainstay, but informal conversations can also generate engagement. Asking how your students spent spring break or what their favorite class is can lead to a lively thread of comments.

**Remember Your Audience.** Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or can easily be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers, colleagues and peers. Ensure your content will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups.

Guidelines:

**Notify the University.** If you have or would like to create a social media presence, contact the Office of Marketing and Web Communications at marketing@neiu.edu to ensure all institutional social media sites coordinate with other Northeastern sites and their content. All University pages must have a full-time appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for content.

**Be Transparent.** If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the University, clearly state your role and goals. Discuss with your supervisor when you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

**Post Conservatively.** Research has shown that posting too frequently results in audience drop-off. Limit your postings to no more than three per day.

**Keep Your Personal Views Separate.** Uphold the University’s mission and
values. Don't include political comments or comments on social issues, except in support of positions Northeastern Illinois University has already taken.

**Don’t use the Northeastern Logo or Make Endorsements.** Do not use the Northeastern Illinois University logo or any other Northeastern marks or images on your *personal* online sites. Only the official Northeastern Illinois University social media sites are permitted to use the logo.

**Link Back to the University.** Whenever possible, redirect your social media site visitors to content within www.neiu.edu.

**Photography and Videos.** Photos of children under the age of 18 may not be posted without written consent from the parents or guardians. Photos on social networking sites must be appropriate and be images that could be posted on the University’s official website. Examples of photos to avoid include, but are not limited to, images involving alcohol or drug use, nudity, medical and hospital patients, and graphic scenes. Give appropriate photo credits.

**Confidentiality and Privacy.** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Northeastern Illinois University, its students, its alumni or fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow University policies and federal requirements, such as [FERPA](https://www2.neiu.edu/ferpa). You are legally liable for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Beware of the damages to individuals or the University that can result through inappropriate disclosure of personal or confidential information. Possible damages include:

- Suit for defamation
- Copyright, patent or trademark infringement claims
- Privacy or human rights complaint
- Workplace grievance under a collective bargaining agreement or unfair labor practice complaint
- Criminal charges with respect to obscene or hate materials
- Damage to the University’s reputation and business interests

**Protect the Institutional Voice.** Remain professional in tone and keep posts in good taste. No Northeastern unit or individual should interpret its social media site as representing the University as a whole. Consider this when naming pages and accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, selecting content to post names, and profile images. Posts should be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

**Free Expression.** Northeastern Illinois University encourages freedom of expression and recognizes the value of diverse opinions. However, page administrators and administrators of the University have a responsibility to remove or ask individuals to remove comments, images, or other material deemed inflammatory, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate, especially when they appear to threaten the welfare or safety of the poster or others. Questions about issues management may be directed to Dana Navarro, director of public relations at d-navarro@neiu.edu.
Getting Started:

1. **Main Goals and Strategies**: Determine your goals and strategies. Do you want to promote your department or college? Engage with the external and internal communities? Determine your messages and goals as well as strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date.

2. **Audience**: Prospective and current students, alumni, faculty, donors … knowing your audience will help you define your content.

3. **Research**: Who is talking about your area? What are they saying? Where are they saying it? Is your niche already filled and by whom?

4. **Content**: What kind of content will you create and share? Stories? Video? Pictures? Don’t forget the social part of social media; ask questions and encourage engagement. As befitting an institution of higher education, make sure your content contains correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

5. **Responsibility**: Who will be responsible for creating and sharing content as well as monitoring and responding? Do they have the time and the skill? Avoid relying on student or other unpaid help. A Northeastern faculty or staff member must have administrative privileges and will be responsible for controlling permissions and security of their social media accounts.

6. **Evaluate**: Regularly evaluate the success of your efforts. Determine what worked and what didn’t. Be prepared to try something new. Social media is an ongoing challenge and requires occasional tweaks to remain effective.

**Ready to start?** Once you have decided which social media platform is right for you, visit the Help section of the site for step-by-step instructions on how to create and maintain your presence. Familiarize yourself with the site’s policies. Don’t run the risk of having your account shut down. Play by the rules.