



Social Media

Policy CR002

Volume 3, Communications and External Relations

Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Communications and External Relations

Responsible Office: Communications and External Relations

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Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to define and govern the use of official FIT social media accounts for communication and promotion of FIT-related information in support of the college's educational mission and strategic goals, and to enhance campus security.

Further, this policy delineates the appropriate use of social media by individuals on behalf of FIT, its divisions, schools, departments, and other units. For purposes of clarity, this policy applies to those social media accounts that are managed by administrative personnel who produce and promote information in support of the college. This policy does not apply to social media accounts developed as a component of academic coursework (including as part of a project or other course-related assignment), through industry-sponsored contests/research, by student clubs or student organizations, or by individuals associated with FIT. Such accounts, however, are subject to copyright and intellectual property laws, as well as other FIT policies.

Reason for the Policy

This policy delineates the appropriate use of social media for FIT community members who communicate on behalf of the college. Henceforth, the term 'FIT Social Media' refers to accounts created and managed by individuals on behalf of FIT, its divisions, schools, and other units. In addition, this policy outlines social media's purpose in the context of emergency communications.

Who is Responsible for this Policy

- Individuals who are designated by Communications and External Relations ("CER") as administrators of FIT Social Media
- All vice presidents

Who is Affected by this Policy

- FIT community members (e.g., employees, students) operating FIT Social Media
- Third parties, such as external vendors and agencies, who engage with FIT Social Media
- Public Safety/emergency personnel, the Emergency Preparedness and Response Group (EPRG), and associated personnel

Definitions

- **Social media:** any communication tool that exists to facilitate the dissemination of information through social interaction using accessible and scalable electronic publishing techniques. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X, TikTok, LinkedIn, MySpace, Tumblr, Pinterest, Reddit, Snapchat, etc.
- **FIT Social Media:** a college-related account created and managed by a department, office, or organization and used to communicate on behalf of the college, and specifically approved and authorized by CER.
- **Account Administrator:** any faculty member, staff member, or student who is designated to be responsible for managing any FIT Social Media. This individual is responsible for posting appropriate content and ensuring quality control, accuracy, and compliance regarding links, spelling, grammar, and accessibility. Account administrators shall confer with CER each year to evaluate the continued use of FIT Social Media.

Principles

- **Requirements for the Use of FIT Social Media**
 - **Compliance with FIT policies**

FIT Social Media should be used in a manner consistent with the reputation and brand of the college, as determined by CER, and in accordance with applicable law and FIT policies, including, but not limited to, the college's [Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment](#) policy, [Sexual Misconduct Response](#) policy, [Academic Honor Code](#), [Code of Student Conduct](#), [Political and Election Activity and Legislative Advocacy](#), [Web Content](#) policy, [Acceptable Use for FIT IT Systems](#) policy, [Campus Events and Demonstrations](#), and all other FIT policies governing employee and student conduct. FIT reserves the right, but assumes no obligation, to remove and/or report any content on FIT Social Media that violates any FIT policy, law, or regulation, or any terms of use of the social media platform utilized.
 - **Privacy, Confidentiality, and Defamation**

FIT Social Media may not post confidential or proprietary information about FIT, its faculty, employees, trustees, donors, students, alumni, third parties, and other related affiliations or matters. Note that certain federal and state statutes and regulations, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and health privacy laws, protect against the disclosure of certain information and apply to all uses of FIT Social Media. FIT Social Media may not post content that is defamatory, as defined by law, against any individual or entity.
 - **Promotion of Business or Political Agenda**

FIT Social Media may not be used to engage in unaffiliated commercial activities and must comply with restrictions on political posts pursuant to FIT's Political and Election Activity and Legislative Advocacy policy. The college recognizes that in certain cases social media arrangements are a consideration of contractual agreements with external sponsors and/or partners, and CER maintains the responsibility to consider draft contractual agreements on a case-by-case basis. Under no circumstances may an FIT employee promise or expect content to be featured on FIT's institutional social media channels without first reviewing the proposal with CER.

- **Use of Copyrighted or Proprietary Materials**

FIT Social Media must adhere to applicable laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, those related to copyright (including fair use) and trademark content, such as artwork, photography, graphics, videos, and music, and FIT's Intellectual Property policy. Care must be taken to properly attribute content to its original source or creator.

- **Account Names and Use of Logo**

The FIT brand and name, including, but not limited to, its logo, tagline, visual identity, and other distinctive graphic elements, are proprietary to FIT and protected by intellectual property laws. Therefore, any unlawful or improper use of these names and logos on FIT Social Media is prohibited. FIT's brand includes the names and visual identities of FIT Athletics and the Museum at FIT.

In addition, members of the FIT community are not permitted to alter FIT's name, logo, and associated legally protected elements (e.g., brand colors, fonts, photography, graphics, and imagery) without express, written permission by CER.

To ensure that use of FIT's name, logo, and other protected elements is proper, CER must approve the creation of new FIT Social Media. CER will work with account administrators to develop account names, profile images, and additional graphic branding. These elements will be logical, intuitive, and must match the college's overall branding requirements. Any proposed changes to these elements must first be approved by CER.

- **Personal Social Media**

Nothing in this policy prohibits FIT employees, students, or other members of the FIT community from identifying their relationship with FIT on social media (e.g., as an employee, a student, etc.). However, it is a violation of this policy to state or imply that any personal views expressed in any way represent the views of, or are endorsed by, the college. To avoid doubt, FIT community members (students and employees) who identify FIT and post about the college on their profiles (individual profile page, club profile page, or group) also may consider including a disclaimer on their profile, such as: "These are my personal opinions, and do not reflect the views of the Fashion Institute of Technology."

Additionally, FIT reserves the right, consistent with its conduct policies, to address conduct occurring on personal social media, regardless of the location or time of the action, where the behavior violates FIT policy.

- **Use of FIT Social Media**

- **Registration and Maintenance of FIT Social Media**

Any request to create FIT Social Media must first be approved by the appropriate vice president or designee. With approval, the request, containing an explanation of purpose and plan for account management, will be sent to CER for final approval. Account administrators are encouraged to provide usernames and passwords to CER, which should be included as an administrator of the account, if possible, on the platform. All departments, offices, and individuals who are authorized to create or maintain FIT Social Media under this policy should maintain their own record of usernames and passwords to ensure accounts remain active.

- **Union Activity**
Nothing in this policy restricts or shall be construed to restrict any activity that is protected by the NYS Public Employees' Fair Employment Act (the Taylor Law).

Responsibilities

- **Communications and External Relations (CER)**
CER maintains sole responsibility for use of the primary FIT social media pages, including, but not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, Vimeo and YouTube. In addition, CER works with vice presidents or their designees to process requests for new accounts and to ensure compliance with this policy. Although CER is not responsible for monitoring or pre-approving content posted to FIT Social Media, the office reserves the right and responsibility to review content, remove content, or terminate FIT Social Media deemed in violation of this or any other FIT policy. CER will take appropriate and collaborative actions with vice presidents or their designees.
- **Vice Presidents**
Each vice president is responsible for collaborating with CER to review requests for new FIT Social Media, implementing control procedures, and monitoring adherence to this policy within their respective division. They may appoint a designee to assume these responsibilities.

Procedures

- **Style, Use, and Accessibility Guidelines**
 - Users should refer to CER's Social Media Best Practices and Guide (see Related Documents below) to further assist them with the appropriate use and development of FIT Social Media.
 - CER offers regular Web Accessibility training to facilitate compliance with electronic accessibility guidelines; it is highly recommended that users attend to gain a better understanding of how to ensure their use of social media is accessible to all end-users.
- **Emergency Communications**
During a crisis, emergency (as defined by the [Emergency Management Plan](#)), or college closing, CER maintains sole responsibility for posting information on the college's main social media channels. Under no circumstances will emergency-related information be posted to FIT Social Media without the explicit permission of CER. Students, even if they hold Account Administrator privileges, are not permitted to make official posts to FIT Social Media during emergencies. Users, Account Administrators, and departments are only permitted to repost information that has been authored and posted by CER. If comments or questions are directed to other FIT Social Media, Account Administrators should contact CER, who will provide instruction on how to proceed. In addition, CER may access other FIT Social Media to control and amplify communications in a situation that requires action by the college's Emergency Preparedness and Response Group (EPRG).
- **Advertising**
Monetized advertising remains the sole responsibility of CER, and all requests for such advertising must first be submitted to CER for consideration, approval, and implementation. All advertising and its related processes must adhere to the college's policy on Advertisement Purchasing and Placement (see Related Policies below).

Violations

Alleged violations will be handled through the college disciplinary procedures applicable to the offending individual. If there is a potential violation of law or regulation, FIT may refer the matter to appropriate law enforcement agencies, as well. If necessary, CER may suspend, block, or restrict further use of such accounts.

Related Policies

- [Academic Honor Code](#)
- [Acceptable Use for FIT IT Systems](#)
- [Advertisement Purchasing and Placement](#)
- [Blogging](#)
- [Code of Student Conduct](#)
- [Employee Code of Ethical Conduct](#)
- [Intellectual Property](#)
- [Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment](#)
- [Political and Election Activity and Legislative Advocacy](#)
- [Principles for the FIT Web](#)
- [Web Content](#)
- [Campus Events and Demonstrations](#)

Related Documents

- [Editorial Style Guide](#)
- [Social Media at FIT](#)
- [Social Media Best Practices and Guide](#)
- [Social Media Style Guide](#)

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