WPI Employee Benefits and Policies Manual

Social Media Policy (Personal)

WPI understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

**Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else’s web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with WPI, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in WPI policies and these basic beliefs apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. You may be personally responsible for any litigation that may arise should you make unlawful defamatory, slanderous, or libelous statements against any customer, manager, owner, or employee of the University. Before creating online content, you may want to consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved.

**Know and Follow the Rules**

Carefully read the WPI’s EEO Statement and Non-harassment Policy, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Postings that include unlawful discriminatory remarks, harassment (as defined by our EEO policy), and threats of violence or other unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**You Are Encouraged to Show Respect**

WPI cannot force or mandate respectful and courteous activity by employees on social media during nonworking time. However, everyone should be aware of the negative impact comments of this nature can have on the workplace and relationships with others. In addition, please keep in mind that you may be more likely to resolve work-related disputes by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as unlawful, slanderous, threatening, or that might constitute unlawful harassment (as defined by our EEO policies). Examples of such conduct might include defamatory or slanderous posts meant to harm someone’s reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, age, national origin, religion, veteran status, or any other status or class protected by law or company policy.
Honesty and Accuracy
You should understand that honesty and accuracy are important when posting information or news, and that it is good practice to correct a mistake quickly. You may want to be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings often can be searched.

Posting Information

When posting information:

- Maintain the confidentiality of University trade secrets and confidential University-related commercially-sensitive information (i.e. financial reports, marketing or business strategies/plans, customer lists, patents, trademarks, etc.).
- Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a WPI website that identifies you as speaking on behalf of WPI.
- Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for WPI. If the University is a subject of the content you are creating, do not represent yourself as speaking on the University’s behalf.
- Respect copyright, trademark, and similar laws and use such protected information in compliance with applicable legal standards.

Using Social Media at Work

- Refrain from using social media while on your work time, unless it is work related as authorized by your supervisor.

Retaliation Is Prohibited

WPI prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

For More Information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

Nothing in this policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment, or to restrain employees in exercising any other right protected by law. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.