

Social Media Guidelines

Social media has become a major branding opportunity for Samford University. You represent Samford through your online activities, whether in a blog or through text or video or photograph posts via the emerging plethora of social media outlets. These guidelines are a summary of applicable Samford policies and higher education best practices. They are designed to help you navigate social media in a positive and confident manner.

Writing – Write in the first person. Be clear and concise. Use active verbs.

Disclosure and disclaimer – Your samford.edu email should be used only in connection with official university business-related social networking sites. Where your connection to Samford is apparent, be clear that you speak for yourself and not the university. You may want to include a disclaimer: “The views expressed on this [blog, Twitter, etc.] are my own and do not reflect the view of Samford University.”

Respect – Be respectful and professional to colleagues, peers, competitors and other members of the community. Avoid using unprofessional online personas. Avoid ill-conceived comments and responses to the posts of others.

Confidentiality – Maintain the confidentiality of Samford’s trade secrets and related confidential information. This includes reports, policies, education records and a variety of other information covered by university policies and federal laws.

Copyright – Respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws.

Good judgment – Strive for accuracy in your communications; errors and omissions reflect poorly on Samford. Never post information or rumors that cannot be verified by an official source.

Timeliness – Integrate your social media communications with other marketing/branding strategies. Make sure your messages are timely

Monitoring -- Consider having multiple administrators who can monitor and add content to your site. That ensures that it stays fresh and doesn’t become dormant if the primary administrator is on vacation or away for an extended period. Also, most sites welcome comments, but you will want to monitor your site to respond in a timely manner, to delete spam comments and to block individuals who may post offensive, inaccurate or frivolous comments.

Remember that Samford expects you to exercise personal responsibility whenever you participate in social networking sites or other online activities, especially in connection with official university programs, organizations, activities or events. Also remember that the university’s political activity policy extends to social media.

State and federal laws related to social networking continue to evolve, but remember that there can be consequences to your social networking actions.

If you need assistance with your official social networking needs on behalf of the university, please contact the Office of Marketing and Communication.