

System-wide Policy:
GE0006 - The University's Digital Presence

Version: 1

Effective Date: 01/05/2026

SECTION 1. Policy Statement

I. University's Digital Presence

- A. The University of Tennessee's digital presence is critically important as a resource for stakeholders, including without limitation, students (both potential students and currently enrolled students), faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and the people of the state of Tennessee.
- B. This policy is intended to support members of the University community, while also ensuring that the University's websites and other digital assets comply with applicable laws and regulations, and University policies and procedures.
- C. For purposes of this policy, a "website" is a set of related web pages that are prepared and maintained as a collection in support of a single purpose. Websites might be external-facing, serving the public, or internal-facing (intranets), serving an organization's employees or members.
- D. This policy also governs the creation, use, and monitoring of social media accounts that are intended to represent the University. This policy does not address social media accounts that individual employees create for their personal use in their individual capacity. Accounts by executive leaders posting in their official capacity solely on behalf of the institution are also considered official university accounts. These accounts serve as an extension of the institution's communications and represent the official perspectives, decisions and positions of the university. Examples may include personal accounts with public visibility that are operated by the president, chancellors or other executive leaders when the account is clearly dedicated to institutional messaging rather than personal commentary. These accounts are used to communicate messages from and on behalf of the university and serve as voice of the institution and an official representation of the university's perspectives, decisions, and positions.
- E. For purposes of this policy, "social media" are internet-based applications that enable users to participate in social networking by posting content or by exchanging content with other users. Examples of social media include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Facebook, X, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Tumblr, Vine, and Snapchat.

II. Requirement for Campuses and Institutes to Issue Procedures

- A. Each campus or institute must issue procedures that govern their respective digital presence, including without limitation procedures that address: public-facing websites and social media pages that are intended to represent the University.
- B. Campuses and institutes may, but are not required to, draft procedures that include intranet websites (not public-facing websites) and digital advertising.
- C. At a minimum, procedures must address the following topics:
 1. **Accessibility:** All websites must comply with [UT's Digital Accessibility Policy](#). This ensures content is accessible to users with disabilities and meets legal requirements.

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Each campus must specify who is responsible for monitoring and managing compliance with accessibility standards.

2. **Approval process:** the process that each campus or institute must follow to seek approval for websites and digital content, as well as procedure(s) for how to address violations.
3. **Design and Branding:** a requirement that all campus or institute websites and digital content comply with the University's design and brand guidelines.
4. **Designated content manager/sponsor:** At a minimum, the designated content manager/sponsor will be responsible for:
 - a) Keeping information current.
 - b) Removing or archiving outdated or incorrect information.
 - c) Ensuring that the applicable communications and marketing office conducts periodic reviews of the website(s) for which the designated content managers/sponsors are responsible.
 - d) Engaging in ongoing professional development opportunities related to content management, compliance, digital accessibility, and best practices in communications to ensure their skills and knowledge remain current.
 - e) Coordinating with their information technology office, as needed.
5. **Hosting requirement:** a requirement that all University websites must be hosted on University-managed infrastructure or via a service provider that the applicable campus or institute's office of information technology has approved. Campuses and institutes may include an exception process in their respective procedure issued under this policy, provided that, at a minimum, the campus or institute's chief information technology official is included in the exception review process.
6. **Security and Data Privacy:**
 - a) A requirement that the campus's or institute's websites and other digital content comply with applicable laws and regulations (including without limitation, HIPAA and FERPA), and University policies.
 - b) A requirement that all forms collecting data must include approved privacy notices and must use secure protocols (HTTPS).
7. **Social Media:** Establish a process for how departments may request to create a social media account. Further, each campus and institute must create procedures for social media account use, maintenance, monitoring, and account closure. For social media platforms where members of the public can post comments, campuses and institutes are responsible for establishing a procedure(s) for routinely monitoring comments and outlining how to appropriately identify and deal with comments that may be problematic in a way that recognizes the difference between threatening speech and free speech.
8. **Third-Party Content:** A requirement that all campus and institute websites and other digital content provide disclaimers when hosting third-party content. Also,

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campuses and institutes must address how to ensure that each campus or institute will make reasonable efforts to ensure that third-party content is compliant with accessibility standards.

9. **University Email Signatures:** Adhering to standardized University branding requirements, including the exclusive use of approved University email signature formats. Email formats should be consistently presented within each campus and should be limited to communicating professional contact information and credentials. Alternative or personalized formats are not permitted.

III. Compliance with Applicable Laws and Policies

- A. Campuses and institutes must ensure that their digital presence (including without limitation websites, intranet web pages, digital ads, and social media accounts) complies with applicable laws, regulations, and University policies and procedures.
- B. Campuses and institutes must ensure that content posted to the campus's or institute's websites, intranet web pages, and social media accounts, comply with [BT0019—Process for Submitting Legislative Proposals and Funding Requests to the General Assembly](#), and [GE0004—Philosophy on Institutional and Leadership Statements](#).

SECTION 2. Reason for the Policy

This policy requires each campus or institute to implement a procedure to facilitate optimal website and digital experiences, while maintaining compliance with University policies and procedures, as well as compliance with laws and regulations.

SECTION 3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to all University employees.

SECTION 4. Procedures

SECTION 5. Definitions

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Digital assets - digital content owned, licensed or managed by the university for official use. These may include images, videos, logos, documents, presentations and other media. Such assets are critical to maintaining brand integrity, supporting consistent communications and engaging audiences across platforms.

Executive leaders - senior administrators of the University of Tennessee System and its campuses or institutes who are authorized to speak on behalf of the university in their official roles. This generally includes, but is not limited to, the president, chancellors, vice presidents, provosts and other positions designated by the president or chancellors as part of the university's executive leadership.

SECTION 6. Penalties/Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in campuses and institutes losing their ability to maintain their own websites.

SECTION 7. Responsible Official & Additional Contacts

UT System

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Melissa Tindell, UTSA Communications & Marketing	865-974-0741	mtindell@tennessee.edu
Policy Training	Blake Reagan, UTSA Policy and Process Improvement	865-974-3971	breagan@tennessee.edu

UT Knoxville

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification	Jacob Rudolph, UTK	865-974-8046	jrudolph@utk.edu

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and Interpretation	Communications and Marketing		
Policy Training	Jacob Rudolph, UTK Communications and Marketing	865-974-8046	jrudolph@utk.edu

UT Chattanooga

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Sally Halloran, UTC Communications & Marketing	423-425-5689	sally.halloran@utc.edu
Policy Training	Bridget Hornsby, UTC Information Technology	865-660-9834	bridget.hornsby@utc.edu

UT Southern

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Aimee Rose, UTS Strategic Communications and Marketing	931-363-9813	arose@utsouthern.edu
Policy Training	Blake Reagan, UTSA Policy and Process Improvement	865-974-3971	breagan@tennessee.edu

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UT Martin

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Ann Joiner, UTM Office of General Counsel	731-881-7565	AnnJoiner@tennessee.edu
Policy Training	Amy Belew, UTM Office of Information Technology Services	731-881-7901	abelew@utm.edu
Additional Contact	Bud Grimes, Office of University Relations	731-881-7615	rgrimes@utm.edu

UT Health Science Center

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Karla Leeper, UTHSC Strategic Communications and Marketing	901-448-5544	Kleeper3@uthsc.edu
Policy Training	Ammar Ammar, UTHSC Information Technology Solutions	901-448-2163	aamar@uthsc.edu

UT Institute of Agriculture

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Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Lisa Stearns, UTIA Communications & Marketing	865-974-7141	lstearns@tennessee.edu
Policy Training	Angela Gibson, Information Technology	865-974-8630	gibsonaa@tennessee.edu

UT Institute for Public Service

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	Susan Robertson, IPS Communications & Marketing	865-974-8518	susan.robertson@tennessee.edu
Policy Training	Susan Robertson, IPS Communications & Marketing	865-974-8518	susan.robertson@tennessee.edu

SECTION 8. Policy History

Revision 1: January 5, 2026

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SECTION 9. Related Policies/Guidance Documents

[IT0002–Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources](#)

[IT0005–Data Categorization](#)

[IT0006–Accessibility](#)

[IT0311–Information Technology Data Access, Management, and Recovery](#)
