

Social Media and Norwich

Social media platforms allow the public to interact and build relationships with each other through the sharing of ideas, resources and media. Norwich University has the extraordinary opportunity to leverage these tools to communicate and engage with prospective students, current students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff and the public in a whole new way.

Social media offers unprecedented opportunities to show the world what we have to offer. It is important, however, to learn to use them effectively in order to grow your social media presence, avoid complications and be aligned with the Norwich University brand. Because there are many platforms that can be used in a variety of ways, the Office of Communications is overseeing all social media presences associated with Norwich to advise in best practices and ensure Norwich's branding and message are consistent across platforms.

Norwich social media presences may be found on:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- Flickr
- Snap
- Vimeo

As the designated expert, the Office of Communications Social Media Manager acts as an advisor and resource for those seeking to establish university social media accounts and provides best practices to achieve success. Prior to establishing a university account, community members are asked to review Norwich's Social Media Guidelines, review the procedures for establishing an account, complete a registration form and meet with the Social Media Manager to discuss next steps. The Social Media Manager is responsible for day-to-day management of the main Norwich University presences on major social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

Note: The Social Media Manager does not monitor personal social media use by the university's students or employees. Unofficial Norwich social media accounts are checked/reviewed, from time to time, to assess student sentiment and see what issues or concerns are circulating in the student realm (typical criticisms throughout the school year have been about the quality of food/dining services and campus security re: parking permits and towing). If the area of concern is unknown to university stakeholders, the appropriate depts/offices are alerted for awareness or action. If the content posted violates the social media platform's rules of use, it is reported to the respective platform for review/action.

Social Media Guidelines:

Social media platforms have had significant impact on organizational reputations and blurred the line between personal and institutional voices. In order to protect those reputations and separate institutional and personal communication, adhere to the following:

Norwich faculty or staff may create official sites, professional sites and personal sites.

Norwich faculty or staff may create/have official University and/or personal social media sites. An official site is one that represents and speaks on behalf of the University or a Norwich department, office, group or organization. Official sites should be approved by the Office of Communications and adopted by the appropriate department for maintenance. Personal sites are for private use and are in no way affiliated with Norwich University. Unofficial Norwich social media sites are personal sites about Norwich University and/or life at the school.

Respect University time and property. University computers and time are reserved for institutional-related business. Participate in personal social media on your own time.

Be professional. When posting on official sites, remember you are representing the university. Posts or remarks made by official university accounts are viewed by others as the official representation and word of the brand. Be respectful and apply the same behavioral standards online as you would while working.

Be transparent. When posting as a representative of Norwich, clearly state your name and role at the University.

Think twice before you post. There is no such thing as a “private” social media site. Information you post or share may be viewed or used by anyone. Be sure what you post will not come back to haunt you.

Keep personal views separate. It is your job to uphold the University’s mission and values, especially when posting on official sites. If you would like to comment on political or social issues, do so on a personal site.

Include disclaimer on personal sites. If you identify yourself as a Norwich faculty or staff member during a personal posting, be clear the views you share are not representative of Norwich.

Protect personal information. Do not give out personal information—addresses, phone numbers or emails—of yourself or any other Norwich community member. Use University contact information and follow applicable University privacy and confidentiality policies.

Obtain permission. Before posting images or videos of members outside of the Norwich community (to include guest lectures/speakers and members of the public – especially minors), ensure you have consent. Use Norwich’s [Photo Release Form](#).

Create a maintenance plan. Create a plan on how administrative controls will transferred between account coordinators, so that access to the account is not lost as administrator roles and responsibilities change.

Do not fundraising for non-Norwich events. Norwich University social media channels do not fundraise for other organizations or for students and alumni who are seeking fundraising assistance for personal charity events/causes/activities (GoFundMe). The only fundraising that Norwich supports on its social media channels is fundraising for the university or university initiatives (employee or student driven).

Rationale: The university cannot post or share any GoFundMe requests to Norwich social media channels, as doing so can make the University liable for the fundraiser. In addition, many students and alumni frequently contact Norwich University for personal fundraising assistance. If the university were to support an individual or group, it would set a precedent that the university would be expected to adhere to. Norwich University is a nonprofit and should not compete with its own interests when it comes to soliciting donations. The main purpose of Norwich University's social media accounts is not to fundraise. If Norwich followers are asked for money too often they will no longer engage with the university on social media, because they will feel like the school is only are interested in their money.

Be wary of posting ads. Unless an ad or promotion is exclusive to the Norwich community, ads should not be posted on Norwich University social media accounts. This mitigates spam issues.

Be accurate. Professional and official sites reflect upon the University, so it is important to ensure that information is accurate and spelling correct.

Respect Norwich branding. To learn more about appropriate use of the Norwich logo and brand, view [Norwich's writing style guide](#) or [request a logo](#).

Follow crisis communication protocol. The primary role of social media during a crisis is to direct people to the Norwich website, www.norwich.edu, which will display our emergency website with updated information.

Maintain account passwords/access. The Office of Communications (OC) is not responsible for keeping records of Norwich social media account login information that is not directly managed by the OC. Be sure to create a management plan to transfer account access to employees and to update passwords after providing temporary access to students (or other community members) for account support or takeovers.

Note: Do not connect a Norwich Instagram account to your cell phone or personal Norwich email account (this will create continuity and access issues). Use a Norwich program/office email account, or create and alias email account (work with your supervisor and ITS to establish one), to access and manage it.

Respect copyright law. You must have permission to use copyrighted material such as music, art, photos, video and text.

Respect privacy. If you are contacted by an individual asking that a post or photo of them is removed, respect their privacy and remove the post.

Obtain release form for photos. If you are posting images of people outside of the Norwich community (i.e., students, faculty or staff), specifically minors and the greater public, you must obtain a signed copy of [Norwich's photo release form](#). Norwich photography for use on social media, can be found in the University's [photography gallery](#) (the password to download images is "norwich" – all lowercase and no quotes).

Obey terms of service. Read and obey the Terms of Service outlined by individual social media platforms. Violation of the terms can result in account suspension or deletion.

Social media crisis communication protocol

The primary role of social media during a crisis is to direct users to the Norwich website, www.norwich.edu. If a crisis were to occur, most University social media sites should remain silent with the exception of primary, official University presences (e.g. pages managed by the Office of Communications).

Your Norwich social media channel should remain silent during a crisis, unless your followers are actively posting about it on your presence. In the event a response is necessary:

- Do not comment on an individual's posts unless you are dispelling rumors, sending them to the emergency website, www.norwich.edu, or giving media outlets contact information to our Media Relations Manager. Keep all responses neutral and factually oriented. Social media should be used as a calming force.
- Avoid being redundant. Do not post updates linking to the www.norwich.edu website repeatedly.
- Listen to and monitor conversations happening on the University social media channel you manage. Take note of criticisms or praise and save the information in a document to share with the University social media manager.

Social Media Best Practices:

Be timely. Social media provides a way to share information instantly with the world, and visitors expect timely posts and responses. Be sure posts are current and relevant, and that you make at least one post per week so the site does not become stagnant.

Provide excellent customer service. Providing excellent customer service/community management is a key component of social media success. It is becoming more and more commonplace for people to communicate with a brand on social media about their questions, concerns or criticisms. A person's customer service experience on social media shapes their feelings about the brand, so it is important to listen and proactively respond and provide resolution (when necessary, be sure to alert and work with the appropriate offices on campus before responding).

Be conversational. Talk to the audience like you are speaking with someone face to face. Avoid complex words when simple ones will do. Consider posting content that is open-ended and encourages responses.

Leverage photography and videography. A picture is worth a thousand words. Photo and video content on social media reigns supreme, as content with imagery receives greater engagement than those without.

Create rules of use. Circumstances may arise where it is necessary to delete a post or limit access of a social media user who posts inappropriate content or spam. If a rules-of-use is created, it will support your actions. Post the rules in a place where visitors can view them. For an example, visit [Norwich University Facebook Rules of Use](#).

Monitor comments. Be prepared to respond to comments. Not all comments will be positive. Therefore, it is important to respond to negative remarks professionally. Use additional facts or information to help resolve the issue.

Be active. A social media presence requires care and attention. If visitors see the last site activity was a month ago, they may not come back.

Helpful resources:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Hootsuite](#) (Click the Resources tab)
- [SproutSocial](#) (Click the Resources tab)
- [Falcon/Brandwatch](#) (Click the Resources tab)
- [Buffer](#)
- [HubSpot](#) (Click the Resources tab)
- [Social Media Today](#)

There are a variety of benefits in having a social media presence associated with Norwich. That does not mean, however, these are appropriate tools for everyone. If you wish to develop a Norwich social media presence, contact the Norwich University Social Media Manager in the Office of Communications for guidance.