



Social Media Policy for the Johns Hopkins Department of Biomedical Engineering

Document Scope

This document outlines Johns Hopkins (JH) policies covering Johns Hopkins Department of Biomedical Engineering (JHBME)-affiliated social media accounts that are officially and unofficially representative and/or reflective of the JHBME.

An **official JHBME-affiliated social media account** would be any account representing the department or related center, institute, research program, or office and run by a member of the Johns Hopkins BME staff. These accounts make their JHBME affiliation clear in their account bios, through official icon use, and/or in the actual account names. One example of an official JHBME-affiliated social media account would be the BME Twitter account ([@JHUBME](#)). It adheres to Johns Hopkins and BME branding guidelines and its purpose is to promote official department business and communications efforts.

In contrast, an **unofficial JHBME-affiliated social media account** would be any account maintained by individuals associated with JHBME (i.e., staff or faculty) but used for communications goals that may not be entirely related to JHBME. One example of an unofficial JH-affiliated social media account is the [@MikeKlag](#) Twitter account. This account is JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health Dean Klag's personal account, and he uses it to communicate his activities (explicitly JH-related or non-) and also to communicate with peers and colleagues. However, because of his position within Johns Hopkins, anything he posts can, does, and will reflect upon the School. This is an important reality that one must keep in mind whether they hold a prominent position or not, and it is expounded upon further in this document. (See the "Students and Alumni" and/or "Guidelines for Social Media and Online Communications" of this document for more information.)

All of the policies covered in this document apply to official Johns Hopkins and JHBME-affiliated social media accounts, but not all of these policies apply to unofficial JHBME-affiliated account holders. Owners managing either or both types of accounts should contact the social media specialist for questions if aspects of this document are unclear.

1. Overview

Social media platforms offer powerful means of communicating with faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of the Johns Hopkins Biomedical Engineering (JHBME). We strongly encourage faculty, staff, and students to use these platforms to communicate with their colleagues and peers, to share their knowledge with the larger world, and to stay informed about news and happenings in their areas of interest. However, while these platforms create new opportunities to connect with others, employees, including all faculty and staff, need to keep their responsibilities in mind while managing official JHBME-affiliated social media accounts, and they should also be cognizant of how their communications on personal, unofficial JHBME-affiliated social media accounts can and will reflect upon the School.

The Communications and Marketing team in the Office of External Affairs (OEA) manages the official social media accounts for many JH entities. The team, through the Social Media Specialist position (see contact details at the end of this document), oversees and implements the School's social media policy, best practices, and daily content creation and distribution. The team also offers consultation and guidance for faculty, staff, students, departments/offices and affiliated official groups wanting to update and/or potentially launch social media accounts.

The Department of Biomedical Engineering's official social media accounts include [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and a [LinkedIn](#) group.

Facebook: In addition to the official BME Facebook page, closed JHBME class Facebook groups are created for each academic year by the BME Undergraduate Program Manager. There are multiple administrators for each group. These groups become forums to discuss course registration, homework questions, and promotion of clubs, and/or upcoming events. The groups are extremely popular and they live on forever for our JHBME alumni.

2. Who Can Set Up an Official JHBME-affiliated Social Media Account?

Department administration will first determine if there is a need to establish official JHBME-affiliated social media accounts to communicate with their specific audiences about their particular disciplines, research expertise, programs, events, people, and ideas.

While the criteria to establish these official accounts are very flexible, all new official JHBME-affiliated social media account requests must be approved by JHBME primary social media contact (see contact details at the end of this document). It should first be considered if the department would be better served by utilizing the University's existing social media accounts. All official JHBME-affiliated accounts must follow University branding, graphics standards, and style guidelines.

It is important that all new official JHBME-affiliated accounts are confirmed through the Johns Hopkins Office of Communications to ensure:

1. Training in social media policy and best practices;
2. Consistency in brand messaging and design;
3. Avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts between academic units at Johns Hopkins;
4. Compliance with University and School Use-of-Name guidelines; and,
5. Coordination and communication amongst account managers.

Key criteria for establishing official JHBME-affiliated social media accounts include:

1. Specific goals and audiences for using social media to further the mission and strategies of the department, center, institute, etc.;
2. Dedicated JHBME-affiliated staff member to manage the account(s) and who has social media experience and/or is willing to undertake social media skills training;
3. Capacity for dedicated staff member to actively oversee and manage the account(s) on a regular basis;
4. Ability to adhere to Johns Hopkins and JHBME brand, identity, content, and social media guidelines and best practices;
5. Financial budget to support social media training, paid social marketing, or purchasing/creation of visual content (photography, video, infographics, etc.) if desired.

Faculty and/or staff who oversee these official JHBME-affiliated accounts do so as representatives of the department. Understanding the Johns Hopkins overall communication goals, branding and Use-of-Name Guidelines is critical to not just promoting our work but also protecting the reputational integrity and legal requirements of our faculty, staff and students.

Official Johns Hopkins Department of Biomedical Engineering social media accounts must be created using a department-designated social media email address. At the time of this writing there are several alias email addresses for use on individual platforms:

Twitter: bme-twitter@jhu.edu

Facebook: bme-facebook@jhu.edu

LinkedIn: bme-linkedin@jhu.edu

YouTube: bme-youtube@jhu.edu

Note: The email aliases feed into a master email account: bme-SocialMedia@jhu.edu, which is used by the BME social media manager/s.

Department accounts, and the names of administrators for each, should also be shared with the contacts listed in the close of this document. This is a safeguard to ensure that the social media account can be maintained when personnel change, or if an account's manager is unavailable during an emergency incident or crisis.

Note: A full directory of active, official JH-affiliated social media accounts is maintained by the OEA Social Media Specialist. A list of inactive and discontinued sites is also maintained.

3. YouTube

The Department of Biomedical Engineering does not current have a YouTube channel.

[Johns Hopkins University](#) has a wealth of video footage available for [many departments on YouTube](#). This includes channels for the [School of Medicine](#) and the [Whiting School of Engineering](#).

YouTube channels give departments, centers, and institutes more control over their own YouTube content, and make it easier for our audiences to find material relevant to their interests. If the department should decide that a YouTube channel is desired, it is recommended that a discussion with Johns Hopkins Office of Communication's social media manager take place prior to the creation of said channel.

4. Students and Alumni

The use of official JHBME and JHU logos (e.g., "the shield") is reserved for official JHBME-affiliated social media accounts, and therefore students and alumni may not use these logos on their unofficial and/or personal social media accounts without prior JHU approval. The same rules apply for using "JHBME", "JHU", or any variant therein as part of the personal social media account's name.

Exceptions to this rule can be made for factual and accurate references to an individual's status as a student or alumnus/alumna of JHU for identification purposes, however. Here are two examples to make things as clear as possible:

Not Permitted

An alumnus sets up a Twitter account called “@JohnsHopkinsJim” and decorates the account with the JHBME shield as the account's profile picture.

Permitted

An alumnus sets up a Twitter account with a name that doesn't incorporate “Johns Hopkins” (or a variant of the name) and doesn't use an official JHBME/JHU logo as the account's profile picture, but does include some language like “Graduate of @JohnsHopkinsBME” in their account bio.

Not Permitted

An alumnus sets up a Twitter account called “@JohnsHopkinsJim” and decorates the account with the JHBME shield as the account's profile picture.

Permitted

An alumnus sets up a Twitter account with a name that doesn't incorporate “Johns Hopkins” (or a variant of the name) and doesn't use an official JHBME or JHU logo as the account's profile picture, but does include some language like “Graduate of @JHUBME” in their account bio.

These policies are in place to ensure that individuals **do not misrepresent themselves as official JHBME/JHU spokespeople and/or representatives**. As such, the JHBME name and logo may not be used on any student social media account for any use that has the potential to imply or suggest Johns Hopkins endorsement or approval of any programs, events, publications, viewpoints, positions, policies, political and/or social movements, products, services, companies, or activities.

If an individual is interested in receiving permission to use the official JHBME/JHU name or logos, they must submit a request for approval by JHBME social media contact, who may consult the University Office of Communications. In almost all cases, a disclaimer will need to accompany the name or logo if approval is granted.

This information is outlined in the University's Use-of-Name Guidelines.

5. Guidelines for Social Media and Online Communications

Whether you are posting on a social media site with an official JHBME-affiliated account, or your personal social media account, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- No email or online posts can ever be truly private or anonymous. Any statement or image posted online can potentially be distributed or viewed by anyone with access to the Internet regardless of any security settings you may apply. When sending an email message or posting online, consider whether you think the content would be appropriate for your supervisor to read, or the dean of the school, or the president of the university. Would you want it on the front page of the newspaper? If not, do not post it online.
- Do not post confidential or private information online. Some information ([FERPA](#), [HIPAA](#)) about students, alumni, employees, and research subjects is protected by privacy laws, which also apply to material online. Please consult with the Office of Communications if you have questions or concerns.
- Verify information, links, and images before posting. Credit sources. Limit posts about the School to your area of expertise and knowledge. General questions or comments about the School and its policies should be directed to the Office of Communications.
- Social media audiences are global. Your posts are being read and seen by people around the world. Be sensitive to language and cultural understandings and sensitivities both with the words you use and images you display. Consider how messages may be interpreted within a multi-cultural and multi-lingual framework.
- Be a respectful community member and keep your comments appropriate and polite. Avoid becoming defensive or argumentative. Please consult with the Office of Communications for advice on handling sensitive issues.

6. Separating Personal and Professional Life Online

On some social media sites, such as Facebook, personal and professional activity co-exist within the same account. In the case of Facebook specifically, all official JHBME-affiliated pages are administered and/or managed by a user's personal account. Please consider that your official JHBME-affiliated page for your department, center, or institute lives side-by-side with your personal account. Be sure to exercise caution and good judgment when using any personal Facebook accounts – whether they are tethered to a JHBME-affiliated Facebook page or not.

Also in all cases, be sure to exercise caution and good judgment when using any personal Facebook accounts – whether they are tethered to a JHBME-affiliated Facebook page or not.

7. Defining Audience and Goals

Social media allows participants to share information with a group or community. It is not a means for “top down” dissemination of information, but rather a way to foster discussion and interaction among participants.

Before you establish an official JHBME-affiliated social media account, it is important to determine communication goals and sources for content. Consider the demographics of the audience you are likely to reach in each channel. Many social media platforms cater to specific demographics. For instance, the audience on LinkedIn is different from the audience on Instagram.

The Whiting School of Engineering Communications Office or the Johns Hopkins Office of Communications can assist in determining the best social media platform for communicating your message and developing a communications strategy.

The strength of social media is that it allows for conversation among a specific audience or community, which requires regular monitoring and participation. Pose questions and topics that will engage your target audience and spark discussion and sharing. Allow posts from followers and encourage feedback from the community. Try to be responsive to the community, but resist the urge to react to every negative comment. The community will often help regulate and monitor the discussion.

8. Dedicating Resources

Although many social media tools are free to use, social media is not “free” in that it requires time and personnel to manage effectively. Make sure you have dedicated resources to your social media outreach. The Social Media Specialist within the Office of External Affairs can help you gauge necessary workloads, and can also share valuable tools, tips, and best practices to make that workload more manageable.

9. Account Naming: Official JHBME-affiliated Social Media Accounts

Try to use “Johns Hopkins” in the title of your official JHBME-affiliated social media account.

10. JHBME/JHU Images and Logos (General)

The Johns Hopkins name, logo, and identity are copyrighted material, and they have created a Johns Hopkins Biomedical Engineering logo has been created specifically for the use of JHBME. All University [branding guidelines](#) must be observed when using any Johns Hopkins logo.

Before setting up an official JHBME-affiliated social media account please contact the Communications Specialist in the Whiting School of Engineering to make sure that your account's visual appearance adheres to these JHU guidelines.

Note: The University policy bars the use of the Johns Hopkins name and logo to endorse any products, services, or political candidates. Questions about copyright issues and proper use of outside materials on official social media accounts should be directed to the Johns Hopkins Office of Communications.

11. Alumni Outreach

There are official social media accounts available for Johns Hopkins Alumni. JHBME does not current have a social media account for this intention. It is recommended that interested alumni follow Johns Hopkins Alumni Association on [Twitter](#) and on [Facebook](#)

12. Political Activity

Johns Hopkins is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and therefore cannot intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. To make sure you are in compliance, please read the [Johns Hopkins University Policy on Political Activities](#).

13. BME-specific Guidelines for Department Social Media Community Contributors

Johns Hopkins Biomedical Engineering Brand

The Johns Hopkins Biomedical Engineering is widely regarded as the top program of its kind in the world. The department seeks to continue a great history of biomedical innovation and discovery through education and research. Our rigorous comprehensive educational programs are designed to aid students to develop and translate ideas into the tools that remedy real-world clinical and global health challenges.

Through social media we strive to elevate our reputation and authority as a world-renowned leader in biomedical advances. We seek to speak to and engage a broad audience of current and prospective students, faculty, alumni, parents, academia, and medical professionals as well as the community at large. The overarching mandate of JHBME social media initiatives is to cultivate public perception of departmental faculty, staff, and students as thought leaders in the realm of biomedical engineering.

As a social media community contributor you have been chosen to be a voice for Johns Hopkins, the BME department and its brand. It is important that your posts further these goals. We encourage you to be positive, authentic, and to let your personality shine through. Specific guidelines, (in addition to the Johns Hopkins general guidelines shown in section 5,) for official BME community contributors are shown here.

- Posts should make use of hashtags before relevant words or a phrase to proliferate topic (limit 3 to avoid perceived spamming)
- Make use of @names to extend reach of post to the named party's friends or followers.
- Use your own photos or artwork to engage your audience

14. Handling Complaints, Criticisms and Negative Comments

Social media can result in receipt of negative comments or criticism. Actively “listen” to comments. Recommended responses to negative comments may be:

- If the issue cannot be remedied – just **let it go**. Deleting the post is not recommended as it may escalate user frustration and ultimately reflect poorly on the department.
- If the issue seems to be born of frustration or misunderstanding, be patient and take your time. **Respond with empathy, suggest a solution, or state what you have done to help.**
- **Delete comments** if they contain profanity or are an overt attack.
- **Report comments** to the [Johns Hopkins Office of Vice President and General Counsel](#) if they contain a threat against the school or a student.

Suggested reading: [Handling complaints, criticisms and negative comments on social media](#)

15. Social Media Contacts

JH Office of External Affairs

Nick Moran, Social Media Specialist

JH Office of Communication

Gus Sentementes, Audience Engagement Manager

School of Medicine

Therese Lockemy, Director of Internet Marketing and Social Engagement

Whiting School of Engineering

Alaina Willing, Digital Media and Marketing Manager

Department of Biomedical Engineering

Cathy Jancuk, Facebook

Cathy Schoonover, LinkedIn