

1 **USF SYSTEM POLICY**

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3 **Policy Number:** 0-206

4 **Policy Title:** Digital Communications

5 **Responsible Office:** Communication & Marketing

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8 **I. PURPOSE & INTENT**

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10 The purpose of this Policy is to outline standards required for all official University of South
11 Florida System (USF System) digital communications. This includes, but is not limited to
12 web sites, domain names, social media sites, native mobile applications, as defined herein,
13 and digital advertising.

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15 **II. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

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17 In an effort to ensure accuracy and consistency of brand messaging throughout the USF
18 System and to ensure compliance with the Federal Program Integrity Rules established by the
19 Department of Education, which “strengthens the Department's authority to take action
20 against institutions engaging in deceptive advertising, marketing, and sales practices,” The
21 Office of University Communications and Marketing (“UCM”) is responsible for
22 administering and enforcing this policy to deter any false, erroneous, or misleading
23 statements regarding program or institutional descriptions and to ensure that the USF System
24 messaging is consistent with the university’s branding and communication strategy.

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26 **III. APPLICABILITY & AUTHORITY**

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28 The following Policy applies to all regional institutions; departments; colleges; schools;
29 centers; institutes; programs; students; employees, including faculty; and administrative units
30 (“USF System Units”) that are communicating, either directly or indirectly, and formally or
31 informally, on behalf of the USF System.

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33 **IV. METHODS OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS**

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35 **A. Official External USF System Websites**

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37 Websites produced in direct support of and sponsored by USF System Units with a
38 primary audience of external users are considered Official USF System Websites (“USF
39 System Internet Websites”). Information housed on these sites is for public
40 consumption.

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42 All USF Internet Websites must be managed through a Content Management System
43 (“CMS”) approved by the USF System Chief Information Officer. The websites must
44 utilize approved CMS templates to ensure consistency and compliance. All sites and site
45 managers must adhere to the Web Templates Terms of Use

46 [\[http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/terms-of-use.aspx\]](http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/terms-of-use.aspx). For assistance in ensuring
47 compliance with this requirement, please contact UCM at ucm@usf.edu.
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49 For the purposes of this policy, the following sites are not considered USF System
50 Internet Websites:

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- 52 1. Student organization websites managed and hosted independently from
53 USF System resources.
- 54 2. Faculty members' websites using USF System resources primarily for
55 communicating instructional information and materials with students.
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58 **B. Official Internal USF System Websites**

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60 Websites produced in direct support of and sponsored by the USF System, with a primary
61 audience of internal users are considered Official USF System Intranet Websites ("USF
62 System Portal Sites"). Information housed within these sites is strictly for students, faculty
63 and staff that have a USF NetID.
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65 All USF System Portal Sites must be managed through the USF System Portal for internal
66 communications and must use the Portal templates provided by UCM to ensure consistency
67 and compliance. All sites and site managers must adhere to the Intranet Terms of Use
68 located on the UCM site [<http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/web.aspx>]. For assistance in
69 ensuring compliance with this requirement, please contact UCM at ucm@usf.edu.
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71 C. Web Applications (both internal and external) should adhere to branding standards where
72 possible. A variety of branding templates and standards are available for departments and
73 vendors to utilize. For assistance in ensuring compliance with this requirement, please
74 contact IT at webservices@usf.edu.
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76 **D. Social Media Accounts:** For the purposes of this Policy, social media is defined as any
77 "publicly accessible platform through which users create online communities to share
78 information, ideas, personal messages, and/or other content."
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80 Any social media account that is used to support research or instruction in furtherance of
81 USF System's mission shall be considered an Official USF System Social Media Account
82 and requires a faculty or administrative sponsor. For reference, general guidelines for
83 Official USF System Social Media Accounts include the following:
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- 85 1. USF System Units shall work with UCM to evaluate what, if any, social media
86 presence is necessary to meet their communications needs.
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- 88 2. Individuals may not portray themselves as acting on behalf of the USF System
89 or any part of the USF System, or present a social media account as an official
90 USF System account unless authorized to do so.

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3. To ensure brand consistency and messaging, UCM will periodically evaluate all existing and newly developed Official USF System Social Media Accounts and determine whether or not they will be recognized as an Official USF System Social Media Account. Accounts that do not meet appropriate thresholds outlined by UCM will be terminated.
4. New Accounts: If a USF System Unit would like to establish an Official USF System Social Media Account, they must contact UCM at ucm@usf.edu to obtain permission.
5. Employee Personal Accounts are not official USF accounts and must be maintained in a separate and distinct manner from all Official USF System Social Media Accounts in which the employee manages.

E. Mobile Applications

A native mobile application is one that is installed directly onto the smart phone and can work, in most cases, with no internet connectivity depending on the nature of the application. All native mobile applications, related to communications, marketing and community involvement must be approved by UCM and IT. USF System Units are prohibited from participating in or procuring mobile development software/services which are not approved by the University Technology Standards Board (UTSB) per [USF System Policy 0-512 Information Technology Governance Structure](#).

Requests for mobile applications should be directed to IT Web Services at webservices@usf.edu.

V. CONTENT USE

A. Posts and Other Content

Only the views expressed on Official USF System Internet Websites, Official USF System Portal Sites, and Official USF System Social Media Accounts (“USF System Digital Resources”) are those of the USF System. User provided content is not screened or evaluated during the submission process. Opinions expressed by other users do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the University.

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B. Advertising/Sponsorships

USF System Digital Resources and associated network resources shall not be used to advertise or sell non-USF System products or services. Only USF System Units with an existing and approved advertising or sponsorship program may extend it to their website in accordance with UCM’s requirements.

C. Use of Name, Seal, and Logo

The name, seal and logo of the USF System are the official symbols and registered trademarks of the USF System and may only be used in compliance with [USF System Policy 0-215 Use of USF System Name and Symbols](#).

Accounts and pages must feature the respective unit's official name, logo and/or signature. When a social media platform allows changes to layout or design, official university colors shall be used.

D. Confidential Information and Illegal or Improper Use

Confidential and personal information, shall not be published on or disclosed on USF System Digital Resources in violation of [USF System Policy 0-501 Information Technology Resources – Use and Protection](#).

Use of USF System Digital Resources must be in compliance with [USF System Policy 0-502 Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources](#).

E. Personal Use of Official Websites/Accounts

USF System Digital Resources shall be used to support the mission of the USF System only and are not to be used for personal gain or to promote personal business or business activities.

F. Acceptable Use of Protected Content

Rights and permissions must be secured before posting, sharing or distributing protected content (i.e. copyrighted materials or trademarks), including but not limited to: music, art’ photographs, texts, videos or portions of videos, or information otherwise considered the intellectual property of the USF System or any third party. All third party content distributed through USF System Digital Resources with permission must be appropriately attributed to its source and owner, except when expressly not required by the respective content license.

G. Use of Identifying Images

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It is the responsibility of each USF System Unit to obtain prior permission (i.e. a release) to post, share or distribute certain identifiable images of individuals as required. Distribution of such photographs or videos in conjunction with an official USF System communication must be authorized by UCM at ucm@usf.edu.

H. Top Level Domain Naming

The USF System is the sole owner of the usf.edu, usfsp.edu, and usfsm.edu top level domains and governs the use of the domains for their academic, communication and research missions.

1. Standard Addressing

Standard addressing for USF External Websites will be: www.usf.edu/<keyword>. UCM will work with applicable parties to establish the most appropriate keyword for each specific USF System Unit.

It is understood that there may be specific technical or business needs which require non-standard addressing, such as 3-part names (i.e. [.<keyword>.usf.edu](http://<keyword>.usf.edu)). For these exceptions, USF System Units may submit a request for non-standard addressing to UCM for consideration.

2. Third-Party Vendors

It is recognized that the USF System regularly enters agreements with third-parties who host websites and applications for the USF System. USF System Units that wish to extend the usf.edu domain name to such sites or applications must request the extension through UCM, in consultation with IT Web Services.

UCM and IT Web Services will consider such requests provided that:

- i. The third party adheres to the USF System branding standards as provided on the UCM Site [<http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/brand.aspx>].
- ii. The USF System has a properly executed contract with the service provider.
- iii. The third party adheres to all USF System privacy policies.
- iv. The third party adheres to all USF System security practices and policies.

3. Use of Domain Extensions Other Than .edu

- 219 i. **.com Addresses:** In order to protect the USF System’s identity and
220 the public’s association with the USF System as an educational
221 institution, .com or commercial domain names are strictly
222 prohibited absent an approved exception in accordance with the
223 Digital Communication Procedure. [Note: Confirm with Tom this
224 is address is not already taken]
- 225 ii. **.org/Other Addresses:** While standard addressing should be used
226 whenever appropriate and possible, it is recognized that the USF
227 System’s research mission occasionally calls for the use of .org or
228 other non-standard usf.edu addressing. USF System Units may
229 request the use of such an address provided: [Note: Confirm with
230 Tom this is address is not already taken]
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- 233 a) The address is not used for an official university
234 department or unit (such entities should utilize
235 standard addressing).
- 236 b) The purpose is to support a grant, research or non-
237 traditional university program.
- 238 c) Limited branding standards for such programs have
239 been met (entities may work through UCM on a
240 case-by-case basis for this).
- 241 d) Requests for .org or other addressing can be made
242 by e-mailing webservices@usf.edu. Requests will
243 be considered by UCM in consultation with IT Web
244 Services. If approved, entities must follow the
245 procedures and guidelines for setting up such
246 addressing at www.usf.edu/it .
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248 **V. EXCEPTIONS**

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250 Appropriate leadership within UCM and IT Web Services may grant limited
251 exceptions on a case by case basis in accordance with the Digital Communications
252 Procedure.

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254 **VI. ENFORCEMENT**

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256 Misuse of USF System Digital Resources in violation of USF System Regulations
257 and Policies or as determined by the USF System in its sole discretion, is prohibited
258 and may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution. UCM and IT Web
259 Services reserve the right and discretion to remove any site in violation of this Policy.

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261 Use of USF System logos on any website or social media account by anyone,
262 including USF System Units, in violation of USF System policy and/or the rights of
263 the USF System is strictly prohibited. All use of USF System logos or other

264 intellectual property is unauthorized unless permission is granted in writing and
265 signed by an authorized official with proper delegated authority. Failure of the USF
266 System to enforce its rights does not constitute a waiver of such rights. The USF
267 System reserves all rights whether or not expressly referenced herein. Please refer to
268 UCM's logo usage protocol and other brand guidelines at
269 <http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/brand.aspx> to ensure compliance.

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272 **VII. RELATED INFORMATION:**

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274 • Copyright: <http://guides.lib.usf.edu/content.php?pid=56649&sid=419978>

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276 • Fair Use: <http://guides.lib.usf.edu/content.php?pid=56649&sid=420228>

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278 • Copyright Free Sources:

279 <http://guides.lib.usf.edu/content.php?pid=56649&sid=4426219>

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281 • Copyright Materials- Use and General Principles:

282 <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-105.pdf>

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284 • USF Brand Guidelines: <http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/brand.aspx>

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286 • USF CMS Website Migration Process:

287 <http://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/content-migration-process.aspx>

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289 • U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/>

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291 • Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

292 (SACSCOC): <http://www.sacscoc.org/>

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295 Authorized and signed by:

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297 Tom Hoof, Chief Marketing Officer

298 Judy Genshaft, President