



Eastern Kentucky University

Policy and Regulation Library

University Policy: 1.5.7POL

Responsible Office(s): University Counsel

Effective: November 12, 2025

Next Review Date: Fall 2030

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Institutional Viewpoint Neutrality

Statement

Eastern Kentucky University (“EKU” or “University”) affirms its commitment to fostering an environment that promotes intellectual diversity and upholds the free exchange of ideas. The University or its employees shall not discriminate against individuals or groups based on their social or political viewpoints, and values the contributions of all community members to robust dialogue and the free exchange of viewpoints to contribute to an intellectually diverse campus community. Nothing herein restricts or limits the First Amendment rights of students, faculty, or staff to engage in personal expression or advocacy, as provided for in EKU’s University Policy [9.3.3, Policy on Governing Time, Place, and Manner of Demonstrations, Meetings, and Other Assemblies](#), Policy [4.1.1, Academic Freedom](#), and Administrative Regulation [8.3.10 Campaigning & Political Activity of Employees](#). EKU supports the rights of all individuals within its community to participate in civil discourse in their personal capacities, ensuring that the University remains a space where a wide range of perspectives can be expressed and debated freely.

In support of those rights, the University shall not require any individual to endorse or condemn a specific ideology, political viewpoint, or social viewpoint to be eligible for hiring, contract renewal, tenure, promotion, admission, or graduation.

Procedures

I. Institutional Statements

The President has the sole authority and responsibility to issue Official Statements on behalf of Eastern Kentucky University. The President may select a designee, including the University Spokesperson, to issue Official Statements as appropriate. The President shall abide by the principle of Institutional Neutrality, and shall not make any Official Statement on political, social, or

cultural matters that are not directly related to the operations, mission, or legal obligations of the University.

University leaders, faculty/staff, colleges, departments, and units should not issue any institutional or official statements, as defined in this Policy, unless expressly authorized.

II. Statements on Behalf of the Board of Regents

As noted in the Bylaws of the University Board of Regents, all Official Statements on behalf of the Board shall be issued by the Board Chair. The Board and Board Chair shall abide by the principle of Institutional Neutrality, and shall not make any Official Statement on political, social, or cultural matters that are not directly related to the operations, mission, or legal obligations of the University.

III. Statements Made in Private Capacity

University Community Members have a constitutional right to freedom of expression, including the right to engage in political, social, or personal speech in a private capacity. However, such expression must be clearly distinguished from official University communications and must not imply or appear to represent the views or positions of ECU or any of its colleges, departments, or units. To preserve institutional neutrality, the following restrictions apply:

- a) University employee email, social media accounts, or web address should not be used when issuing statements in a private capacity.
- b) Elements of the ECU visual or brand identity should not accompany such messages, including the university's name, logo, or associated images, unless used as part of a position title by a faculty member to demonstrate a field of study or subject matter expertise.
- c) University stationery, backdrops, or signature lines, either in print or electronically, should not be used for or include statements made in a private capacity. All employees must use the institutionally approved ECU Email Signature Generator in official communication and shall not include additional taglines or statements in an ECU email signature line, unless required for certain professional positions.
- d) When speaking at professional or academic conferences or engaging in activities related to professional associations, University Community Members should make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not for the institution.

Definitions

- **Official Statement:** A formal communication issued on behalf of Eastern Kentucky University or the Board of Regents, intended to represent the institution's or Board's official position on a matter. Official statements include, but are not limited to:
 - Campus-, unit-, college- or department-wide emails
 - Messages published on EKU websites
 - Messages published on printed materials
 - Social media posts on EKU accounts
 - Statements made to news media
- **Institutional Neutrality:** The principle that the University refrains from taking positions on political, social, or cultural matters not directly related to its operations, mission, or legal obligations.
- **University Spokesperson:** An individual designated by the President or their designee to speak or issue communications on behalf of the University in an official capacity.
- **University Community Members:** Students, faculty, and staff, as well as anyone doing business for or with the University

Responsibilities

- **University President:**
 - Approves and issues official institutional statements; may designate spokespersons as appropriate.
- **Board of Regents Chair:**
 - Approves and issues official statements on behalf of the Board of Regents.

Violations of the Policy

Failure to comply with this Policy may be in violation of Laws, Regulations, and Policies and will be handled through the normal University processes.

Policy Adoption Review and Approval

Policy Revised

Date

November 12, 2025

Entity

Board of Regents

Action

Adopted

Policy Issued

Date

May 14, 2025

Entity

Board of Regents

Action

Adopted