

Strategies to Protect Yourself Online in the Current Climate

A Guide from the AAUP and Faculty First Responders

In a moment when it is becoming increasingly difficult to predict the consequences of our online speech and choices, we hope you will find these strategies and resources helpful.

If You Need Support Right Now

- If you are facing suspension, dismissal, or other employment repercussions as a result of your speech online, reach out to your union or AAUP chapter immediately and contact the AAUP national staff.
 - To find your AAUP chapter, visit <https://www.aaup.org/chapters/find-chapter>.
 - To contact the AAUP national, write to academicfreedom@aaup.org.
 - To contact your AFT union local, reach out to your local union officer or write to highereddept@aft.org.
- If you are facing harassment for your views expressed online, contact Faculty First Responders (FFR) at facultyfirstresponders@gmail.com for peer-to-peer advice and support. (FFR cannot and does not provide legal advice or representation.)

Top Five Tips for Engaging with Social Media

1. Set your personal social media accounts to private mode. When prompted, approve the setting to make all previous posts private.
2. Be mindful that anything you post online can be screenshotted and shared.
3. Before posting or reposting online commentary, pause and ask yourself:
 - a. Am I comfortable with this view potentially being shared with my employer, my students, or the public?
 - b. Have I (or the person I am reposting) expressed this view in terms I would be comfortable sharing with my employer, my students, or the public?
4. In your social media bios, state that the views expressed through the account represent your own opinions and not your employer. You do not need to name your employer.
5. Consider posting positive statements about positions you support rather than negative statements about positions you disagree with. Some examples could be:
 - Academic freedom is nonnegotiable.
 - The faculty united will never be divided.
 - Higher ed research saves lives.

- Higher ed transforms lives.
- Politicians are interfering with your child's education.

Top Five Digital Safety Tips

1. Use strong, unique, complex passwords and passcodes on devices and accounts. A password manager can save them all for you.
2. Install software updates immediately. Updates are usually security-related.
3. Enable two-factor authentication for all social media and other sensitive accounts.
4. Do not use your employer-provided email address, devices, or campus wifi for nonwork activities, including organizing and any other sensitive activities.
5. Search for your name in common search engines to find out what is available about you online. Put your name in quotation marks to narrow the search. Search both with and without your institution attached to your name.

Three Key AAUP-AFT Member Benefits

1. [Trauma Counseling Programs and Services](#). The AFT offers support and services to members who experience workplace trauma. If you or other members experience a traumatic event at work, this trauma counseling benefit can provide support.
2. [Legal Services](#).
3. [Occupational Liability Insurance](#). AAUP-AFT offers insurance that provides coverage for legal expenses in the event that you are sued for activities performed in the course of your work duties.

Get More Information

- AAUP [Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom](#) (CDAF)
- CDAF [Academic Freedom First Aid Kit](#)
- Additional AAUP Resources:
 - [Legal](#)
 - [Digital Security](#)
 - [Dox Defense](#)
 - [Responding to Freedom of Information Requests \(FOI\)](#)
- AAUP/AFT [“FAQ: Campus Free Speech/Academic Freedom in Politically Charged Times”](#)
- AFT [Guide to Defending Higher Education in 2025](#)
- Faculty First Responders [Guide to Academic Freedom Self-Defense](#)
- AFT [Know Your Rights Guide: Academic Freedom and Campus Free Speech For Scholars and Students on Visas](#)
- AFT [Mobilization Best Practices](#). Includes information on rights and safety during and while planning rallies and other mobilizations.