

Online Community Guidelines

Our online communities provide a convenient place where current students, prospective students, faculty, employees, and alumni—whether they live around the corner or across the globe—can easily connect and discuss topics related to the pursuit of a degree from Western International University (West).

We want you to participate. We encourage lively discussion. Feel free to post constructive comments that do more than identify issues. We encourage posts that propose solutions to problems.

Keep in mind that we're all part of a shared community founded in trust and fairness. That's why any community's interaction hinges largely on its members' agreement to follow common rules and guidelines. This content does not specify an Internet standard of any kind.

Forum Topic and Comment Guidelines

Here is a summary of our online community guidelines:

- **Profanity:** Profanity is not permitted.
- **Derogatory Comments:** Derogatory comments of any kind toward individual students or groups are not permitted.
- **Sexually Explicit Material:** Posts or forum topics containing sexually explicit language, material, or links to sexually explicit material are not permitted.
- **Copyrighted Material:** Posts containing others' copyrighted material are not permitted.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** Comments or forum topics referring to actions that are academically dishonest or unethical are not permitted.
- **Non-Constructive Negative Statements about Western International University Faculty or Administrators:** Comments or forum posts that make libelous statements or aggressively attack faculty or administrators, in general or by name, are not permitted.
- **Commercial Posts and Solicitations:** Posts containing commercial content or solicitations are not permitted. This extends to students seeking to drive traffic to their own, non-Western International University-affiliated websites and/or commercial ventures.
- **Personal Information:** You should refer to each social media platform's Terms of Use Agreement. Posting phone numbers, email addresses, home or work addresses, last names, grades, or similar personal information for yourself or others is not permitted.

Online Community FAQs

- **May I post a comment if I believe I have an issue or negative experience with the University?**

We encourage any student who feels they are being treated unfairly to go through the proper student grievance process as set forth in the Western International University Catalog. Comments that are thoughtful and constructive are generally appropriate as long as they don't include any material otherwise not allowed on the forum boards.

- **What should I do if I find a post that I think is inappropriate?**

Please use the report function provided by the online community platform. Do not attempt to moderate discussions or correct other users yourself.

Western International University and/or the online community platform reserve the right in its/their sole discretion to review all posts and remove any content that does not fully comply with the online community's platform's Terms of Use Agreement or these Guidelines. Notwithstanding the foregoing, neither Western International University nor the online community platform assumes any responsibility to undertake such review and you remain solely responsible for your posted content and activities in these forums. In addition, Western International University, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to restrict or eliminate your access to this site and its related forums for violating these Guidelines or for any reason, or no reason.

Netiquette

The term "netiquette" is used to refer to online etiquette over networks, such as online communities, forums, and even online learning environments.

Following the rules of netiquette improves the readability of your messages, lays the groundwork for making trustworthy connections and helps other people to better understand you.

Here are a few guidelines to help you follow proper netiquette:

- **Stay on topic.** While discussion is encouraged, rambling conversations aren't conducive to a quality experience.
- **Use appropriate subject lines in your replies.** As a conversation evolves, it's helpful to change the subject line of a threaded message to reflect the changing topic. For example, if the subject line reads "Participation requirements" and the conversation evolves into a discussion on attendance, changing the subject line to "Attendance" in your reply would help others interested in the topic to join the conversation.
- **Avoid "I agree" and "Me, too!" messages.** Spending time reading messages without substance can be frustrating for all parties.
- **Avoid posting messages using all caps.** (IT'S LIKE SHOUTING!) It's OK to use all caps occasionally to emphasize a point, but you should only capitalize the individual words you want to highlight, not the entire sentence or paragraph.
- **Avoid writing errors, even when "talking" with one another.** Even though messages posted are conversational and often informal, please avoid posting messages with grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors. Post intelligible messages despite the informality of the environment.
- **Carefully choose the format for your messages.** Long paragraphs are difficult for other people to follow on-screen. In general, try to limit each paragraph to five to seven lines and avoid using font styles, colors, and sizes that are difficult to read. Please also avoid using stationery because it takes longer to download.
- **Be friendly.** Remember that even though you can't see the person you're connecting with online, you're still connecting with someone. Before posting a comment, ask yourself "Would I say this to a person face to face?" If the answer is no, don't post it.
- **Avoid responding when emotions are running high.** If you're angry about something someone has posted, don't reply to his or her message until you've had a chance to calm down. Remember, your posted messages can be seen by everyone, even potential employers.
- **Before posting anyone's picture on any social networking site, get the person's permission.** Give your friends, family members, and co-workers the opportunity to control their digital privacy.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms are commonly used in online communications to quickly express words and phrases that we use in everyday conversation. Abbreviations and acronyms that are frequently used online include:

BTW: By the way

FYI: For your information

IMO: In my opinion

IMHO: In my humble opinion

IMNSHO: In my not-so-humble opinion

OIC: Oh, I see

OTOH: On the other hand

ROTFL: Rolling on the floor, laughing

LOL: Laughing out loud

TIA: Thanks, in advance

<g>: Grin

Emoticons

Writers often use “emoticons” to convey their feelings in electronic communications like text messages, e-mails, and message boards. Emoticons blend text and punctuation together to visually portray facial expressions.

Tilt your head slightly to the left to read the following emoticons:

:-) Smiling

;-) Winking and smiling

:-D Laughing

:-(Frown

:-o Oh!