

STUDENT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Student Social Media Policy

Introduction

1. The University of Law recognises that social media can offer many social, academic, and professional benefits and it is an important method of communication. However, there is an inherent risk attached to its use, in that, it is an instantaneous and far-reaching form of communication and inappropriate use can impact upon staff, students and the reputation of the University. The purpose of this policy is to help students understand the implications of the misuse of social media.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
 - The Student Charter and Student Code of Behaviour which set out the standards of behaviour expected of students
 - Dignity at Work and Study Policy which outlines the University's position on harassment and bullying including harassment and bullying conducted online through social media
 - Student IT Acceptable Use Policy which sets out the rules for the use of the University's computing facilities
 - Academic Freedom Policy which sets out the framework of the University's approach to academic freedom
 - Student Discipline Regulations which set out the action that may be taken for breach of University policies, procedures, and protocols

Scope of this policy

3. This policy applies to all students who engage in online conversations or share content in the context of a social networks. The policy extends to students' use of social media in a personal capacity, where this impacts the University, its students, staff, or the wider community. It also applies where students use social media associated with a University club or society or the Students' Union.
4. This policy applies to social media communications made privately or publicly at any time and from anywhere, including away from campus and on personal devices, including those to an individual, or limited group of recipients.
5. Students are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and it may be that in certain circumstances they shall also be considered responsible for the actions of others, within and outside the University, who share content they have posted. Such circumstances would include where a student intends for or encourages others to share more widely the digital material they have posted.
6. Students should be aware that once digital material has been created and/or shared via social media they will have very limited control over its permanence and

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audience and therefore digital material could reach a wider audience than would have been expected or intended. Students should consider this point carefully before posting on social media. In this context students should be aware that the University may treat it as foreseeable that digital material shared via social media will be disseminated to the world at large, and if so, it will not be possible for a student to put forward as a defence to any disciplinary action that they did not expect that the content in question would be revealed to people beyond the intended recipient.

7. Nothing in this policy is intended to have the effect of limiting either freedom of speech or academic freedom, subject to that freedom being exercised within the law.
8. For the purpose of this policy social media is any online interactive tool which enables participation, interaction, and exchanges. This includes any existing platforms and any new platforms that may be developed. It includes blogs, instant messaging, discussions forums, and review sites. It also applies to the chat function in conferencing software, VLE and online classrooms.

Responsibility for this policy

9. Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

Principles for personal use of social media

10. Students who have a social media presence which refers to the University, or from which the University can be identified, should ensure it is clear they are speaking in a personal capacity. Students should not declare, imply, or indicate that their content or views are representative of those of the University.
11. The University prohibits the use of its logo in any social media network profile, background images or cover photographs without its permission.
12. The University prohibits the use of its name, or derivatives of its name, within the name of a social media account without its permission.
13. Students should ensure that their social media communications do not
 - 13.1. Say anything or include any image which is discriminatory, illegal, obscene, defamatory, or threatening
 - 13.2. Say anything or including any image which may be considered to be bullying or harassing of any individual or group of individuals on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act 2010. The University has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and students who are

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uncertain about what constitutes bullying or harassment should familiarise themselves with the Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

13.3. Reveal confidential information about the University, its staff, or its students

13.4. Use someone else's image or written content without their permission or commit any other breach of copyright

13.5. Say anything or post any image which may compromise the reputation or safety of the University or anyone connected with the University

13.6. Breach the terms of the use of the service provider

14. Students should be aware of the risks that misuse of social media may pose to their employability as a graduate or placement student. Social media content in the public domain could be accessed by future employers, professional bodies or academic institutions.

15. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the privacy settings for each social media platform and consider how much of their information they want to appear in the public domain. The University provides information on using social media safely, as well as other online safety guidance, which is available to students through ELITE, the University's virtual learning environment.

Principles for Use of Social Media on behalf of a Society or Club

16. Students using social media on behalf of a society or club should comply with the principles set out in paragraphs 9 to 14 above.

17. Where a society or club has two or more committee members running social media for the society or club, one user should be nominated as the lead administrator. This person will be responsible for

17.1. making sure that the login details are shared only with those who have a real need to use the account

17.2. revoking access to the account where necessary, such as if a student leaves the society or club or breaches this policy

17.3. ensuring that all content produced for the social media account is in line with this policy

Compliance

18. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Student Discipline Regulations. The University may request the removal of

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content if it is deemed to be a risk to the reputation or safety of the University of anyone connected with the University.

19. Where a criminal offence may have been committed the University may report the matter to the police.
20. Any individual who is subject to bullying or harassment on social media will have the full support of the University to bring a complaint under the Dignity at Work and Study Policy which outlines the procedures to be followed. Reports of bullying and harassment can be made online using the University's Report and Support platform or by contacting the DignityComplaints@law.ac.uk.

Monitoring and review

21. Responsibility for monitoring and review of this policy lies with the Academic Board.

Version history:

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Director of Student Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	Initial Drafting and approval by Academic Board	October 2021