

University of South Wales

Social Media Policy

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Title: Social Media Policy					
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V. 1	December 2012	Policy set	AD		
V. 1.1	April 2013	Rebranding to University of South Wales	AD		
V. 1.2	9 December 2013	Minor textual updates (University name, staff intranet name)	AD		
V. 2	November 2015	Revised Policy (include reference to the student population)	JR	For approval at VCEB ICT 04/12/15	
V. 2.1	February 2016	VCEB ICT requested clarification on the wording: 'Members' defined in Page. 2.	JR		Feb 2017

Social Media Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The internet provides unique opportunities for members of the University i.e. (its staff and students) to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Online blogs etc.

We actively encourage members of the University to use these mediums, but we also recognise that use of social media can potentially pose risks to the University's confidential information and reputation, and can jeopardise its compliance with legal obligations.

To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of productivity and to ensure that University Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems are used only for appropriate purposes, we expect all members of the University to adhere to this policy both on the University's premises and in their own time

It should be noted that this policy will be reviewed periodically and may change in line with technological, legislative and other developments.

The latest version of the Social Media Policy is available via the: [IT Services Web Pages](#) and [UniLife](#).

DEFINITION

Social media is the broad term given to describe the latest evolution of internet and web based communication platforms, which enable users to rapidly connect and interact in a variety of different formats, examples provided above.

WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY

This policy covers all members of the University, (staff and students).

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to:

- Encourage **good practice**.
- **Protect** the University and its employees.
- **Protect** its students, visitors and guests.
- Clarify where and how **existing policies** apply to social media.
- **Promote effective and innovative use** of social media as part of the University's activities.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during University hours or otherwise, and regardless of whether the social media is accessed using University ICT equipment, public equipment or personal equipment.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during University hours, and regardless of whether University equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of the University suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with the University investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

Members of the University will be required to remove internet and/or social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy, making recommendations for change to minimise risks and ensuring that the policy meets legal requirements and reflects best practice lies with the [Vice-Chancellor's Executive Board \(VCEB\) ICT Sub-Group](#).

All members of the University are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it.

Any misuse of social media or breach of this policy should be reported to the [University Secretary's Office](#) via: appeals.complaints@southwales.ac.uk.

The University will ensure this policy is accessible to all members of staff and incorporate in induction information. Similarly, students will be guided of their responsibilities via student inductions.

The University will periodically review and update the policy and any significant changes will be communicated accordingly.

LINKS TO OTHER USW POLICIES / PROCEDURES

The USW [Disciplinary Procedure](#) may be invoked where by a breach of the Social Media Policy has taken place by an employee of the University of South Wales.

For the student population, the Student Charter has been developed jointly by the University of South Wales and its Students' Union to enable its students to understand what will be expected of them during their studies, and what they can expect of the University. Students at the University are expected to observe University policies and procedures, to respect persons and property and to show courtesy and consideration at all times. Any alleged misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with the [Student Conduct Regulations](#).

Members of the University should familiarise themselves with key University policies including:

- [ICT Computing Regulations](#)
- [Information Security Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Statement](#)
- [Copyright & Intellectual Property](#)
- [Records Management Policy Statement](#)
- [Dignity at Work Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct on Personal Relationship between Staff and Students](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy](#)

REGULATIONS

Members should note the following regulations on personal internet presence:

- Use a personal email address and not your University email address.
- You are reminded to set your personal settings on social media sites to ensure inappropriate information is not put into the public domain by mistake.
- You should not use your site to attack or abuse colleagues, students or 3rd party organisations with whom the University is actively engaged. You should respect the privacy and feelings of others and be aware that making comments about certain personal characteristics could constitute harassment under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and that you could face prosecution under that or other legislation.
- You should not include contact details or pictures etc. of other members of staff or students without their prior permission. Remember that if you break the law on your site (for example by posting something defamatory), you will be personally responsible.

AS A STAFF MEMBER

- You must take personal responsibility for your social media content. If you can be identified as working for the University, you must make sure your profiles, and anything you post, are congruent with how the University expect you to present yourself to colleagues and students. You must be mindful that even if you do not name the University as your employer, people who know you and where you work may still make an unwelcome association with the University. If you are in any doubt about what is and is not acceptable, this must be discussed with your line manager.
- You must protect the University's interests and you must not publish anything that could directly or indirectly damage these or compromise the University's reputation.
- You must always show respect to others when using social media. You must never criticise or make defamatory comments about the University, students, your colleagues or anybody else you come into contact with professionally.
- You must not do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - a. making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or partnership status, race, religion/belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation, or any other distinction;
 - b. use social media to bully another individual (such as an employee or student of the University) or;
 - c. post images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.
- If you think something on your site gives rise to concerns about a conflict of interest and, in particular, concerns about impartiality or confidentiality this must be discussed with your line manager.
- Do not reveal confidential information about the University, its staff, students or its intellectual property. This might include aspects of University policy or details of internal discussions. Consult with your manager if you are unclear about what might be confidential.
- If someone offers to pay you for site content this could constitute a conflict of interest and you must consult with your line manager. Do not forget that you are required contractually to obtain permission to undertake paid or unpaid work outside the University.
- If someone from the media or press contacts you about posts on your site which relate to the University you should discuss it with your line manager and the [Corporate Communications Team](#) - USW's [Media Policy](#).
- Whereby you have political views, the University has a policy on visits, media and activity involving political parties and candidates - USW's [Political Policy](#):

In particular note section – 19 –Campaigning by USW Colleagues:

Colleagues are free to express political views in support of and against particular parties and to engage in political campaigning providing that:

- a. Any social media posting makes it clear that such views are their own personal opinions and not the position of the University. Where a reasonable person might infer USW support, particularly for example from a colleague whose role or seniority is such that they speak for USW in public, colleagues are advised to use their best judgement in the context of the University's social media policy and to err on the side of discretion in their public social media comments.
 - b. Such activity does not take place in work time or using University resources, including but not limited to computer equipment, social media feeds, or email addresses.
 - c. The University's staff communications channels, including The Hub, are not used to disseminate such political views.
- You should not update your personal site during paid working time, unless such activities form part of a work related activity.

ENCOURAGED PRACTICE

- Academic uses – The University recognises that social media has the potential to support and advance learning opportunities and encourages its use in this way. Where existing supported learning technologies, e.g. Virtual Learning Environment, offer equivalent functionality, consideration should be given to the most effective medium.
- Collaborative uses – The University supports both internal (cross Faculty / Department) and external collaboration and recognises that social media can provide opportunities to support this work.
- Communications and External Relations uses – The University recognises the opportunity to communicate with prospective and existing customers through social media.
- Student uses – Prospective and existing students, along with others who have an interest in the University, are active in social media, e.g. setting up Facebook groups and blogging. Marketing and Student Recruitment may look at these sites, if appropriate, to get further insights into the needs of University customers. Possible responses to any contentious issues identified in any unofficial social media sites should be referred to the Communications Working Group via the [Corporate Communications Team](#) in the first instance.

- Alumni uses – The University recognises the opportunity to communicate with existing students and alumni through social media to develop an on-going relationship with them. Overall responsibility for alumni relations lies with the Alumni Relations and Development Office in Research and Business Engagement.
- Students' Union uses – The University understands that the Students' Union will want to use social media to maximise the exposure of its services and the associated societies to existing and prospective students. These uses are the responsibilities of the Students' Union.
- Welsh Language uses – When possible, social communication should be made in both Welsh and English.

OTHER POTENTIAL USES

The University will not refer to social networking sites when assessing student applications unless such sites are specifically highlighted in the application. Should an individual's site be viewed, any information pertaining to a Protected Characteristic will not influence any decisions.

- The University may refer to social networking sites when investigating breaches of discipline or grievance cases, e.g. harassment, anti-social behaviour.
- The University may monitor member's use of social media, along with their wider use of Company IT resources, to make sure members are complying with this Policy. Whenever members use our IT resources and systems, they give us their consent to monitor their activities.
- The University may monitor forums and blogs to gain indirect feedback on University services and facilities. The University may post replies on forums and blogs to answer queries or address factual corrections, but would generally take a cautious approach before getting involved in any contentious issues.
- The University reserves the right to take any necessary steps to protect its facilities, staff and students from malware (malicious software) including blocking sites where this is an issue.
- If a complaint is received that a student or employee is being bullied or harassed via social media, then the University's ['Dignity at Work Policy'](#) or ['Dignity at Study Policy'](#) may be invoked.