



Student Guidance For Using Social Media

Please read alongside the University's [Social Media Policy for Students](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The University supports lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom. This guidance is intended to help students engage responsibly online while protecting the rights, safety, and wellbeing of others.

Social Media: The Essentials

Why it matters

Everything you post contributes to your **digital footprint** - a lasting record that can affect your studies, future career, and even have legal consequences.

What counts as social media

This includes platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, X (Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, blogs, forums, and tools like Teams or Zoom. It covers posts, comments, shares, and even "likes".

Professional vs personal capacity

- 1 **Personal:** Your own account, but may still link back to the University
- 2 **University-related:** Posting on behalf of the University, clubs, or societies using approved accounts

Monitoring

The University does not routinely monitor social media accounts but may investigate concerns where necessary.

Key things to know

Professional, statutory or regulated courses: Some courses have additional rules - check your course handbooks.

Freedom of Speech: You can express lawful views - even if they're controversial - but must do so respectfully and within the law (see our [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#)). We expect respectful dialogue and regard for others' dignity and wellbeing.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: Discrimination, bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct is not acceptable. See the [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Policy](#) and [Preventing and Addressing Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct \(Students\) Policy](#).

Safeguarding and Prevent Duty: Take extra care when interacting with children or Adults at Risk (see the [Safeguarding Policy](#)). Do not post or share content that supports or promotes terrorism (see the University [Prevent Duty](#) guidance).

Data & copyright: Do not share personal data or others' work without permission (see the [Data Protection Policy](#) and [Intellectual Property Policy](#)).

If something goes wrong

- **Raise concerns:** through [Student Casework](#) or [Support Report Respect online form](#).
- **Consequences:** Misuse of social media may result in disciplinary action under the [Student Code of Conduct](#), impact professional placements or future employment, and in serious cases may lead to civil or criminal proceedings.
- **Removal of content:** The University, platform providers, rights holders, or law enforcement agencies may require content to be removed where appropriate.

Guidance

Guiding principles to help you use social media responsibly:

DO:

- ✓ Be respectful, responsible, and lawful
- ✓ Respect others' rights to lawful freedom of speech and academic expression, even where you disagree
- ✓ Think before posting - pause if unsure and seek advice¹
- ✓ Protect your privacy (strong passwords, limit personal information, Multi-Factor Authentication)
- ✓ Get consent before sharing others' content, images, or data
- ✓ Credit original creators and respect copyright
- ✓ Take care when interacting with children or Adults at Risk
- ✓ Be clear whether you are expressing personal views or communicating on behalf of the University. Where appropriate, make clear that your views are your own
- ✓ Report concerns, harmful content, or mistakes promptly
- ✓ Be alert to scams, phishing attempts and fraudulent accounts on social media, and avoid clicking suspicious links or sharing personal or financial information – you can report incidents involving University assets and accounts via the [University's cyber incident reporting process](#)
- ✓ Follow University policies and codes of conduct

DON'T:

- ✗ Post or engage with unlawful content, including terrorist content, unlawful hate speech, or material that encourages violence or criminal activity (see Appendix 1)
- ✗ Harass, bully, intimidate, threaten, or unlawfully discriminate against others
- ✗ Share confidential, sensitive, or personal information or images without permission or lawful basis
- ✗ Post false, misleading, or defamatory content, this includes misleading edited media, impersonation, or AI-generated content intended to deceive, harass, or damage reputation
- ✗ Upload copyrighted material without permission
- ✗ Disrupt teaching, events, University activities, or others' lawful freedom of speech
- ✗ Engage in inappropriate communication with children or Adults at Risk

Before you post, ask yourself:

- Is it **legal**?
- Am I sharing **accurate** information?
- Do I have **permission** to share this?
- Could it be **misunderstood**?
- Could it affect me or others later? Would I be comfortable if this became public or was linked to me later?

05/06/2026 - [Registrar & Secretary's Office](#)

¹ Support is available from your **course team**, [Student Services](#) / [Support Report Respect](#), [Students' Union Advice](#), and relevant University teams. Questions about the Social Media Policy can also be raised with the [Registrar & Secretary's Office](#), and students may log a complaint through the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

Appendix 1 - Examples of Acts Likely to be Unlawful

The following online behaviour may be illegal and could lead to disciplinary and/or legal action:

- **Threats or violence:** Posting threats of violence, encouraging harm, or sharing content that could cause fear, hatred, criminal damage, or risk to safety.
- **Terrorism-related content:** Encouraging, supporting, glorifying, or promoting terrorism, including [proscribed \(banned\) terrorist groups or organisations](#).
- **Harassment and discrimination:** Targeting individuals or groups with abuse, intimidation, or discriminatory behaviour based on protected characteristics under equality legislation.
- **Grossly obscene or offensive material under UK law:** Sharing grossly offensive, obscene, indecent, or menacing communications where these meet the threshold for unlawful conduct under UK law, including cyberflashing or sharing sexual images without consent or sharing sexual or intimate images to a person without their consent or request.
- **Defamation:** Spreading false statements about a person or organisation that could damage their reputation.
- **Confidentiality and data protection breaches:** Sharing confidential University information or another person's personal data (including their image) without permission or a lawful basis.
- **Copyright and intellectual property breaches:** Using or sharing others' work (e.g. images, videos, writing) without permission or proper acknowledgement, including misuse of University branding.
- **Misinformation or fraud:** Creating or sharing fake, misleading, manipulated, or fraudulent content, including impersonation, fake accounts, or deceptive AI-generated content.
- **Freedom of speech disruption:** Acting in a way that unlawfully prevents others from expressing lawful views or causes unlawful disruption to teaching, events, or University activities.