



Keele
University

Social Media Guidance

Lead Director: Director of Human Resources and Student Services

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Guidance to be reviewed every 2 years.
Date of Next Review: 2016/17

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

(STAFF AND STUDENTS)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context/Background

- 1.1.1 Social Media is part of most people's everyday communication. It allows for the exchange of ideas, opinions and information about both personal and work related issues. These guidelines cover the publication of commentary by employees, honorary appointees and officers of the University (hereafter referred to as 'staff') and students, relating to the University, staff, students or associates, on personal and University on-line social media sites. Examples include: blogs; websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, MySpace, Google+, Wikipedia; Web 2.0, and all other internet postings
- 1.1.2 Staff and students who contribute to social media sites must do so responsibly, and treat electronic behaviour as they would treat non-electronic behaviour, and be mindful that the content on social media sites may remain. Staff and Students are responsible for anything they say on social media sites, which directly, or by inference, is relevant to the University.
- 1.1.3 Staff and students should make reference to any local guidelines in place and indeed to expectations of any relevant professional body. This is a strong recommendation for those students studying a health related course.
- 1.1.4 This guidance makes reference to the IT Conditions of Use, the University's Harassment and Bullying policy and the University's Disciplinary Procedure.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 This guidance applies:

- (a) to the personal use of all forms of social media, whether during working hours or otherwise, where there is potential impact on the University, its officers, staff, students or associates; and regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the University's IT facilities and equipment or personal equipment. Staff and students should take responsibility for security of access and safeguarding of information on personal website and electronic accounts
- (b) where members of staff or students use social media in a work capacity. They must ensure that they comply with this guidance.

2.2 The University and its staff and students, all have a mutual responsibility not to act in a way that is likely to impugn or damage the relationship of trust and confidence between the parties.

3 GOOD PRACTICE – PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 In the workplace / At place of study

3.1.1 The University recognises that staff and students may wish to use social media for personal use at their place of work or study, during break times or before or after their working/study hours, by making use of the University's computers, networks and other IT resources and communication systems. Such occasional use of these systems is permitted during break periods, provided that it is not excessive; does not disrupt or distract colleagues or others; and does not negatively impact on the conduct of University business and/or colleagues or others.

4 GUIDANCE

4.1 Staff members and students must not use social media to criticise, undermine, harass, bully or abuse colleagues or students, or to behave in a manner which could bring the University into disrepute. Examples include:

- Making offensive, derogatory or defamatory remarks;
- Bullying, intimidating or harassing others;
- Using insults;
- Posting comments or material which are hateful, slanderous, threatening, discriminatory or pornographic;

- Posting of inappropriate pictures and/or videos of Keele staff, students or visitors.
- Undermining confidence in the University;
- Actions which harm the reputation of the University.

- 4.2 Individuals should ensure that they do not reveal confidential information about the University, or its staff and students. This might include aspects of University policy or details of internal discussions or affairs, personal data or copyright protected information / publications. Staff should consult with their manager if they are unclear about what may be confidential, and if in doubt, should not reveal the information.
- 4.3 Students should consult with their Personal Tutor or with Student Services if in doubt, or wish to raise any concerns.
- 4.4 Additional information on acceptable conduct and conditions of use of University equipment and facilities, is set out in the '*IT Conditions of Use*' document, available from the University's IT Department.
- 4.5 Where the standards of conduct laid out within this guidance or an associated University Policy, are not followed or are breached, this may be regarded as potential misconduct or gross misconduct, and may result in disciplinary action being taken, irrespective of whether the breach of the guidance or policy occurred using University IT facilities and equipment, or not.
- 4.6 Any misuse of social media when it is alleged to constitute bullying or harassment, may be investigated in accordance with the Bullying & Harassment policy.
- 4.7 Social networking sites may be accessed and referred to, when investigating possible misconduct/gross misconduct.
- 4.8 The University may require staff and students to remove internet postings/comments/material which are deemed to constitute a breach of this guidance or University policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself, result in disciplinary review.

5 RAISING CONCERNS

Where members of staff wish to raise concerns about a particular posting/incident involving the use of social media, they should do so using the University's internal procedures, via their line manager, rather than raising them outside of the workplace or on-line.

Students wishing to should do so by contacting the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Team rather than raising them outside of the University or on-line.

Third parties should raise any concerns with their line manager as appropriate, or by contacting the Directorate of Marketing & Communications, or the Directorate of Human Resources & Student Services, rather than raising them outside of the University or on-line.

Staff may also refer to the University's Harassment and Bullying policy for further advice and information.

6 SEEKING FURTHER ADVICE

Staff and students may wish to seek further advice before posting on social media. This advice can be sort from various sources within the University:

- Alumni and Development Team if you intend to engage with former students
- Press Office if you receive a press query regarding the content of your social media channel which relates to the University
- IT Service Desk should you need advice about social media account privacy and security
- Keele University Students Union should you need to advise a student on use of social media.
<https://keelesu.com/advice/socialmedia/>

Advice is also available from various sources external to the University, such as getsafeonline.com

