

# Social Media Guidelines for Students

## Purpose of the Guidelines

The aim of these guidelines is to help:

- Protect and support students contributing to, and engaging with, social media
- Encourage good practice
- Protect the reputation of the University, its staff, students, partner organisations and clients.

## Scope of the Guidelines

These social media guidelines are aimed at students who use, or intend to use, social media as part of their studies at Canterbury Christ Church University. These guidelines also apply to students' personal use of social media where their comments could be taken to reflect on the University.

## Contacts

Any questions or concerns about the interpretation or operation of this policy should be taken up with the University's Secretary Office - Robert Melville, Assistant University Secretary (e-mail [foi@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:foi@canterbury.ac.uk)).

## 1. Introduction

Social media is now a part of everyday life and is a great tool to enhance students' learning experience through the sharing of knowledge, the discussion of ideas and the development of professional and social networks.

However, despite the opportunities presented by social media, there are significant risks. Social media allows individuals to communicate with a potentially huge audience, and sometimes its informality can encourage us to be less cautious than we would be using other more traditional methods of communicating and interacting.

These social media guidelines are aimed at students who use, or intend to use, social media as part of their studies at Canterbury Christ Church University. These guidelines also apply to students' personal use of social media where their comments could be taken to reflect on the University.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The guidelines aim to:

- Protect and support students contributing to, and engaging with, social media
- Encourage good practice
- Protect the reputation of the University, its staff, students, partner organisations and clients.

## 3. Policy framework

These social media guidelines for students are governed by other official documents that regulate student behaviour and conduct:

- [Terms and Conditions of Registration](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#)

## 4. What is social media?

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interactions, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation and wikis are among the different types of social media.

Prominent examples include: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, and Instagram.

## 5. Students' responsibilities

It is your responsibility as a student to read and act in accordance with the principles of these guidelines, and regularly check the website for any minor updates to documents.

It is also your responsibility to read and act in accordance with the rules and guidelines set out by individual social media, social networking and website hosting companies and providers.

You must:

- Act lawfully in the use of social media and to be aware that criminal and civil proceedings can be taken in the event of unlawful activity.
- Remain mindful of, and respect, the University's [values](#) and [the Student University Partnership Agreement](#) when using social media, in line with the [terms and conditions of registration](#).
- Note that social media may not be used to inform or promote inappropriate behaviour or actions which damage the reputation of individuals or the University.
- Remember to follow the anonymity and confidentiality rules set out by your course and/or the professional standards set out by the Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies for your professional studies. If you breach the code of conduct of a professional body (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery Council, Police forces, National College for Teaching and Leadership), it may directly affect your future learning and career aspirations.
- Don't use social media to attack others and remember to respect other people's privacy and feelings. If you break the law on social media sites (for example by posting something defamatory) you will be personally responsible.
- Always ask permission before sharing private details about your fellow students, staff, the University, its partner organisations and clients. Such details could include private contact details, pictures or details of private discussions.
- Remember to be appropriate when engaging with staff, students or clients of the University through social media. Inappropriate information, promotion of events/activities or contact may breach the [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#).
- Make sure you adhere to all ethical requirements of the University, your faculty and course if you're using social media as part of a research study or project. You also need to consider intellectual property rights, copyright and ownership of data.
- Not state or imply that your views are those of Canterbury Christ Church University when using social media; nor use the University logo at any time.

If you see something on a social media site that concerns you, you can report it to the social media provider. The provider is likely to pass the complaint to the person who set up the space or group. If it concerns the University, or a member of the University community, please report it to the Student Communications Unit via [the i-zone](#).

## 6. Behaviour and conduct on social media

Any misconduct on social media will be dealt with by the [University's Student Disciplinary Procedures](#). This could include:

- Foul and abusive language
- Discrimination
- Violence and threats
- Bullying and harassment
- Hateful speech
- Inappropriate graphic content
- Inflammatory comments - those arousing or intending to arouse feelings of anger or violence
- Deliberately misleading or defamatory comments - those damaging the good reputation of someone, slanderous or libellous
- Phishing and spam.

## 7. Monitoring the use of social media and the University's responsibilities

The University will:

- Ensure these guidelines are accessible to staff and students.
- Take steps to give students the information to stay safe on the internet when using social media.
- Monitor references to the University on social media.
- Investigate complaints regarding students' behaviour on social media in line with the [University's Student Disciplinary Procedures](#). (Please note that social media is not recognised as an official channel via which to make a formal complaint).
- Take disciplinary action where inappropriate behaviour is exhibited that affects the University in accordance with the [University's Student Disciplinary Procedures](#).
- Periodically review and update the guidelines and any other associated policy and guidelines. Staff and students will be notified of any significant changes.

# Social Media Guidelines

<b>Department Owner</b>	Student Experience
<b>Subject</b>	Social Media Guidelines to help protect and support students contributing to, and engaging with, social media
<b>Related University Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Terms and Conditions of Registration</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Student Disciplinary Procedures</a></li><li>• <a href="#">The Student and University Partnership Agreement</a></li></ul>
<b>Approved by</b>	Students' Union and University Partnership Forum
<b>Date Approved</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
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