Social Media Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the University's policy around both organisational and personal use of social media services.

1.1 Purpose

Social media is the term commonly given to internet services and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement.

Social media makes the University more accessible to new and broader audiences who may not normally have visited the official website. Social media is a tool for two-way communication, not just for broadcasting corporate messages, and gives the opportunity to build relationships with key audiences as well as promote a greater understanding and public awareness of the work, courses, and research taking place within the University.

Staff who use social media must do so responsibly, and treat electronic behaviour as they would treat non-electronic behaviour, and be mindful that the content on social media may remain. Staff are responsible for anything they say on social media sites, which directly, or by inference, is relevant to the University.

Policy objectives are:

- To provide staff with information on University expectations regarding social media;
- To ensure a consistent approach to social media across the institution
- To set out the responsibilities of users of corporate social media accounts
- To support users of corporate social media accounts to mitigate the risks associated with social media, protecting themselves as well as the University
- To clarify expectations of staff using social media in an individual professional or personal capacity
- To signpost staff to resources which will support them in enhancing their social media presence and that of the University

1.2 Scope

This policy covers the publication of commentary by employees of the University, and those on atypical contracts, e.g. Honorary Appointments, Secondments, and Officers of the University etc., (Hereafter referred to as 'staff') on both personal and University social media channels.

Where employees also hold contracts of employments elsewhere, any conflict of interest between the respective employers' social media policies should be raised with their line manager.

Nothing in this policy is intended to have the effect of limiting freedom of speech (see University Freedom of Speech policy) and academic freedom subject to that freedom being exercised within the law.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy 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 staff, or its students or its reputation in general; and regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the University's IT facilities or personal equipment. Staff should take responsibility for security of access and safeguarding of information on personal social media channels.

b.   where members of staff use social media in a work capacity.

The University and its staff have a mutual responsibility not to act in a way that is likely to damage trust, cause serious offence, or bring the University into disrepute via social media. Staff who are registered to a professional body (e.g. GMC, NMC etc.) should be mindful of their obligations in adhering to any additional professional responsibilities.

The Director of Human Resources and Director of Marketing and Communications have joint oversight of this policy.

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

- In the first instance, please contact the Communications Team, or visit keele.ac.uk/communications
- Social media training is also available for marketing, communications and engagement purposes

Staff who wish to raise concerns regarding a social media posting(s) should refer to section 3.5 below.

3. POLICY

3.1 ORGANISATIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

All top-level Keele University social media accounts (e.g. @KeeleUniversity, Keele University on Facebook) will be created, managed and maintained by the Communications Team within the Marketing and Communications (MAC) directorate.

3.2 SCHOOL / DEPARTMENTAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There are a growing number of locally managed school and departmental social media accounts that bear the University's name and branding. It is recommended that all staff managing University social media accounts undertake the University's social media training.

To ensure best practice is applied across all externally-facing channels, if colleagues wish to set up a social media account in a work capacity then the Communications Team should always be made aware in advance and have oversight of this process. Requests for new accounts will normally be approved by the Communications Team within five working days. The details of the new accounts will then be added to the internal social media directory and the Keele University website where appropriate. The Communications Team will also ensure that new accounts meet University brand guidelines.

Under no circumstances should passwords be shared, except with other administrators authorised to use the relevant University account (University social media accounts should always have at least two administrators).

Passwords must be changed when an account administrator leaves the University or changes role within the University. Furthermore, the Communications Team must have admin rights to any Keele University social media account in order to effectively manage risk (for example, if a tweet is posted in error) and assist with crisis communications (for example, when broadcasting messages during an emergency). The Communications Team will not interfere with the day-to-day running of locally-managed accounts, but as guardians of the overarching Keele University brand they reserve the right to edit or remove content if absolutely necessary.

b) ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The University's acceptable use policy sets out the content standards that apply when content is uploaded to its website, contact is made with other users on the site, links to the site are established, or any other interaction with the Keele University website takes place.

3.3 CONTENT

The development and maintenance of the main organisational accounts will be the responsibility of the Communications Team; content on school or departmental accounts will be the responsibility of the specific school / department.

All social media channels must be regularly maintained and updated, with a regular flow of new content.

Content must always be of high-quality and relevant to the business of the University. Inappropriate content or that expressing personal opinion must not be shared via organisational or departmental / school social media accounts/ channels. Nothing should be posted on social media that could bring the University into disrepute or compromise any legal responsibility. The copyright for all photographs and footage posted should be owned by Keele University or there must be other legal entitlement to use them, for example sharing a GIF provided by a social media network.

If negative comments or complaints about the University are posted by external stakeholders then these must be dealt with thoroughly and promptly. If a comment from an external stakeholder is completely inappropriate, outwardly rude and/or unconstructive, then consideration may be given to either ignoring or removing it, and/or blocking the user if comments of a similar nature persist.

Users that behave highly inappropriately can also be reported to the Communications Team for guidance and advice.

As an exempt charity, the University is legally bound to not support particular political causes and therefore partisan content should never be shared on an organisational or departmental / school social media channel.

Under no circumstances should staff set up anonymous Twitter accounts linked to the University.

Further guidance on the use of social media for University purposes can be found at keele.ac.uk/digital/socialmedia.

b) POLICY FOR PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

With the exception of staff for whom social media use is part of their professional work, the University recognises that staff may wish to use social media for personal use at their place of work, during break times or before or after their working hours, by making use of the University's computers, networks and other IT resources and communication systems, 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.

Individuals' personal accounts should not use University branding and, if staff do discuss their work on social media, they should make it clear on their profile statement or elsewhere that the views expressed are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the University.

Staff members must not use social media to criticise, undermine, harass, bully or abuse colleagues, students or others, or to behave in a manner that violates UK laws, laws in the territory where the post is published from, or relevant Keele policies (see Section 4). Examples include:

● Making seriously offensive, derogatory or defamatory remarks;

● Bullying, intimidating or harassing others;

● Posting comments or material which are hateful, libellous, slanderous, threatening, extremist, discriminatory or of an overtly sexual nature;

● Posting of inappropriate images and/or videos of Keele staff, students or visitors.

● Undermining confidence in the University;

● Actions which harm the reputation of the University.

Individuals should ensure that they do not reveal confidential information about the University, or its staff and students. This might include aspects of confidentially protected University policy or internal discussions, 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.

Information Security Considerations

In considering how to use social media, particularly in a personal capacity, staff should be aware that they are creating a digital identity online and that information can be used and re-used. It can be combined with other data to create a profile about the individual and it can be sold to advertisers, commercial companies and other interested parties. Much of this data is stored outside the UK (or the EU/EEA) and therefore outside of some of the UK's regulatory framework, although the General Data Protection Regulations has helped, and there may be no expiry date for this information. Staff should consider what information they are willing to have in the public arena and use social media accordingly.

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.

Where the standards of conduct laid out within this policy 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 occurred using University IT facilities and equipment, or not.

Any misuse of social media when it is alleged to constitute bullying or harassment, may be investigated in accordance with the Bullying & Harassment policy.

The University and/or its employees will not actively monitor personal social media accounts or other forms on online communication. However, social networking sites may be accessed and referred to, when investigating possible misconduct/gross misconduct.

In addition, the University may require staff to remove internet postings/comments/material which are deemed to constitute a breach of this or any other University policy as listed in Section 4. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself, result in disciplinary review in line with the University Disciplinary Policy.

3.5 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 online.

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

Any disclosure of serious malpractice, corruption, wrongdoing or impropriety should be made in accordance with the University Whistleblowing policy.

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please note that the list below is neither inclusive nor exhaustive.

- Staff Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure
- Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure for Academic Staff
- Policy & procedure to deal with complaints regarding bullying, harassment and victimisation - staff
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Freedom of Speech Code of Practice
- IT Conditions of Use (IT Regulations)
- Acceptable Use Policy
- General Website Terms of Use

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the Director of Marketing and Communications and the Director of Human Resources and ratified by the University Executive Committee. The review will involve consultation with the Trade Unions.

The policy will be available on the University Policy Zone and will also be on the HR webpages.

6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	*Social Media Policy*
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Related University Policy Documents	• *Staff Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure* • *Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure for Academic Staff* • *Policy & procedure to deal with complaints regarding bullying, harassment and victimisation - staff* • *Whistleblowing Policy* • *Freedom of Speech Code of Practice* • *IT Conditions of Use (IT Regulations)* • *Acceptable Use Policy* • *General Website Terms of Use*
For Office Use – Keywords	