Student Social Media Policy

The University of Law

LCCA London College of Contemporary Arts

Introduction

1. The University of Law (including any subsidiaries) recognises that social media can offer many social, academic, and professional benefits and it is an important method of communication. However, there is an inherent risk attached to its use, in that, it is an instantaneous and far-reaching form of communication and inappropriate use can impact upon staff, students and the reputation of the University. The purpose of this policy is to help students understand the implications of the misuse of social media.

2. In creating this policy, The University sets out what would be considered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or threats of violence in communications and online interactions. Whilst we do not tolerate bullying or harassment on the grounds of race, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy or maternity as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 should not be interpreted to undermine freedom of speech and academic freedom. This can mean the sharing of some views which may include exposure to research, course material, discussion or speaker's views that some may find offensive, contentious or unacceptable, could nonetheless be within the law, and unlikely to be considered unlawful harassment or discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

   3.1. The Student Charter

   3.2. Student Code of Behaviour

   3.3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

   3.4. Dignity at Work and Study Policy

   3.5. IT Acceptable Use Policy – Students

   3.6. Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

   3.7. Student Discipline Regulations Online Etiquette protocol

   3.8. Prevent Duty Policy

   3.9. Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

   3.10. Student Sexual Misconduct Policy

   3.11. Students under 18 years of age Policy

Scope of this policy

4. This policy applies to all students who engage in online conversations or share content in the context of social networks. The policy extends to students' use of social media in a personal capacity, where this impacts the University, its students, staff, or the wider community. It also applies where students use social media associated with a University club or society or the Students' Union.

5. This policy applies to social media communications made privately or publicly at any time and from anywhere, including away from campus and on personal devices, including those to an individual, or limited group of recipients.

6. Students are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and it may be that in certain circumstances they shall also be considered responsible for the actions of others, within and outside the University, who share content they have posted. Such circumstances would include where a student intends for or encourages others to share more widely the digital material they have posted.

7. Students should be aware that once digital material has been created and/or shared via social media they will have very limited control over its permanence and audience and therefore digital material could reach a wider audience than would have been expected or intended. Students should consider this point carefully before posting on social media. In this context students should be aware that the University may treat it as foreseeable that digital material shared via social media will be disseminated to the world at large, and if so, it will not be possible for a student to put forward as a defence to any disciplinary action that they did not expect that the content in question would be revealed to people beyond the intended recipient.

8. Nothing in this policy is intended to have the effect of limiting either freedom of speech or academic freedom, subject to that freedom being exercised within the law.

9. For the purpose of this policy social media is any online interactive tool which enables participation, interaction, and exchanges. This includes any existing platforms and any new platforms that may be developed. It includes blogs, instant messaging, discussion forums, and review sites. It also applies to the chat function in conferencing software, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and online classrooms.

Responsibility for this policy

10. Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

Principles for personal use of social media

11. Students who have a social media presence which refers to the University, or from which the University can be identified, should ensure it is clear they are speaking in a personal capacity. Students should not declare, imply, or indicate that their content or views are representative of those of the University.

12. The University prohibits the use of its logo in any social media network profile, background images or cover photographs without its permission.

13. The University prohibits the use of its name, or derivatives of is name, within the name of a social media account without its permission.

14. Students should ensure that their social media communications do not:

    14.1 Say anything or include any image which is discriminatory, illegal, defamatory, or threatening

    14.2 Say anything, including images which may be considered to be bullying or harassing of any individual or group of individuals on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act 2010. The University has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and students who are uncertain about what constitutes bullying or harassment should familiarise themselves with the Dignity at Work and Study Policy

    14.3 Reveal confidential information about the University, staff, or its students

    14.4 Use someone else's image or written content without their permission or commit any other breach of copyright

    14.5 Say anything or post any image which may compromise the reputation or safety of the University or anyone connected with the University

    14.6 Breach the terms of the use of the service provider

15. Students should be aware of the risks that misuse of social media may pose to their employability as a graduate or placement student. Social media content in the public domain could be accessed by future employers, professional bodies or academic institutions.

16. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the privacy settings for each social media platform and consider how much of their information they want to appear in the public domain. This won't prevent or protect individuals from others sharing their posts, or the consequences of what they may post in a private forum. The University provides information on using social media safely, as well as other online safety guidance, which is available to students through ELITE, the University's virtual learning environment.

Principles for Use of Social Media on behalf of a Society or Club

17. Students using social media on behalf of a society or club should comply with the principles set out in paragraphs 9 to 14 above.

18. Where a society or club has two or more committee members running social media for the society or club, one user should be nominated as the lead administrator. This person will be responsible for:

    18.1. making sure that the login details are shared only with those who have a real need to use the account

    18.2. revoking access to the account where necessary, such as if a student leaves the society or club or breaches this policy

    18.3. ensuring that all content produced for the social media account is in line with this policy, and other related policies, e.g Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.

Compliance

19. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Student Discipline Regulations. The University may request the removal of content if it is deemed to be a risk to the reputation or safety of the University of anyone connected with the University.

20. Where a criminal offence may have been committed the University may report the matter to the police.

21. Any individual who is subject to bullying or harassment on social media will have the full support of the University to bring a complaint under the Dignity at Work and Study Policy which outlines the procedures to be followed. Reports of bullying and harassment can be made online using the University's Safe and Inclusive Campus Disclosure Form.

Monitoring and review

22. Responsibility for monitoring and review of this policy lies with the Academic Board.

Version history:

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Director of Student Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	Initial Drafting and approval by Academic Board	October 2021
V2.0	Head of Safe & Inclusive Campuses	Full Review	August 2026
V2.0a	Director Quality Assurance & Academic Standards	Definition of the University amended to include subsidiaries	October 2026