



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

## **Social Media Policy for Students**

### **Overview and Scope**

"Social media" is a category of online media that supports people talking, participating, sharing, networking and bookmarking online. Common social media platforms include, but are not limited to, online social networks such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, RSS feeds, and content sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube.

The purpose of this policy is to help students develop an online social media presence that is ethical and legal while maximizing the benefits of utilising emerging social media technologies when communicating with fellow students, staff and the public.

The scope of this policy extends to all students who engage in online conversations or share content using social media sites.

It is the responsibility of **each** student to adhere to this policy. Where inappropriate use of social media may constitute an offence under criminal law, **referral will be made to the appropriate authorities**. In addition, students in **breach** of the policy **will be liable to disciplinary action** under University procedures.

There are two sections to this policy: **Section A** extends to students' use of social media including personal use, where this use impacts on the University, staff members, other students and the wider community. **Section B** outlines the additional responsibilities of students who use University social media sites, such as sites associated with University Schools or Students' Union Clubs and Societies.

## **Section A: General Social Media Use**

### **Acceptable Use**

Students are personally accountable for any breach of the University's Social Media Policy, whether posting as a private individual, as part of their studies or as a member of a University Club or Society.

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's Social Media Guide for Students (available at: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/socialmedia>) which gives advice on a number of important issues including protecting yourself online.

Students' use of social media is subject to all current University policies including the Conduct Regulations for students (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/conduct>), the University's Computer Resources - Acceptable Use Policy and other Security Policies (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/itpolicies>) and the JANET Acceptable Use Policy (<https://community.ja.net/library/acceptable-use-policy>).

Students wishing to make a complaint about a potential breach of the University's Social Media Policies may do so through the University's Student Complaints Procedure (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/media/Media,252952,en.pdf>).

### **Posting Content to Social Media Sites**

Students should presume that everything they post online will be public and permanent, regardless of the privacy settings they assume are applied.

Students should be aware that social media content may easily become available to the public, including the University, its staff and the media, and that inappropriate use could result in disciplinary proceedings or damage their reputation and future career prospects. The University reserves the right to act on any information obtained from online sources if it indicates that a student is in breach of Conduct Regulations or other University policies.

Students should familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of any social media site that they use and note that many companies that operate social media platforms specify that, by posting on their sites, the company is granted irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive license to use and distribute content for any purpose, commercial, advertising or otherwise.

### **Posting Guidelines**

The following guidelines must be considered when posting content to any social media site for any purpose, whether the content is text, images, video, audio or links to other sources.

1. Students should respect the dignity and privacy of others and should always consider how their online behaviour may affect other users and reflect on

themselves and the University.

2. Students are free to discuss the University and their experiences as a student online. However, when using social media, students must not engage in misconduct or behaviour which brings, or may bring, the University into disrepute, as set out in the University's Conduct Regulations.
3. Special care must always be taken when dealing with any content related to children and vulnerable adults. No content relating to children or vulnerable adults should be posted online without the express approval of the relevant University authority.
4. When participating in a social media site as part of their studies, work placement or as a member of a University Club or Society, students should conduct themselves in a professional manner that fully adheres to this policy and related policies.
5. When undertaking a period of work placement, students should familiarise themselves and comply with their employer's social media policy in addition to the University's Social Media Policy for Students.
6. Students who undertake paid duties as an employee of Queen's University must also comply with the Social Media Policy for Staff (available at: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/socialmedia>).
7. In particular, students must not use social media for any of the following under any circumstances:
  - To post inappropriate, discriminatory or defamatory comments including comments about other students, staff, or work placement employers or their clients
  - To bully, harass or intimidate other students, staff or members of the public
  - To post threatening, obscene or profane comments
  - To express or support sexist, racist, sectarian or homophobic views
  - To express support for illegal activities or organisations
  - To disseminate misleading information
  - To share confidential or sensitive information
  - To view or distribute sexually explicit or offensive content
  - To infringe or violate someone else's rights
  - To post personally identifiable information that could be used to locate any individual without that person's permission
  - To post content that could create a security risk for the University, its staff or students
  - In any way which may be unlawful

## **Section B: Use of University Affiliated Social Media Sites**

### **Social Media Site Creation**

A University affiliated social media site is defined as any site that could reasonably be perceived to be associated with or representative of Queen's. This includes sites associated with recognised University Schools (e.g. a student society) or SU Clubs & Societies, along with any social media sites that, by their content or look, could be perceived as being associated with Queen's.

Any student wishing to establish a University affiliated social media site must obtain approval:

- From the Students' Union Marketing Manager ([sumarketing@qub.ac.uk](mailto:sumarketing@qub.ac.uk)) for recognised Clubs and Societies
- From their Head of School for any other University affiliated site

Any queries relating to the establishment of a University affiliated social media site should be emailed to [socialmedia@qub.ac.uk](mailto:socialmedia@qub.ac.uk). If you are in any doubt as to whether your site could be reasonably perceived as being affiliated to the University, you should seek advice before proceeding.

Queen's reserves the right to monitor any social media sites that affiliate themselves with the University and, where necessary, to request the removal of sites that reflect negatively on the University or the removal of content that infringes on the University's copyright or implies an unauthorised association, e.g. references to Queen's University Belfast or QUB, the Queen's logo and related imagery.

### **Responsibilities of Site Administrators**

If you set up a University affiliated social media site, you effectively become the administrator for that site on behalf of the University and are responsible for maintaining the site and moderating content. It is important that at least one other student shares administrator responsibilities for the site and has access to the login details in order to ensure continuity and to assist with moderation.

University affiliated sites must be registered via an online form available at <http://go.qub.ac.uk/socialmedia>. Note that the form requires confirmation that the Students' Union Marketing Manager or Head of School has approved the creation of the site and must include contact details of two site administrators.

Approved sites will be included in the University Social Media Directory (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/socialmedia>) where appropriate.

The site administrators must maintain the security of account passwords and are fully responsible for any actions that take place using the account. If a site is no longer required, administrators should deactivate or permanently delete the account as appropriate.

Care should be taken when naming accounts to maintain consistency and to ensure accounts can be easily identified as University affiliated accounts.

Site administrators must have an understanding of the basic principles and etiquette associated with the management of an effective social media site. Further guidance on using social media is available at <http://go.qub.ac.uk/socialmedia> or by emailing [socialmedia@qub.ac.uk](mailto:socialmedia@qub.ac.uk). In addition, students can receive regular advice and updates on the use of social media at Queen's University from the following sources:

- Social Media blog at <http://blogs.ac.uk/socialmedia>
- Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SocialMediaQUB](http://www.facebook.com/SocialMediaQUB)
- Twitter at [www.twitter.com/SocialMediaQUB](http://www.twitter.com/SocialMediaQUB)