

UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH STUDENT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES

1. Statement of Policy

1.1. Social media is a powerful tool to connect with the wider world. For students it offers opportunities to grow depth of learning and engage in unique opportunities, as well as develop employability opportunities. This policy is designed to support students to use social media effectively, safely, and responsibly whilst avoiding compromising their own personal safety, or the University's security and reputation.

1.2. The scope of this policy covers individual students, student groups and societies, and individual student campaigning groups. For social media activities that use any authorised University social media accounts, the Staff Social Media Policy will apply.

1.3. This policy aims to:

- encourage the responsible use of social media by University of Greenwich students
- encourage use for positive purposes in line with the University's value of being Inclusive, Collaborative and Impactful, sharing news and information and celebrating others
- raise awareness of relevant UK legislation and regulations, and relevant University of Greenwich policies
- outline the responsibilities for individuals or student groups using social media for University of Greenwich purposes
- highlight the potential risks of using social media for personal use
- provide clear guidelines on how breaches of this policy will be addressed to protect the reputation of University of Greenwich, its students, staff and partner organisations.

The policy was developed with feedback from student focus groups, officers and staff at Greenwich Students' Union and staff in the university's Student and Academic Services.

It is important that all students familiarise themselves with this policy upon commencement of study at the University of Greenwich.

2. Social Media

2.1. Social media describes online communities and networks that provide a base for interactions and the exchange of user-generated content. They allow people to share information, opinions, knowledge and interests.

2.2. Examples of popular social media sites include but are not limited to:

- LinkedIn
 - X (formerly known as Twitter)
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Threads
 - TikTok
 - Snapchat
 - YouTube
 - Whatsapp
 - WeChat
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- This policy covers all social media channels and is not limited to those set out above. It also covers new/emerging channels that might develop.

3. Guidelines:

3.1. Students and student groups should adhere to the following points of good practice when using social media.

- Be aware that third parties, including the media, employers and the Police can access profiles and view personal information including pictures, videos, comments and posts. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of you as an individual, plus the perception of the University, and can have a negative impact on your future prospects.
- Consider the impact of what you post: things you post on social media have a long life- span and they may be shared on channels that you do not have control of. Consider private profiles, and ensure you review your security settings regularly.
- Respect your privacy and that of others: do not include personal information about yourself, or others, including students and University staff.
- Be familiar with professional practice and confidentiality rules: make yourself aware of the rules that may apply to your area of study at university. For example, students studying health and teaching qualifications must retain professionalism and respect confidentiality agreements at all times.
- Before publishing anything that does not belong to you (such as photos, graphics, video, graphics, text), ensure that you have sought the permission of the owner. Infringement could lead to legal action.
- Do not use the University's logo or associated logos on any social media unless expressly permitted to do so. You can request permission from the Social Media Team.
- Do not represent yourself through your social media account, or through any public platform including the media, as talking on behalf of the University unless you have been given express permission to do so.

- When representing the university or posting from any university affiliated accounts, you must adhere to the brand guidelines. You can find the brand guidelines for the University of Greenwich [here](#).
- Platforms such as WhatsApp are also social media, so please behave safely and responsibly when messaging.

Policy-related guidance

- Note that as a student you have agreed to the Rules and Regulations for the use of ICT and these also apply on social media channels. You can find the current IT Policies and Procedures [here](#).
- As a student, you have also agreed to the university's [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#). This policy also applies to social media activity.
 - Examples of bullying and harassment as set out in this policy include spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone, ridiculing or demeaning someone or unfair treatment.
 - The Policy states that harassment and discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and victimisation are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
 - An offensive/negative comment on social media not only affects the image and reputation of the individuals involved and the university but also can have a negative impact on the student community, in full or in part. Students should carefully consider the impact of what is posted and its potential impact on individuals and groups.
 - The University will remove posts and comments on our own posts which constitute bullying and harassment, defamation or hate speech (defined as abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation). The University may also request the removal of posts and comments from personal accounts under one of our conduct procedures with resultant sanctions for non-compliance.

3.2 Students or groups of students using an official University of Greenwich Social Media/Online presence have additional responsibilities which they should be aware of (as set out below). This can include any student setting up social media for their society, placement students working for the university or student ambassadors representing the university.

3.3 The following additional guidelines are given for students working in the roles set out above:

- Placement students who are working for the university should also adhere to the current Staff Social Media Policy and Guidelines [which can be found here](#).
- If students need to establish an official University social media presence, they should contact the University's social media team at gresocialmedia@greenwich.ac.uk in the first instance

for guidance and training. This will ensure the channel is recorded appropriately, and that it adheres to branding, naming and visual identity guidelines.

- The University logo and University Crest can only be used on official University social media and other online channels that are identified as official University of Greenwich accounts. These accounts are maintained by the social media team within the Directorate of Marketing and External Relations.
- Students using official accounts, or with roles working for the university as set out above, should be aware that they are representing the University of Greenwich when posting comments, liking, sharing or responding to comments made by others on social media.
- Students who have access to, or manage, official social media accounts should ensure they manage accounts safely and securely. Passwords to University social media accounts must comply with the [University's Password and MFA Policy](#).
- Live video: If you're going to host regular live videos i.e. Instagram Live, please ensure you screen any guest beforehand and review the relevant guidance.
- Any student who already maintains an official University social media channel and wishes to close it down should contact the social media team at gresocialmedia@greenwich.ac.uk for guidance in how to manage this process.

3.4 Where there is a student group, network, society or research project, this will fall under the Staff Social Media Policy.

4. Breaching this policy

4.1 The university has a strict no bullying policy which also covers any form of online bullying such as hate speech and harassment. This policy is in place to keep all of our students safe. Allegations of bullying and harassment, including on social media, will be dealt with as set out in this policy.

4.2 Where breaches of the bullying policy occur and they are deemed to potentially constitute misconduct or bullying and harassment, such instances would be considered within the frameworks of the Student Disciplinary Procedure, the [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#) or the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#).

4.3 Under English Law, unapproved downloading and sharing of Copyright Material is theft and as such is an Illegal Act under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. [Find out more here.](#)

5. How to report any concerns

5.1 If you see or experience behaviour on social media channels that:

- uses violent, indecent, aggressive, threatening or offensive behaviour or language
- incites hatred
- contains obscene or offensive language and/or imagery
- bullying or intimidating and/or harassing behaviour towards others

or that you think might be in breach of these guidelines, and the policies set out above, you can contact the Student Registry (student-conduct@greenwich.ac.uk) or file a report via [Report + Support](#).

5.2 It should be noted that students should not use social media channels as an alternative route to make official complaints. These should be made through the Student Complaints Procedure or Report + Support.

5.3 There are also additional resources if you need extra support:

- A range of [Wellbeing Support](#) is available
- [Greenwich Students' Union Advice service](#)
- [Student Finance Support](#)
- [Careers Service](#)
- [Academics Skills Support](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing](#)
- More links to helps and advice on the student portal [here](#).

6. Links to other relevant Policies and Procedures

- [Student Charter](#)
- [Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)

7. Maintaining this policy

7.1.1 This policy is subject to approval from the Information and Assurance Committee and will be maintained by the Marketing and External Relations Directorate, who will also ensure students are aware of the policy. It will be reviewed annually (next review in 2026) with updates made as necessary.