

Guidance for staff on the use of social media

Introduction

Social media provides important and exciting opportunities for Queen Mary University of London, its staff and students, to engage with a wide range of audiences and stakeholders. There are also a range of risks associated with the use of social media that have the potential to damage the aims and reputation of the University.

Queen Mary encourages staff to engage, collaborate and learn through social media.

This guidance provides information to staff on how to safely and productively use social media, in both professional and personal capacities, to reap the benefits and manage the associated risks.

Separate to this guidance, the Marketing and Communications Directorate provide guidance on how to make the best use of social media for the benefit of Queen Mary.

Scope

This guidance applies to all Queen Mary staff, including part-time staff and honorary appointments, and all communications on social media that represent or impact upon the University and its students and staff, whether directly or indirectly.

This guidance relates to social media usage made at any time, in any language, both privately and publically, in a professional and personal capacity.

Definitions

The term 'social media' refers to interactions and technologies through which people create and share information in online communities or networks. Social media technologies take many forms including internet forums, blogs, vlogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, internet messaging and any website that supports public commenting or posting. This list is not exhaustive.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- reading and taking the time to ensure that they understand this guidance;
- ensuring that any use of social media (professionally and personally) is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies;
- completing any relevant training as required;
- ensuring that relevant policies and guidelines for appropriate IT usage are followed e.g. [Acceptable use of IT Policy](#); and
- reporting any incidents or concerns regarding social media use to their manager or socialmedia@qmul.ac.uk.

All managers are responsible for:

- ensuring their direct reports have read and understood this guidance
- reporting and escalating any incidents or concerns regarding social media as appropriate;
- completing relevant training as required, as well as ensuring their staff are appropriately trained as required;
- addressing any issues of misuse of social media by those staff for whom they are responsible.

All University-branded social media account owners (official and unofficial) are responsible for:

- completing any relevant training as required;
- operating accounts appropriately, and in accordance with this guidance and relevant guidelines;
- seeking relevant authorisation for official University posts where required;
- putting in place appropriate security on accounts including password management;
- ensuring that accounts have up to date content;
- responding to comments; and
- closing down unused accounts.

General principles

The University recognises that staff have a general freedom to express their views and opinions, and from time to time these may include views that are in conflict to those of the University.

All communications on social media (whether professional or personal) must be made in accordance with this guidance.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media.

Staff have a responsibility to represent the University accurately and fairly in any online space and to uphold the values of the University.

Nothing in this guidance is intended to have the effect of limiting either freedom of speech within the law or academic freedom.

All use of social media must comply with relevant University policies.

Staff may also need to comply with social media guidance issued by relevant regulatory bodies.

The following are examples of content that is considered to be of an unacceptable nature and should never be posted:

- any confidential information about the University and its associated entities, including subsidiary companies;
- any University copyright materials, including all those owned by the University relating to teaching and learning;
- the work of someone else without obtaining permission from the owner to do so and, where appropriate, crediting the author;

- details of internal complaints and/or legal proceedings involving the University and/or any current or former student(s) or staff of the University where such sharing will breach data protection legislation or subvert due process;
- personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission;
- content that could be discriminatory, intimidating, offensive, threatening or amount to bullying or harassment;
- content posted to impersonate colleagues, University accounts, students and/or third parties related to the University;
- content which includes University trademarks, including logos or the trademarks of third parties, such as those of University stakeholders without obtaining the necessary permissions (contact designandbranding@qmul.ac.uk for further information).

This list is not exhaustive.

Formal action over social media use

Members of staff should note that any breaches of this guidance may lead to formal disciplinary action under the University's Discipline Policy and Procedure. Serious breaches, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity that might cause serious damage to the University, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

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