

## **Social Media Policy for Students**

<b>Responsibility for Policy:</b>	Deputy Chief Executive, Student and Academic Services Division
<b>Relevant to:</b>	LJMU Staff and Students
<b>Approved by:</b>	Interim Vice Chancellor, 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019
<b>Responsibility for Document Review:</b>	Director of Legal & Governance, Director of Corporate Communications & Stakeholder Relations
<b>Date introduced:</b>	September 2015
<b>Date(s) modified:</b>	September 2016, September 2017, July 2019, May 2020
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	July 2021

### **RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

Data Protection Act 2018  
Equality Act 2010

### **RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS**

The following Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Student Code of Behaviour
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Dignity At Study Policy
- Computing Facilities Conditions of Use (including procedures for misuse)
- Information Security Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The University encourages students to use social media: it can bring many benefits and opportunities and is a valuable tool to engage with the University, the programme of study, staff and other students.
- 1.2 This Policy has been developed to clarify the expectations of the University and to give students a framework for the appropriate use of social media, so that serious mistakes – which can cause legal, ethical and reputational problems for the University and individual members of the University community (staff, students, and visitors) – can be avoided.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this Policy, "social media" means any type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate with one another or to share data in a public and private forum. This includes, but is not limited to, social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, WhatsApp, Interactive Applications such as Meeto, as well as blogs, wikis and video and image sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr and all other internet postings. As new sites are constantly being created, this list is not exhaustive, but is intended to demonstrate the range of sites that are included within the definition of "social media".
- 1.4 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's current Computing Facilities Conditions of Use, the Student Code of Behaviour and Student Disciplinary Procedures.
- 1.5 The University reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This Policy has been designed to advise students of their responsibilities and what the University expects of them when accessing and using social media sites. It should be applied to all use and all forms of social media where there is a potential impact on the University, whether for University/Programme related or personal use, whether during business hours or otherwise, whether social media is accessed using the University's IT facilities and equipment, or equipment belonging to students or a third party.
- 2.2 Students should be aware that both their University/programme usage and their personal usage of social media can infringe the Student Code of Behaviour and can result in action being taken against them under the Student Disciplinary Procedures.
- 2.3 This Policy applies to students where their use of the internet can affect the University. Examples of ways in which student behaviour on social media can affect the University are when the student:
  - Is using University resources to access social media; or
  - Is using a University email address as their contact email; or
  - Is identifiable as an LJMU Student; or
  - Posts comments, information, likes, images or messages online in a public or private/restricted forum about the University, its staff and students

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

### **3. Principles**

- 3.1 The University is committed to providing a learning environment that is conducive to the academic and social well-being of the University community and students are required to act in a professional, respectful and acceptable manner at all times. This includes behaviour and conduct on social media.
- 3.2 Students are responsible for their words and actions in an online environment and are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, message, image or link etc. they are considering posting is something that they would want other students, LJMU staff, placement providers, employer and potential employers or people outside the University to read. Students should remember that social media usage can leave a permanent trail and, once a comment, image or link etc. is posted, they will no longer be able to control whether it is forwarded to others or who will ultimately read it.
- 3.3 If a student's use of social media is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, creating a legal liability for the University, damaging to working relationships, bring the University into disrepute or breaching the Student Code of Behaviour, Equality and Diversity and/or **Dignity at Study Policies**, or any other policy or procedure, then the University may take action under the Student Disciplinary Procedures, regardless of whether the usage was personal or for study purposes. This may incur a range of penalties, up to and including expulsion from the University.
- 3.4 If a student's use of social media is potentially a criminal offence then the University, staff and/or students can report such matters to the Police. The University, staff and students can seek advice from the University Police Officer.
- 3.5 The Internet is provided by the University for bona fide University business use only and subject to the University's Computing Facilities Conditions of Use.
- 3.6 The University reserves the right to restrict access to any websites (including social media sites) or withdraw student access to LJMU IT systems and services, should it deem it necessary.

### **4. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, SECURITY AND IDENTITY THEFT**

- 4.1 4.1 Divulging confidential information may breach the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and/or the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation 2018, which can incur a substantial fine. It may breach other legal and contractual obligations that the University has and put the University's reputation at risk. This is a particular risk with social media due to the speed with which information can be inadvertently disseminated widely to many other users.
- 4.2 Students are expected to be security conscious and take steps to protect themselves and others from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.
- 4.3 Students should ensure that no information is made available that could provide a person with unauthorised access to the University, its systems and/or any confidential information.
- 4.4 Students should refrain from revealing any sensitive and/or confidential information regarding the University, its business, its staff, students or any third party on social media or do anything

to jeopardise the University's confidential information and intellectual property. Students should never disclose staff or other student's private information without consent.

## **5. DUTY TO REPORT**

- 5.1 Any student or member of staff who has concerns about inappropriate social media use by a student or students should contact the Student Governance Office via telephone numbers 0151 231 8128/8147/8148 or via email at [StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk)

## **6. MONITORING**

- 6.1 The University reserves the right to scan public networks to review information about the University held in the public domain. The University has the right to monitor content on the accessible pages of the social media accounts, internet postings and blogs etc of students to ensure compliance with this Policy.
- 6.2 The contents of the University's IT resources and communication systems are the University's property. Students should have no expectation of privacy in any message, file, data, document, telephone conversation, or other kind of information or communication transmitted from, received to, printed from, stored on or recorded on the computer's electronic information and communications system.
- 6.3 The University reserves the right to monitor, intercept, review, audit and disclose all student activity undertaken using the University's IT resources and communication systems, including but not limited to social media, for legitimate business purposes which include ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime). Students consent to such monitoring by their use of such resources and systems. Please refer to the University's *Computer Facilities Conditions of Use*.

## **7. BREACH OF THIS POLICY**

- 7.1 Breach of the Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.
- 7.2 Students on Professional Courses, subject to Professional Body Regulations and Codes of Conduct may be subject to Fitness to Practise Proceedings in the event of alleged internet, or social media misconduct or misuse.
- 7.3 If a student is asked to remove or amend content from a social media site which is considered to be in breach of this Policy, failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.
- 7.4 Any student suspected of committing a breach of this Policy will be required to cooperate with the University's investigation, including providing access to view personal profiles to an investigator and Student Governance.

## **8. ADVICE AND INFORMATION**

- 8.1 The LJMU Corporate Communications Team provide guidance, advice and information to students about Social Media Use.
- 8.2 Further Information on this Policy and Student Code of Behaviour and Student Disciplinary Procedures are available on the University Webpages at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/guidance-policy-and-process> or by contacting the Student Governance Team via telephone numbers 0151 231 8128/8147/8148 or via email at [StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk)
- 8.3 Liverpool John Moores Students' Union (JMSU) provides professional and independent advice on all student related matters. Students can make an appointment to speak to a qualified adviser by contacting Liverpool Students' Union Advice Centre at John Foster Building, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5UZ, telephone number 0151 231 4900 or email [jmsuadvice@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:jmsuadvice@ljmu.ac.uk).
- 8.4 The University Police Officer is available to advise Students on matters such as concerns about potential criminal offences, personal safety and police procedures. If students wish to contact the University Police Officer they can do so via Student Governance or Student Advice and Wellbeing.
- 8.5 Students can seek advice and support from the LJMU Student Advice and Wellbeing department on a range of issues such as:

Accommodation, finance and funding, health and wellbeing issues, disability support, student engagement, counselling services and assistance and advice relating to access to specialist support services provided by external agencies.

Further information and contact details are available on the University Web pages at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/discover/student-support>