



University of the Highlands and Islands

Social Media Policy

POL

Lead Officer (Post):	Web Manager
Responsible Office/ Department:	Marketing and Planning
Responsible Committee:	Marketing and Communications Practitioners
Review Officer (Post):	Digital Marketing Officer
Date policy approved:	13/04/2012
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	19/01/2021
Date policy due for review:	19/01/2023
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	19/01/2021
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	n/a

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Governance and Policy Officer on 01463 279000.

Policy Summary

Overview	Social media use is an integral part of our engagement and communications with a number of stakeholder groups.
Purpose	The policy will bring clarity to how staff, and where relevant, contractors should conduct themselves whilst using social media.
Scope	The policy applies to any person or organisation using social media on behalf of the partnership, university or academic partner. Examples of roles over and above employed staff are detailed in the policy.
Consultation	The policy has been developed by Marketing and Communications Practitioners from across the Academic Partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands to ensure that best practice is reflected in the policy.
Implementation and Monitoring	Web Manager. No specific resource or cost involved.
Risk Implications	The policy touches on reputational risk and compliance risk (with the laws of the land or other institutional policies).
Link with Strategy	Social media use is a key part of recruitment and features in many other areas of our strategy delivery. Adherence to this policy mitigates risk wherever social media is used.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Complete 19/01/2021
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

It is recognised that staff may participate in social media and similar web-based communities both in a professional and a personal capacity and that, on occasion, the boundaries between the two may be indistinct. For the purposes of this policy, 'staff' includes employees and, to the extent it is relevant to them, anyone doing work on behalf of the partnership, university or academic partner including students, volunteers, contractors, etc. as detailed in Section 6 "Policy Detail".

This policy therefore applies to staff regardless of the time and location of use of social and similar media and whether or not their employer's equipment is utilised for such purposes.

In accordance with the above, reasonable use of social media and similar web content by staff during working hours and utilising their employer's equipment to do so is acceptable providing that it is not to the detriment of the university, academic partner or the individual's job responsibilities.

This policy does not cover either general student use or teaching and learning use of social media.

2. Purpose

To raise awareness of requirements and good practice in using social media.

3. Scope

The policy applies to all staff, regardless of partnership employer, who use social media whether on behalf of the university or academic partner as part of their job role or otherwise. It also applies to students, volunteers and contractors to the extent that it is relevant to them.

4. Notification

Any staff using social media should be aware of this policy and any other social media policy in force at their employer.

The policy is published at <https://www.t4help.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/t4-help/content-guidance/social-media-policy.pdf>

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Web Manager owns this policy.

The Web Manager, Digital Marketing Officer and Digital Marketing Assistant are responsible for raising awareness of the policy.

The Marketing and Communications Practitioner Group is responsible for providing feedback on the policy and communicating it to respective academic partners.

All staff using social media are responsible for behaving in line with the policy, especially those using it in a capacity related to their job role.

6. Policy Detail

Applicability

This policy uses 'staff' to refer to anyone doing work on behalf of the partnership, university or academic partner.

This includes students (in remunerated roles or roles such as volunteer, apprentice, work placement, etc.), agency staff, casual staff, suppliers, contractors, volunteers and others who may be deemed to be acting on behalf of, or representing the partnership, university or academic partner and people or organisations in these roles are expected to take account of this policy in their use of social and other web-based media.

In utilising social and similar media, staff must :

1. Comply with the law and any regulatory requirements. In particular, the areas highlighted in Section 7 Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources.
2. Comply with our other policies and procedures and not use social media in a way that breaches any other policies. In particular, the areas highlighted in Section 7 Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources.
3. Be aware of the risks of exposing personal information to public view.
4. Conduct themselves in a professional manner, including in relation to interaction with the public, colleagues and/or students (and, indeed, consider whether it is appropriate to interact with students through such media in a social context).
5. Not disclose confidential or commercially sensitive information relating to the university or academic partners or confidential information relating to colleagues or students and comply with data protection requirements.
6. Respect copyright and intellectual property rights in relation to any content including images.
7. Report to a senior manager any content of which they may become aware which may be in breach of this policy (or other policies).
8. Ensure that it is clear that all views expressed on social media are their own and not the views of the partnership, university or any academic partner (see further below).

In addition, staff must not publish anything which may bring the partnership, university or academic partner into disrepute (whilst acknowledging that the principles of academic freedom may apply in certain instances) or associate the partnership, university or academic partner with any such content or material.

Examples of bringing the partnership, university or academic partner into dispute could include :

- Sharing, reacting or commenting positively on content which is overtly negative about the partnership, university or academic partner.
- Offering negative or critical comment on formal partnership, university or academic partner content on the social platform. Instead raise it directly, offline with the team responsible for posting the content.
- Responding to content publicly as an employee/on behalf of the partnership, university or academic partner when your role is not as a spokesperson or subject matter expert on that topic.

Staff must not make postings or create social media pages, websites or publish other web content purporting to represent the partnership, university or academic partner in an official or authoritative capacity, or to represent its views, unless this is an explicit part of a job role and with the express permission of the relevant senior manager. This does not preclude establishing groups and communities for research, teaching and social interaction (e.g. clubs and societies) providing that the parameters and purpose of such groups and communities are clearly apparent to visitors to such content.

Any use of the visual identity of the partnership, university or academic partner, including icons, name styles and associated intellectual property must be in compliance with the appropriate guidelines for such use (which are available from the respective Marketing and Communications staff or teams) and must recognise that these are trademarks and/or registered trademarks. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal in the most serious instances.

Use of social media for teaching

We encourage and support innovation in learning and teaching. There are legal issues to be taken into account when considering the use of externally hosted technologies for teaching. If you require students to submit personal data or work to a social media site or other externally hosted technology (that isn't a core partnership technology), you must consult Learning & Teaching (LT@uhi.ac.uk) first for help and advice.

7. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

A blend of tertiary, university and academic partner policies exist which cover the areas which social media use can encounter. As above, social media should never be used in a way that breaches any other policies or laws. If an internet post would breach any other policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. Of particular relevance when using social media are the following :

- Information technology, web and email acceptable use
- Equality and diversity
- Safeguarding
- Dignity at work
- Copyright law
- Hate crime legislation
- Data Protection / GDPR

8. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	13/04/2012	Chief Operating Officer	First Issue	Director of Marketing, Communications and Planning
1	19/01/2021	Chief Operating Officer	Adopt current policy template. Add explicit examples in section 8 regarding disrepute. Adopt as tertiary policy, covering partnership-wide use of social media.	Web Manager