INTRODUCTION
At Dublin City University (DCU), we recognise that social media have become increasingly important and influential communication channels that involve the expression of both personal and professional opinions, the sharing of links, images and other information, often with accompanying endorsements, meaning that the lines between the expression of an individuals personal or professional views and those of Dublin City University as an institution can become blurred. Also, the same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, students, alumni, donors, the media and any other University constituents apply online as in the real world.

However, the fact that the content of such media is generated by the users poses a unique set of legal and reputational risks to the University and DCU has developed this Social Media Policy and Guidelines to help clarify how best to use these new evolving tools to the professional benefit of the University, its staff and students.

PURPOSE
The purpose of this Social Media policy is:

• to enhance and protect the University, its staff and students' personal and professional profiles and reputations in the social media space while ensuring that the image and reputation of Dublin City University as an institution is not compromised in any way
• to promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the University's activities

SCOPE
This policy applies to all DCU staff, students and/or external parties (each of which is defined below and are, hereinafter, collectively referred to as Users) and governs the use of social media sites by Users communicating with and/or on behalf of the University. This may arise in a variety of ways including:

• Use of University social media sites such as:
  o Social media sites created by the University (including repositories of material for staff and students); and
  o University profile pages created on third party sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.;
• Use of personal accounts on third party social media sites using University systems and/or equipment.

For the purposes of this Social Media Policy:
• Staff means all full-time and part-time employees of the University and its subsidiary companies.
• Student means all full-time and part-time students of the University.
• External Parties means all University’s contractors, researchers, visitors and/or any other parties who are granted access to the University’s IT Resources and/or University social media sites/discussion forums on third party platforms.

WHAT ARE SOCIAL MEDIA?
Social media are defined as online environments in which content is created, consumed, promoted, distributed, discovered or shared for purposes that are primarily related to communities and social activities, rather than functional, task-oriented objectives. Media in this context is an environment characterized by storage and transmission, while “social” describes the distinct way that these messages propagate in a one-to-many or many-to-many fashion.

There are many different types of social media channels, which attract specific audiences for different purposes. These include but are not limited to:
  • forums and comment spaces on information-based websites, e.g. BBC Have Your Say
  • social networking websites such as Facebook
  • video and photo sharing websites such as Flickr and YouTube
  • weblogs, including corporate and personal blogs
  • micro-blogging sites such as Twitter
  • forums and discussion boards such as Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups
  • online wikis that allow collaborative information sharing such as Wikipedia

Some channels may be more appropriate for the University's or individual's needs than others, particularly in relation to social networking.

LEGAL AND POLICY BASIS
Users should be conscious that all information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the legislation in force at the time. Particular attention should be paid to the following Acts:
  • Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007
  • Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003
  • The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004
  • Defamation Act 2009
  • Equal Status Act 2000
  • Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989

Please note that certain additional DCU standards and policies supplement this Policy and should be read in conjunction with this Policy. These include but are not limited to the following:
  • Policy to Promote Respect and to Protect Dignity
  • Code of Conduct for the Use of Computer Resources
  • Intellectual Property including the use of the DCU name, logo and trademarks
  • Data Protection Policy
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY

Users must at all times use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of the University and of others. In particular, you are required to comply with the following rules:

1. Do not post material that could reasonably be deemed threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory or slanderous towards any individual or entity.

2. Do not post information which is confidential and/or proprietary to the University.
   Users should not post confidential or proprietary information about Dublin City University, its students, employees or alumni (see DCU’s Data Protection Guidelines and Data Handling Guidelines). Care should be taken to use good ethical judgment and to ensure that all University privacy and confidentiality policies are adhered to. Users who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action.

3. In order to avoid discrepancies and minimise the need for updating, social media platforms are not to be used to post detailed policy or procedural information, e.g., programme admission criteria. For such information users should be directed to official DCU website, electronic resource or publication for such information.

4. Do not use pseudonyms or seek to impersonate any other person.

5. Do not infringe copyright and/or intellectual property
   When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights - including inventions, literary and artistic works (images, videos, audio), and symbols, names, images, and designs - of others and of the University.

   For example, photographs posted on social media sites can be easily copied by visitors. Dublin City University’s Communications and Marketing Office has a policy of securing written consent from all students, alumni and other subjects (where appropriate) limited to reporting University business and the promotion of the University online and offline. Please note, this consent does not extend to any purposes outside this remit.

6. The Dublin City University Trademarks including name and/or logos are not to be used for endorsements. Do not use the DCU name, logo or any other University images or iconography on personal social media sites. Do not use Dublin City University’s name to promote a product, cause, petition, political party or candidate.

7. Do not promote or advertise a commercial product or solicit business or membership or financial or other support in any business, group or organisation except those which are officially approved by DCU.

8. Respect University time and property
   University computers and time on the job are reserved for University-related business as approved by line managers/supervisors and in accordance with University policy.
INSTITUTIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

If you post on behalf of a school, faculty, unit or student/student group of DCU, DCU's Communications and Marketing Office will advise you with such social media planning and will maintain a register of all relevant DCU associated sites and the site owners/administrators who have responsibility for them.

COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

The University does not routinely monitor content posted on social media sites but reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, the postings and activities of staff and students and alumni in connection with social media where there is reason to suspect that this Policy is being breached or where deemed necessary by the University for other legitimate reasons.

The University operates a notice and takedown procedure. Users are encouraged to be vigilant and to report any suspected violations of this Policy and/or potentially illegal activity immediately to Office of the Chief Operations Officer (coo@dcu.ie), which will decide, on behalf of the University, the most appropriate course of action under the circumstances. However, please note that frivolous or vexatious complaints will not be entertained.

BREACH OF THE POLICY

On receipt of notice (or where the University otherwise becomes aware) of any suspected breach of this Policy, the University reserves the right to remove, or require the removal of, any content which is deemed by the University to be in breach of this Policy. In the event that content is deemed to be potentially illegal, the University will report such content to the appropriate authorities.

Dublin City University may take appropriate action against individuals when an allegation of a breach has been substantiated. Any actions taken by the institution with respect to DCU staff and students will be initiated in accordance with the appropriate DCU regulations and disciplinary procedures, which may include (but are not restricted to) any of the following:

a. To disable any User and block access for that User to the University’s network, systems, communications devices or equipment.

b. The initiation of steps for implementation of the Dublin City University disciplinary procedures under Dublin City University Statute No. 5 of 2010: ‘Suspension and Dismissal of Employees’ leading to demotion or dismissal (relevant to Dublin City University employees only).

c. The initiation of steps for implementation of the Dublin City University disciplinary procedures under the terms of the University Regulations for undergraduate or postgraduate students.

For further details on any aspect of this policy, please contact:
Office of the Chief Operations Officer
Tel: 01-7005117/8257

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DCU

Office of the Chief Operations Officer