



# **Social Media Policy**



## Introduction

At Dublin City University (DCU), we recognise the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media presents.

Social media channels have become important and influential communication channels that involve the expression of both personal and professional opinions, along with the sharing of links, images and other information, often with accompanying endorsements. This can sometimes result in the lines between the expression of an individual's personal or professional views, and those of DCU as an institution, becoming blurred.

However, the same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, students, alumni, donors, the media and any other University constituent apply equally online as in the offline world.

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 it has developed this Social Media Policy, and additional guidelines, to help clarify how best to use these new evolving tools to the professional benefit of the University, its staff and students.

We actively encourage our staff and students to use social media platforms in a positive and safe manner. DCU adopts an educative approach to supporting appropriate and effective staff use of social media for the benefit of the University and to this end DCU offers regular workshops on how to best use these platforms.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and DCU will ensure that this policy, and any future changes, are accessible to all users.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is:

- to promote the effective and innovative use of social media as part of the University's activities;
- &
- to protect the University, along with the professional profiles and reputations of its staff and students, in the social media space while also ensuring that the image and reputation of DCU as an institution is not compromised in any way.



## 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, or in reference to, the University.

This may arise in a variety of ways including:

- Use of University social media sites such as:
  - Social media sites created by the University (including repositories of material for staff and students);
  - &
  - 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 when using University systems and/or equipment, inside or out of normal university work/study time, and whether on DCU or personal devices.

For the purposes of this 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 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.

## Definition

DCU defines ‘Social Media’ as any and all external online environments, in which content is created, consumed, promoted, distributed, discovered or shared. There are many different types of social media channels which attract specific audiences for different purposes. Some channels may be more appropriate for the University’s or individuals needs than others, particularly in relation to social networking.



## Legal & Policy Basis

Social 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 and 2018](#)
- [The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004](#)
- [Defamation Act 2009](#)
- [Equal Status Act 2000 and 2012](#)
- [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 Privacy Policy](#)
- [The Universities Act 1997 – Academic Freedom](#)

## Policy Statement

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, users must comply with the following rules.

### General Responsibilities

- 1) It is the responsibility of users to read and act in accordance with the contents of this policy.
- 2) Users are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and they must adhere to the standards set out in this policy and all other relevant University policies.
- 3) Users should check the terms and conditions of a social media platform before uploading material to it as by posting material ownership rights and control of the content may be



released. For this reason, it is important to exercise caution in sharing information and images especially where doing so expressly, or by implication or innuendo, identifies a third party.

- 4) DCU understands that specific departments, clubs and societies benefit from having their own social media presence. These platforms are to be monitored and managed by the specific department, club or society and in accordance with the contents of this policy. When contributing to the University's social media activities users should be aware that they are also representing DCU.
- 5) Social media platform of departments, clubs or societies that are not kept current may be deactivated to ensure DCU's online presence is kept relevant and up to date.

### **User Responsibilities**

- 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 DCU, its students, employees or alumni (see DCU's [Data Protection 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 an official DCU webpage, electronic resource or publication.
- 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, in the case of photographs posted on social media sites can be easily copied by visitors to those sites. To safeguard the rights of individuals involved the University's Communications and Marketing Department (hereinafter referred to as 'C&M Department') has a policy of securing written consent from all students, alumni and other subjects (where appropriate) and of limiting the extent of that consent to University business and the promotion of the University online and offline. The consent does not extend to any purposes outside that remit.

- 6) The DCU Trademark, including its name and/or logos, is not to be used for endorsements. Unless you are positively promoting a cause or event related to DCU, do not use the DCU name, logo or any other University images or iconography originating from, or commissioned by, the University on personal or parody social media sites. Do not use DCU'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 and only if you are an agent of the University whose specific remit is to secure funding or sponsorship on the University's behalf, e.g. DCU Educational Trust.
- 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.
- 9) All social media platforms have rules, policies and guidelines which cover everything a user needs to know regarding best practice whilst using the platforms.

### **Online Harassment**

Users who receive threats to life or targeted online harassment as a result of their DCU related postings on social media platforms should in the first instance use the platform's reporting structures regarding such content. If you are unsure how to do this, please email [socialmedia@dcu.ie](mailto:socialmedia@dcu.ie) for advice.

Following reporting of such content, if a DCU student or staff member is still concerned for their safety while studying or working at DCU as a result of the online harassment, and escalation is required, they should bring it to the attention of the C&M Department as soon as possible by emailing [socialmedia@dcu.ie](mailto:socialmedia@dcu.ie) who, in conjunction with subject matter experts, can provide support and advice.



## DCU Social Media Sites

A register of ratified DCU social media accounts is maintained by the C&M Department. In order to establish a new social media account, permission must be sought and granted from the C&M Department. Information on this process can be found by contacting [socialmedia@dcu.ie](mailto:socialmedia@dcu.ie)

If you post on behalf of a school, faculty, unit or student/student group of DCU do not post personal opinions. The C&M Department will advise you on social media planning and will maintain a register of all relevant DCU associated social media accounts along with the account owners/administrators who have responsibility for them.

If you are the victim of sustained trolling or online harassment, please contact the digital communications team on [socialmedia@dcu.ie](mailto:socialmedia@dcu.ie) for advice.

## 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 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 the C&M Department by contacting [socialmedia@dcu.ie](mailto:socialmedia@dcu.ie). The C&M Department will then decide, on behalf of the University, the most appropriate course of action under the circumstances. Frivolous or vexatious complaints will not be entertained.

## Sanctions: 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.



The 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 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](#).

## Contact

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the C&M Department at [socialmedia@dcu.ie](mailto:socialmedia@dcu.ie)

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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End.