

## **Social Media Usage Policy**

### **Edinburgh Napier University**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The University recognises freedom of expression and academic freedom<sup>1</sup> as fundamental to the effective functioning of the University in the fulfilment of its missions to advance learning, teaching and research. However, such freedoms are not absolute and are subject to legally and contractually imposed limits to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

1.2 The term social media is used to describe dynamic and socially-interactive, networked information and communication technologies. The University is aware of the growth in social media, particularly social networking sites. The University recognises that this growth provides unique opportunities for staff to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media. However, the University also recognises that staff's use of social media can pose risks to themselves, students and the University's reputation, and can jeopardise its compliance with legal obligations.

1.3 Edinburgh Napier University will promote an environment where dignity and respect are of paramount importance. The University has a number of policies in place to ensure its statutory obligation to protect its staff and students. This applies on all social media sites.

1.4 The University has developed this policy in order to protect the University, its staff and student community; provide clear guidelines for line managers and staff in general; and comply with legislative requirements in relation to social media usage.

#### **2. Who is Covered?**

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and third parties working for or on behalf of the University; including casual, agency and associate workers, who have access to the University's electronic communication systems and equipment.

2.2 Throughout this policy we will refer to the groups cited in 2.1 as staff.

#### **3. Scope and Purpose**

3.1 This policy covers the use of all forms of social media, including all social and professional networking sites and all internet postings. This policy covers content placed on University, personal, and third party social media sites.

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<sup>1</sup> The University's [Information Note on the Legal and Regulatory Context Concerning Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom](#) provides further guidance.

3.2 This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during or out with a staff member's hours of work. This policy applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using the University's IT facilities and equipment or using personal equipment belonging to staff.

3.3 A breach of this policy may result in the commencement of disciplinary action, in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours.

3.4 Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in the commencement of disciplinary action, in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

4.1 All staff have a responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy. All staff are responsible for ensuring that they take the time to read and understand it.

4.2 All Line Managers have a responsibility to ensure that their staff members are aware of this policy and take action if they become aware of any breach.

4.3 Any misuse of social media should be reported to the relevant University Line Manager or Contact.

#### **5. Responsible use of Social Media**

5.1 The University supports staff using social media where it adds value to existing services, for instance for the purposes of:

- Marketing and communications
- Engagement with external stakeholders
- To communicate with prospective and current students
- Sharing University good news and achievements
- Alumni purposes
- Academic purposes (support and learning)
- Recruitment

The University's Marketing, Brand and Communications Team have developed [Good Practice Social Media Participation Guidelines](#) which staff can refer to.

5.2 Where staff use social media for personal purposes at work this should be done in-line with the University's [Information Security Policies](#). Reasonable access to

social media sites for personal purposes is acceptable before and after working hours and during work breaks.

5.3 The content of IT resources and communications systems are University property, therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in social media posting or any other kind of information or communication transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on the University's electronic information and communications systems, in-line with the University's [Information Security Policies](#).

5.4 For the avoidance of doubt the University has the right to monitor, intercept and review information posted on its systems, which includes social media content.

5.5 Staff should be aware of the volume and accessibility of personal information available on social networking sites and about how to protect themselves from malicious behaviour on these sites. Information about how staff can protect themselves and stay safe when using social networking sites is available on the [Social Networks](#) page of the Information Services intranet pages.

5.6 If an employee decides to set up a social media profile on behalf of Edinburgh Napier University, they should notify the Marketing, Brand and Communications Team in advance of setting up this site, by e-mailing [idea@napier.ac.uk](mailto:idea@napier.ac.uk).

## **6. Protecting the University's Reputation**

6.1 All staff are responsible for protecting the University's reputation.

If a staff member views any social media content that causes them concern, they should contact their line manager and / or relevant HR Client Partner, i.e. where there is:

- Content that has the sufficient potential to or does bring the University into disrepute
- Content that reflects negatively on the University, colleagues or students
- A potential conflict of interest

6.2 If a staff member is approached by someone external or a media contact about content viewed on a social media site about the University, they should contact their line manager and / or the relevant HR Client Partner.

6.3 Staff:

(a) Should avoid social media communications that may be misconstrued in a way that could damage the University's reputation, whether directly or indirectly. Staff must not post inappropriate or defamatory statements.

(b) Are personally responsible for any communications they may make using social media. All those subject to this policy are therefore expected to consider what they are publishing in such a forum, that it may be read by a wide range of people

(including staff, students, future employers and social acquaintances) and may be available indefinitely.

(c) Who use social media to speak for a project or department, should remember that this may be regarded as the official voice of the University and therefore, should take particular care in discussing University business especially if any posts could be construed as detrimental to the University.

(d) Should be aware that even if a staff member makes it clear that these are their personal views on a topic and do not represent the views of the University, these comments could still damage the University's reputation.

6.2. The University uses its official social media channels namely: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube as mechanisms to formally communicate to staff and students. These are used in addition to University e-mail and news announcements, for example, campus closures. If a staff member believes that any corrections are required to the content of any of the University's formal social media sites they should email [news@napier.ac.uk](mailto:news@napier.ac.uk).

## **7. Respecting Intellectual Property, Confidential Information and data protection:**

Staff:

(a) Should not do anything to jeopardise confidential University information and intellectual property, through the use of social media.

(b) Must not post comments about sensitive or confidential University topics (including confidential information relating to their employment at the University).

(c) Should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other organisations and individuals, as this could result in legal action being taken against the University and potentially also the employee.

(d) Should not use the University's logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of the University's confidential or proprietary information without prior permission from the marketing and communications team which can be requested by emailing [idea@napier.ac.uk](mailto:idea@napier.ac.uk).

(e) Should reference sources of particular information posted or upload and cite them accurately, to protect the University and individual against liability for copyright infringement. If an individual has any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, they should seek advice from an appropriate University source before making the communication.

## **8. Consent**

Staff must not post images of their colleagues or students without prior written consent.

## **9. Compliance with related University Policies and Procedures**

9.1 Social media should not be used by staff in a way that breaches any of the University's policies and procedures. If an internet post would breach any of the University's policies in a different forum, it will also breach them in an on-line forum. The University will treat electronic behaviour that constitutes a breach of University policies, whether it arises online or in another forum.

9.2 Employees who breach any of the University's policies may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure

## **10. Related Polices**

[Disciplinary Procedure](#)

[Grievance Procedure](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)

[Data Protection Code of Practice](#)

[Information Security Policies](#)

[Equality and Diversity Policies](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

[Social Media Guidelines](#) (IDEA)

## **11. Useful Websites**

### **Websites**

<http://www.acas.org.uk>

<http://www.direct.gov.uk>