

**Social Media Policy**

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**1.0 Purpose:**

* 1. Cardiff Met University (‘the University’) recognises the importance of the use of social media by the university community. It enables the sharing of university news and information and acts as an important tool in student recruitment and conversion.
  2. The University encourages employees to have an active voice and presence on social media, building online communities, sharing their expertise and acting as advocates for our University. The University also has a wide range of university social media accounts that are managed by staff and students that directly represent our university brand. In addition to building brand awareness and supporting student recruitment and retention, these accounts help reinforce the University’s strategic ambitions and values and strengthen the University’s reputation and relationships with key stakeholders.
  3. The University is committed to promoting principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom so far as is reasonable practicable within the law, as set out in our [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi-gNr25OKGAxUjXEEAHYkwAR0QFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cardiffmet.ac.uk%2Fabout%2Fpolicyhub%2FDocuments%2Ffreedom-of-speech-02-2021.docx&usg=AOvVaw0NDW-q3zuFUM7DLrB-y9HR&opi=89978449). Alongside the benefits that social media can bring, there are risks associated with its use. It is is an instantaneous and far-reaching form of communication, and as such, users must be aware of the potential impact that ‘inappropriate use’ can have on staff and students, wider university community, and on the reputation of the University. The University’s commitment to Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom does need to be balanced against the University’s other legal duties to staff, students and the public.
  4. The purpose of this policy is to set out the University’s requirements for individuals posting and engaging on social media on behalf of the University. It will ensure the University’s employees and brand are protected. The policy provides information on user responsibilities for those running or posting on Cardiff Metropolitan University social media accounts and the expectations on both staff and students using social media for personal or professional reasons.

**2.0 Related Policies**

2.1 This policy should be viewed in conjunction with the University’s [CMET IT Acceptable Use policy](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=002746601839007455011:zaiqtfcuqc4&q=https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/it-acceptable-use-policy.docx&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwj3-Z2C1OeFAxU_aqQEHSDpBhcQFnoECAAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2futeoNHswMU6tUSE1ps-c), the University’s [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi-gNr25OKGAxUjXEEAHYkwAR0QFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cardiffmet.ac.uk%2Fabout%2Fpolicyhub%2FDocuments%2Ffreedom-of-speech-02-2021.docx&usg=AOvVaw0NDW-q3zuFUM7DLrB-y9HR&opi=89978449), [Staff Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/disciplinary-policy.docx) and [Student Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Documents/AH1_09_01E.docx).

2.2 Any staff or student using social media on behalf of the University must also comply with [Welsh Language standards](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/Welsh%20Language%20Unit/Pages/Welsh-Language-Standards-.aspx#:~:text=The%20Standards%20explain%20how%20the,relation%20to%20the%20Welsh%20language) (see section 4.0).

**3.0 Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all Cardiff Metropolitan staff. It also applies to any registered Cardiff student (home or international) with responsibility for running and/or posting on Cardiff Metropolitan University social media accounts. This includes responsibility for community management, such as publicly replying to or engaging with comments on posts and pages and sending direct messages, i.e. sending private messages to another user’s account on behalf of the University account.

**4.0 Definitions – what does the University mean by social media?**

4.1 Social media are websites (including blogs) and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Examples of popular social media sites include, but are not limited to:

* Instagram
* LinkedIn
* X, formally known as Twitter
* Facebook
* TikTok
* YouTube
* Whatsapp
* Snapchat
* Flickr
* Yammer
* Weibo

4.2 A ‘University social media account’ is defined as any account run by a School, department, group or other function which sits within the University, often but not always featuring the name of the University (or a derivative thereof) and/or logo or other element of our visual/brand identity in their social media account handle. This includes Commercial Units linked to the University, such as PDR and the Food Industry Centre.

**5.0 Expected standards of behaviour and appropriate use of social media**

5.1 Staff and students are personally responsible for what they communicate and share on or through social media and they must adhere to the standards of behavior set out in this policy and other related policies mentioned below.

5.2 Communications made via social media should be made in accordance with this policy. Its use must not infringe on the rights or privacy of staff or students. No comments should be made about a staff member, student or third party that could be perceived as being unlawful, discriminatory, constitute harassment under the University’s Bullying or Harassment Policy, breach any University policy or otherwise damage the University’s reputation.

5.3 Staff and students should be aware that innocently intended comments posted on social media may be misconstrued. Any communication made via ‘direct’ message may not remain private and all communications must be made with a view that these are public communications.

5.4 All use of social media must comply with the University’s policies and procedures. This includes (but is not limited to):

[Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi-gNr25OKGAxUjXEEAHYkwAR0QFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cardiffmet.ac.uk%2Fabout%2Fpolicyhub%2FDocuments%2Ffreedom-of-speech-02-2021.docx&usg=AOvVaw0NDW-q3zuFUM7DLrB-y9HR&opi=89978449)

[Data Protection Policy](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/data-protection-policy.docx)

[Data Management and Governance](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/data-management-and-governance-policy.docx)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/equality-diversity-inclusion-policy.docx)

[Harassment and Bullying](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/harassment-and-bullying-policy.docx)

[Information Security](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/information-security-policy.docx)

[Intellectual Property](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/staff-rights-in-respect-of-intellectual-property-policy.docx)

[CMET IT Acceptable Use policy](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=002746601839007455011:zaiqtfcuqc4&q=https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/it-acceptable-use-policy.docx&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwj3-Z2C1OeFAxU_aqQEHSDpBhcQFnoECAAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2futeoNHswMU6tUSE1ps-c)

5.5 Staff and students may have professional requirements that will require them to comply with social media guidance issued by regulatory bodies and, where applicable, must ensure they are familiar with the relevant guidance and comply with it.

**6.0** **Cardiff Metropolitan University Social Media Accounts**

6.1 Before any new University Social Media account is created, permission should be sought from the Head of Brand and Marketing. Before opening a new account, a brief business case should be submitted setting out the objectives, rationale and resourcing plans to the Head of Brand and Marketing, who must give authorisation before proceeding.

6.2 The University's trademarks and logo belong to the University and should only be used with prior approval from the Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment (MCSR) or Head of Brand and Marketing.

6.3 All University Social Media Accounts need to adhere to Cardiff Metropolitan University’s [Brand Guidelines](https://outlookuwicac.sharepoint.com/sites/InSite/Promoted%20Documents/Cardiff%20Met%20Brand%20Guidelines%2010.22.pdf).

6.4 To protect the University’s brand, information and reputation, it is expected that any account that represents or claims to represent any part of the University will take direction from MCSR and/or grant access as required.

6.5 If permission is granted to create a new University Social Media account, the page/account will be added to the University social media directory. Any social media account representing the University must have two named administrators. These details will then be included in the social media directory. The Head of Brand and Marketing will be responsible for ensuring the directory is up to date.

**7.0 Welsh Language Standards**

7.1 All University Social Media Accounts must comply with [Welsh Language Standards](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/Welsh%20Language%20Unit/Pages/Welsh-Language-Standards-.aspx#:~:text=The%20Standards%20explain%20how%20the,relation%20to%20the%20Welsh%20language). In line with these standards, all University social media accounts (those run centrally by MCSR and those run by Professional Services departments or Academic Schools) must operate bilingually. Any content published must therefore be published simultaneously in both English and Welsh.

7.2 The Welsh Language must not be treated any less favourably than the English Language. This could be implemented by publishing content bilingually within one account, or by creating two separate accounts. In the latter case, it should be ensured that these accounts are updated at the same time, and that the Welsh and English versions correspond in every respect.

7.3 If a person contacts a staff or student running a University social media account via social media in Welsh, the reply must be in Welsh (if an answer is required).

7.4 Regarding the Commissioner: The Commissioner conducts spot checks every year, measuring institutions’ compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. One of the most accessible and easiest platforms for the Commissioner to check are public platforms. Moreover, these can easily be accessed by students and members of the public who could lodge a complaint if the University is not posting content bilingually. This could lead to an investigation by the Commissioner’s office, a fine for the University and reputational damage.

7.5 MCSR reserves the right to direct that content is removed from any page, or that any new or existing social media account that is linked to the University is deleted should the above rules and compliance with Welsh Language Standards not be followed.

**8.0 Guidance for staff on setting up a new Cardiff Metropolitan University social media account.**

* + 1. There are more than 100 live social media accounts for Cardiff Metropolitan University. Before creating a new University social media account, staff are asked to consider whether there is a set of objectives which cannot be met through an existing account, whether alternative communications and marketing methods might meet those objectives more effectively and whether sufficient resource and content will be in place over the long term to ensure its success.
    2. Before opening a new account, a brief business case should be submitted setting out the objectives, rationale and resourcing plans to the Head of Brand and Marketing, who will need to give authorisation to proceed.
    3. If a new account is to be established, its name should begin with “CardiffMet” for consistency with other University accounts (unless express permission is granted by the Head of Marketing and Brand).

**9.0 Guidance for all those with responsibility for a Cardiff Metropolitan University social media account**

9.1 All posts from University social media accounts represent Cardiff Metropolitan University. All messages posted must be appropriate and must not damage the University’s reputation or bring the University into disrepute.

9.2 All University social media accounts should be aimed at an external audience. If the target audience for the message is internal (staff/students), existing communications channels (InSite for staff, MetCentral for students) should be used instead. In exceptional circumstances, such as a major incident, social media may be used for internal communications, upon approval or direction from the Head of Communications. For content aimed at an internal audience, contact the Stakeholder Communications Manager for guidance.

9.3 Safeguards should be put in place to minimise the risk of spelling and grammatical errors and to ensure appropriate tone of voice. This includes checking content, including language, images, emojis and any other media used, before publication, ideally by another appropriately skilled University social media user. Alt text should be used where necessary.

9.4 Both individuals and organisations can be held personally responsible for defamatory or libellous comment, or for infringing the copyright or trademarks of any organisation. It can lead to disciplinary breaches for which the University’s [Staff Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/disciplinary-policy.docx) (for staff) or the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Documents/AH1_09_01E.docx) could be invoked. In some cases, social media posters/account admins may break the law/regulation, for which there may be legal implications for both the individual and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

9.5 All posts should respect the confidentiality of Cardiff Metropolitan University, its staff, its students and stakeholders.

9.6 It is important not to post other people’s content – written or visual - without securing the appropriate permissions. The original source should be linked to when possible.

9.7 Content or responses should not commit to something which the University does not intend to deliver or has not yet been externally communicated.

9.8 If a mistake is made, it is important to be transparent and update the page/post with a correction. The Head of Communications should be informed immediately of any serious errors made on social media or where responses to posts could potentially cause reputational damage.

9.9 Cardiff Metropolitan University social media accounts should not be used for sending or receiving personal communications.

9.10 Content posted and shared online is public. Content that would be deemed to be sensitive or information should be kept private. Content posted in private messages and/or private groups runs the risk of being made public.

9.11 Social media content must not refer to, or include information that is in conflict with or risks the University’s interests. The sharing, uploading, posting, or forwarding any of the following material are examples of content that are considered unacceptable and should never be posted. Breaches of this provision could amount to gross misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action being taken against a staff member, or action taken under the Student Disciplinary Procedure:

* Confidential information - guidance should be sought from line manager if unsure whether something is confidential.
* Commercially sensitive information.
* Financial information.
* Product development or trade secrets, e.g. proprietary code.
* Intellectual property of others.
* Business strategy.
* Trade secrets, including those of competitors.
* Current legal proceedings.
* Personal information (belonging to anyone).
* Offensive, obscene, criminal, pornographic or indecent content.
* Discriminatory, derogatory or prejudicial language aimed at a specific person or group. This includes, but is not restricted to sexist, racist, misogynistic and homophobic language.
* Aggressive, threatening or violent language.
* Information that is readily available elsewhere. Example, encourage people to login to Moodle to check for lecture updates, instead of posting the update on social media.
* Anything that may bring Cardiff Metropolitan University into disrepute or cause embarrassment to the University, its stakeholders, students or staff.
* Inappropriate emojis or memes. Both emojis and memes should be considered as carrying the same weight and held to the same respectful standard as words used in social media posts.

Any such action will be addressed under the University’s [Staff Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/disciplinary-policy.docx) (for staff) and/or the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Documents/AH1_09_01E.docx).

9.12 Note that all staff and students have a responsibility to comply with data protection regulation. Further information can be found in the [Data Protection Policy](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/dataprotection) and [Data Protection Procedures and Guidelines](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/dataprotection).

9.13 MCSR reserves the right to request the removal of content from a University Social Media account if it is deemed the account or its contents pose a risk to the reputation of Cardiff Metropolitan University, or to one of its members of staff or students.

1. **Personal and Professional Social Media Accounts – staff**

10.1 It is recommended that colleagues using social media for both professional and personal reasons maintain separate accounts for these purposes. The following should help staff members understand the difference between a professional and personal account:

* Objectives - personal social media accounts are generally used for self-expression, sharing personal news and updates. The objectives of a professional account will be personal and organisational brand awareness, engagement and lead generation.
* Tone: While a professional account should be professional and consistent with brand identity, personal social media accounts may be more casual.
* Audience – a personal social media audience is typically made up of friends and family, whereas a professional audience is usually made up of connections in related industries/fields, including influencers and potential connections. This means that content should be specifically targeted at their needs, interests, and problems.

10.2 If staff do discuss their work on social media, they should make it clear on their profile statement or elsewhere that the views expressed are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the University. Be aware, however, that there is no difference between how a personal and an 'official' account is perceived on social media and disclaimers do not offer protection from possible legal action.

10.3 Staff may make reasonable and appropriate use of social media from Cardiff Metropolitan University devices. Time spent on social media during working hours should normally not interfere with or distract from other duties.

10.4 As a member of staff at Cardiff Metropolitan University, you may receive a request from the media via social media for interview/comment, or you may become a regular prominent commentator in your field. If contacted by the press, always inform your line manager, and notify the press office at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Any media statements must be drafted in conjunction with the press office. Contact: [press@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:press@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

10.5 While the University does not and will not monitor individuals’ personal or professional accounts, if a concern is raised regarding content posted on a staff member’s social media account, this will be reviewed and, if the post is considered to be misconduct, the University will request the removal of the post. In addition, the matter may be subject to further action through the University’s [Staff Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/disciplinary-policy.docx).

10.6 Any breach of the following rules could amount to gross misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action being taken:

* Do not use social network sites to criticise or abuse members of staff, students or stakeholders. Complaints should be made using the University’s [Complaints Procedure](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/complaints).
* Students must not be contacted from a personal social media account (e.g. Facebook) or personal messaging service (e.g. What’s App). Encourage people to discuss University matters over email, telephone or in person. Use discussion boards on Moodle for academic learning.
* Under no circumstances should sexually suggestive comments or material of a sexual nature be shared with staff or students via social media accounts or social media messaging services, whether public or private.

Any such breaches would lead to action being taken under the University’s [Staff Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/disciplinary-policy.docx).

10.7 If there is any doubt, do not post. Remember that content, even if deleted, could have been captured in a screen shot and then shared. Anything posted on social media that could potentially damage the image and reputation of Cardiff Met, staff, students and stakeholders will be the poster’s responsibility.

1. **Compliance**

11.1 All staff are responsible for their own compliance and for ensuring the policy is consistently applied.

11.2 This Social Media policy should be used in accordance and alongside [existing policies](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Pages/default.aspx), including the IT Acceptable Use Policy at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

11.3 Failing to act in accordance with these policies or behaviour that is deemed unacceptable, will be subject to the [Staff Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Documents/disciplinary-policy.docx) and/or the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Documents/AH1_09_01E.docx).

1. **Incidents and Response**

12.1 Any student, staff member or member of the public can raise a concern about social media content and /or other breach of this policy by reporting the matter to the Head of Marketing and Brand. The report will be reviewed, and a decision will be made on the most appropriate and proportionate course of action. This may include referring the matter to be dealt with under a different policy / procedure including those detailed below.

12.2 Any staff or student may raise a concern or make a [complaint](mailto:https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/Pages/Complaints.aspx) if they consider that a breach of this policy relates to them.

12.3 The University has a [Whistleblowing Policy](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/about/policyhub/Pages/default.aspx#governance) which aims to encourage staff to make disclosures relating to actual or potential danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct that is in the public interest. [Link]

**13.0 Review and Approval**

13.1 The Social Media Policy will be reviewed every year by MCSR to ensure it complies with legislative requirements and good practice. A formal review will be undertaken every three years, in line with institutional requirements.

**11.25.2024: Any questions or requests for further information on the Social Media Policy can be referred to the Head of Marketing and Brand [rsquire@cardiffmet.ac.uk]**