

**Students'  
Union**  
Bath Spa

# **BATH SPA STUDENTS' UNION**

## **IT & Social Media Policy**

## General IT Policy

The Union works in partnership with the University, who provide IT services and support to the Union.

With this in mind the Union abides by the University's Regulations for the Use of Computer Facilities, which can be found at [www.bathspa.ac.uk/regulations/use-of-computer-facilities](http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/regulations/use-of-computer-facilities). Union staff and volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with these regulations and abide by them at all times.

### Personal Use of IT facilities

In line with the above policy, Union employees may currently use the IT facilities for personal use provided that it does not breach the regulations, and that it does not prevent or interfere with other people using the facilities for valid purposes or that this does not interfere with your work.

However, this is a concession and can be withdrawn at any time.

Employees using the IT facilities for non-work purposes during working hours are subject to the same management policies as for any other type of non-work activity.

## Social Media Policy

Employees and volunteers (including Trustees, elected Officers and Reps) may be able to access social media services and websites at work either through the Union's IT systems or via their own personal equipment.

This policy sets out the rules governing use of social media at the Union.

It sets out how staff and volunteers must behave when using the Union's social media accounts. It also explains the expectations about using personal social media accounts at work and describes what staff and officers must bear in mind when using their own social media accounts.

This policy should be read alongside the Union's other key policy documents, for example:

- Data protection Policy
- Communications Policy
- Bath Spa University Regulations for the use of Computer facilities

### Why have a social media policy?

Social media has significant benefits to the Union and is one of its principle methods of communication. However it is important that everyone associated with the Union understands both the benefits and risks associated with use of social media.

Social media enables us to be a responsive, fast paced organisation. However a misjudged status can quickly generate complaints or damage the Union's reputation. This policy explains how staff and volunteers can use social media safely and effectively.

The policy applies equally to all employees and volunteers (including Trustees, elected Officers and Reps) who use social media whilst working, no matter whether for business or personal reasons or where that use takes place.

Social media sites include, but are not limited to:

- Popular social networks like Twitter and Facebook
- Online review websites like Reevo and Trustpilot
- Sharing and discussion sites like Reddit and Delicious
- Photographic networks such as Flickr and Instagram
- Question and answer sites like Quora and Yahoo answers
- Professional social networks like LinkedIn and Sunzu

### Responsibilities

Everyone who has access to the Union's social media accounts or who uses their social media accounts at work (including in an elected or voluntary capacity) has some responsibility for implementing this policy.

However these people have specific responsibilities:

- The Board of Trustees has responsibility for ensuring that the Union's policies are adequate to support its strategic objectives and manage any risks to the Union
- The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Union uses its social media safely, appropriately and in line with the approved policy framework
- The Marketing and Communications Manager is responsible for overseeing use of the Union's social media, tracking usage and developing information and marketing campaigns with Department Managers and elected Officers. They are also responsible for ensuring that requests for information or assistance are directed to the most appropriate team member for response.

### General Guidelines

The Union embraces the use of social media as core to its marketing and communications. It recognises it is a core part of its online profile and reputation.

The union believes that its staff and volunteers should be involved in industry conversations to make connections, share ideas and shape discussions. The Union therefore encourages employees and volunteers to use social media to support its Strategic ambitions.

Regardless of which platform is being used or whether these are personal or business accounts, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** You should spend time becoming familiar with the network before contributing. It is important to read through FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable before posting messages or updates.
- **If unsure, don't post it.** You should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If you feel a post may cause complaints or offence you should not post it.
- **Be thoughtful and polite.** Failure to observe simple good manners can easily cause problems. You should adopt the same level of courtesy employed when using email.
- **Look out for security threats.** You should be on guard for engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are used to distribute spam and malware.
- **Keep personal use reasonable.** Whilst the union recognises having staff actively engaged with social media is beneficial, staff should exercise restraint about how much personal social media use they make during working hours.
- **Don't make promises without checking.** Social networks are by their nature public. It is important the information posted is accurate and that commitments or promises on behalf of the Union should not be made unless you are certain they can be delivered.

- **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not good places to resolve complex enquires or issues. Email or by phone are the most appropriate ways to deal with complex issues and customers and contacts should be directed to those sources.
- Don't escalate things. It is easy to post a quick response to a contentious status and then regret it. Staff and officers should always take time to think before responding and seek the advice of the Marketing and Communications Manager, or CEO if in any doubt.

## Use of Bath Spa Students' Union Social media accounts

This part of the policy covers use of all social media accounts owned and run by the Union.

### **Authorised users**

Only people authorised to use the Union's social media accounts may do so.

Authorisation is provided by the Marketing & Communications Manager, in line with the Communications policy.

Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures the company's social media presence is consistent and cohesive.

### **Creating social media accounts**

The Union operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most appropriate social networks, given the available resources.

New social media accounts in the Union's name can only be created with the approval of the Marketing & Communications Manager. No accounts should be established without this approval and due consideration of the resource implications.

Where a club or society wishes to create a website or social media account for their club or society, they must seek guidance from the Clubs & Societies Co-ordinator at the start of the project and it must be approved by the Marketing & Communications Manager before it is launched. The Marketing & Communications Manager and the Clubs & Societies Co-ordinator must be given full administration rights to the site.

### **Purpose of social media accounts**

The Union's accounts may be used for many purposes. In general you should only post updates or messages which clearly help deliver the Union's objectives. These will largely be to:

- Respond to student enquiries or requests for help
- Share blogs, posts and other content from the Union
- Share insightful articles, videos and other content from other organisations that is of relevance to students
- Provide students and partners with an insight into how the Union works
- Promote marketing campaigns and special offers
- Support product launches and other initiatives

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly. In order to maintain a visible presence employees and volunteers are encouraged to work with the Marketing & Communications Manager to develop creative ideas to stimulate interest in the Union's social media platforms.

### **Inappropriate content and uses of Union social media accounts**

The Union's social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or take part in any activities that could bring the company into disrepute.

When sharing interesting blogs, articles or links, employees and officers should always review the whole content thoroughly and should never post a link based purely on the headline.

### **Use of personal social media accounts**

The Union recognises that employees' personal social media accounts can generate a number of benefits. For instance:

- Staff members can make industry contacts that could be useful in their roles
- Employees and volunteers can discover content to help them learn and develop in their roles
- By posting online this can build up the Union's online profile

As a result the Union is happy for employees to spend a reasonable amount of time using their personal social media accounts at work. However this should be proportionate, in line with the Union's overarching IT policy.

### **Acceptable use**

Employees may use their personal social media accounts for work-related purposes during regular hours, but must ensure this is for a specific reason only. It should not affect the ability of the employee to perform their regular duties.

**Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes is restricted to non-work times such as lunch breaks.**

### **Talking about the Union**

Employees, Officer, Reps and volunteers should ensure that they are clear that their personal social media account does not represent the Union's views or opinions. Opinions expressed should not openly criticise the Union or contain content which may bring the Union into disrepute. This includes ensuring that the background of any images does not contain images of the Union, its activities or the Union logo in a manner or alongside content which may damage the reputation of the Union.

Staff and volunteers may wish to include a disclaimer in social media profiles that state 'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of Bath Spa University Students' Union.

### **Safe, Responsible Social Media Use**

The rules in this section apply to:

- Any employees using the Union's social media accounts
- Employees, Officers and Reps using their personal social media accounts

Users must not:

- Create or transmit material that might be defamatory or incur liability for the Union
- Post messages, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate

Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, comments using gender stereotype, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling or illegal drugs.

This definition of inappropriate content also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, gender, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.

- Use social media for any criminal or illegal activities
- Send offensive or harassing material to others via social media
- Send or post messages or material that could damage the Union's reputation
- Enter into discussion with the Union's members, partners or competitors in a manner which could be interpreted as being offensive, disrespectful or rude. Any communication with direct competitors must be kept to a minimum.
- Discuss colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers without their approval
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages via the Union's social media accounts

### **Copyright**

The Union respects and operates within copyright laws. It is essential that anyone using a Union social media account or the website must not:

- Publish or share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless they receive express written permission from that third party.

Staff wishing to share content published on another website are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.

- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games or other software.

### **Security and Data Protection**

Staff, Officers, Reps and volunteers should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social networks.

In order to maintaining confidentiality, users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the Union that might be considered as confidential or commercially sensitive. This could involve sales figures, details of customers or information about future strategy, events or marketing campaigns.
- Share or link to any content or information owned by another company that could be viewed as confidential or commercially sensitive. For example, if another company's marketing strategy was leaked online this should not be mentioned or shared on social media.
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach the Union's Data Protection policy.

### **Protection of the Union's Social Media Accounts**

The Union's social media accounts should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.

Whilst all members of the Union, Reps, Officers and staff are encouraged to develop content for the Union's social media outlets, access to approve content on the website and social media pages will only be given to the following officers and staff members of the Union, once training has been completed:

- Sabbatical Officers
- Chief Executive
- Department Heads
- Clubs & Societies Co-ordinator, Student Advisor, Representation & Academic Advice co-ordinator & Bar Supervisor

Users must not use any new software, apps or services with any of the Union's social media accounts without receiving approval from the Marketing & Communications Manager.

All users must take precautions to avoid social scams. Staff should be alert to potential phishing attempts, where scammers may use deception to obtain information relating to the Union or its members or customers.

All users should ensure that they NEVER reveal information through social media channels which could be considered as sensitive.

All users should avoid clicking links in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious. In particular, users should look out for URLs contained in generic or vague-sounding direct messages.

## Policy Enforcement

### Monitoring social media use

All users should be aware that, under the University IT Regulations, Bath Spa University monitors and logs the use of its IT facilities for the purposes of:

- Detecting, investigating or preventing misuse of the facilities or breaches of the University's regulations;
- Monitoring the effective function of the facilities.
- Investigation of alleged misconduct;
- Dealing with email in an employee's absence

The Union therefore reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through these resources.

Any such monitoring will only be carried out by staff authorised in line with the University policy.

All data relating to social networks which are written, sent or received through the Union's IT systems are part of the Union's official records.

The Union will comply with lawful requests for information from law enforcement and government agencies for the purposes of detecting, investigating or preventing crime, and ensuring national security.

**Potential sanctions**

Breaching this policy is a serious matter. Users who do so could be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Staff, Elected Officers and Representatives may also be held personally liable for violation of this policy.

**Approved by Board of Trustees on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

**Date for Review: October 2019**