ACADEMIC POLICY FRONT COVER SHEET

Name of Policy:	Student Policy on the Use of Social Media
Scope of Policy:	The policy guides students on the appropriate use of social media in relation to their status as a student of the University.
Author and contact for further information:	Head of Student Services owns the policy which was originally drafted by the Head of Public Relations and Head of Governance
Applicable to:	Students
Consultation Process:	The draft policy was considered and endorsed by the Education & Student Life Committee on 9 May 2018
Approval Body:	Academic Board
Date of Approval:	20 June 2018
Date of Implementation (if different from date of approval):	As above
Review Date:	To be confirmed as June 2021
Version:	As referenced in the footer

Student Policy on the Use of Social Media

1. Policy Statement

1.1   The University of Lincoln recognises and embraces the benefits and opportunities that social media brings as a set of tools for communication and engagement. The University also recognises that inappropriate use of social media can impact adversely upon students, staff and the interests of the University.

1.2   This Policy provides information for students regarding the appropriate use of social media when connected to their status as a student of the University, or when directly or indirectly referencing the University.

2. Scope of the Policy

2.1   For the purpose of this Policy, social media is defined as any online tool, such as a website or app, which enables users to create and publish content or exchange ideas or information through online communities. This Policy recognises that new platforms and technologies emerge frequently. Mainstream social media services currently include Facebook, , Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and Twitter, as well as blogs , discussion forums / chatrooms, instant messaging services and other online platforms which allow public commenting or posting.

2.2   This Policy applies to all enrolled students and to any communications they make using social media platforms which directly or indirectly identify them as a student at the University or otherwise impact directly upon students, staff or the interests of the University. Staff are directed to the University's Social Media Staff Policy and Guidance which is designed for staff who use, or wish to use, social media within their role at the University.

2.3   This Policy applies to social media communications made at any time, whether privately or publicly, and from any location, including away from campus and on personal devices, whether to an individual, to a limited group or to a public audience.

2.4   The University acknowledges that students may use social media in their private lives and for personal communications. Personal communications are those made on, or from, a private social media account, such as a personal account on Facebook or Twitter, a personal blog or within a private messenger app. Students are free to refer to their status as a student at the University on their public-facing personal social media accounts, if they wish. In these instances it should be made clear that views expressed are those of the account holder and not made on behalf of the University.

3. Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

3.1   Nothing in this Policy is intended to have the effect of limiting either freedom of speech or academic freedom, subject to that freedom being exercised within the

law. The University's <u>Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech</u> and <u>Statement on Academic Freedom</u> are available here: http://secretariat.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/academic-policies-2/

4.   Using Social Media as a Teaching and Learning tool

4.1   Many students will use online platforms which enable users to post content, collaborate and offer feedback as part of their academic studies. This includes University supported software such as Blackboard. On occasion, third party tools (such as social media platforms) may be used to support student engagement and teaching and learning. The scope of this Policy extends to these uses.

4.2   In using third party tools, students are advised to read the terms and conditions, including privacy statements and notices, and refer to their Personal Tutor if unsure.

5.   Social Media in Students' Personal Lives

5.1   Students should be aware of their association with, and responsibilities to, the University, and ensure that their profiles and behaviours on social media are consistent with:

> ➢ the University's policies, including but not limited to those on data protection, dignity, the Respect Charter, the Student Charter, ICT acceptable use and information security
> ➢ Students' registration agreement with the University (including the University General Regulations)
> ➢ how students would wish to present themselves – including to future employers

5.2   Students should be aware of the potential impact and permanence of material they post online and should avoid posting content online that:

> ➢ they would not wish to be permanently in the public domain
> ➢ they would not be willing to say in person to another individual or in public

5.3   Students should also be aware that any material posted online could reach a wider audience than expected or intended. Once digital content has been created and shared, students will have limited control over its permanence and audience.

6.   Expected Standards of Behaviour

6.1   Students are personally responsible for their behaviour when they communicate on, or through, social media and they must adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in this Policy and any related Policies or Regulations (see section 6.3).

6.2   Communications on social media must adhere to the principles of the dignity, respect and integrity reflected in the University's Policies, Regulations and Charters and in accordance with this Policy. Use of social media must not infringe on the rights of other students, staff or members of the public, and students must not subject other parties to abuse, harassment or defamation.

6.3   All existing University of Lincoln Policies, Rules and Regulations concerning students extend to students' use of social media. These include codes of conduct, professional course policies, corporate branding policies, Data Protection, acceptable use of IT and disciplinary procedures. The following are of particular importance, but this list is not exhaustive:

> ➢ The Respect Charter
> ➢ ICT Acceptable Use Policy
> ➢ Research Misconduct UKRIO Procedures
> ➢ University of Lincoln Code of Ethics
> ➢ Research Ethics Policy
> ➢ University General Regulations
> ➢ Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations
> ➢ The Student Charter

6.4   The following non-exhaustive list may, according to the circumstances (and subject to 3.1), be considered to be of an unacceptable nature and should never be posted online:

- confidential information (which may include commercially sensitive information, research not yet in the public domain, or private information about fellow students or staff);

- details of formal complaints and/or legal proceedings/potential legal proceedings involving the University which might prejudice or unduly influence those proceedings;

- personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission;

- comments posted using fake accounts or using another person's name without their consent;

- material, including images, that is threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, indecent, defamatory, or hostile towards any individual or entity;

- any other posting that constitutes a criminal offence;

- anything which may compromise the safety or vital interests of students, staff and those connected with the University.

6.6   The University has well-established ways for students to raise any dissatisfaction or concerns that they may have including through the Student Complaints Procedure and the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.

7.   Cyber Bullying via Social Media Sites

7.1   The University will not accept any form of bullying or harassment by, or of, members of University staff or students.

7.2 The following examples illustrate the types of online behaviour which the University may consider to be forms of cyber bullying (this list is not exhaustive):

➢ maliciously spreading derogatory rumours, gossip or lies about others
➢ intimidating or excessively aggressive behaviour or comments
➢ grossly offensive or threatening comments or content
➢ insulting or mocking an individual with the intent to harass or humiliate them
➢ posting racist, sexist, or homophobic content (or other discriminatory behaviour)

7.3 Cyber bullying may also take place via other means of electronic communication such as email, text or instant messaging.

7.4 Any student who is experiencing cyber bullying by another student or a member of University staff, will have the full support of the University. The Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy outlines the procedure to be followed if a student feels they are being bullied, harassed or victimised.

8. Intellectual Property

8.1 All students must ensure that they have permission to share trademarked or copyrighted materials (including images, photographs, text and videos) before posting via social media. Where use is permitted, students should ensure that such materials are credited appropriately.

8.2 All students must check the terms and conditions of a social media account and/or website before uploading copyrighted material to it; by posting material to social media accounts and/or websites, a student may be releasing ownership rights and control of the content. For this reason, students must exercise caution in sharing third party content.

8.3 The University is not responsible for, nor does it hold any ownership of, any content posted by its students, other than content posted by students using official University accounts, or in the course of their duties, as a form of professional communication. This also applies to the use of social media in assessments.

9. Brand

9.1 The University's logo is a registered trademark and should only be used in accordance with the University's Identity Guidelines.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 All students are responsible for:

• ensuring that their own use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies;

• informing the relevant staff member(s) when an institutional account is to be used;

- seeking relevant authorisation for posts from institutional accounts prior to publication;

- regularly monitoring, updating and managing content they have posted;

- ensuring it is clear content and views posted from personal accounts are their own and not those of the University (see section 2.4 above); and

- using appropriate processes to raise concerns or seek advice (see section 13 below).

11. Monitoring

11.1 The University reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, within the law and without notice, student activities using its IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings.

11.2 The use of social media may be monitored by the University in accordance with its Information Security Policy and the Code of Practice for Users of the University Computing Facilities.

12. Data Protection Legislation and Freedom of Information Act 2000

12.1 Data Protection legislation applies to social media as it does in other contexts. Students must ensure that all posts comply with the relevant data protection law. See the University's Guidance on Data Protection and Data Protection Act Policy.

12.2 No personal information, including photographs and videos, should be shared on social media without the consent of the individual to whom it relates. Students should, therefore, never post other students' and/or staff and/or a third party's personal information without their consent.

12.3 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 may apply to posts and content that you have uploaded to official University websites, or any other website belonging to a public authority. As such, if a request for such information is received by the University (or other public authority), the content that a student has posted may be disclosed.

13. Incidents and Response

13.1 Where a breach of this Policy is reported, the University will review the circumstances and decide on the most appropriate and proportionate course of action, which may include referring the matter to be dealt with under a different procedure.

13.2 Where students are concerned about online behaviours they think may be in breach of this Policy, this should be reported to the University via their School, College, Personal Tutor or to the Information Security Manager.

14.   Consequences of a Breach of this Policy

14.1   Breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, exclusion/termination of registration.

14.2   Any disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.

14.3   Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of when the breach is committed or whether any University equipment or facilities were used in committing the breach.

14.5   Where conduct may be illegal or a criminal offence the University may report the matter to the police. Beyond that, any member of staff, student or third party may pursue legal action against a student in breach of this Policy.

15.   Reporting

15.1   Any complaints about social media behaviours received under this Policy may be reported, on an anonymised basis where appropriate, to the relevant body within the University.

Social Media Guidance for Students

Introduction
This guidance has been designed to help students understand their rights and responsibilities in using social media and other online platforms while enrolled as a student at the University of Lincoln. It is not a policy document but should be read in conjunction with the University's Student Policy on the Use of Social Media. This guidance makes reference to UK law and the University's own regulatory frameworks, and how they apply. It also offers some basic advice on online safety.

Social media as a communications tool
Social media is a uniquely powerful communications tool through which we can debate and discuss important issues instantly, on an international platform. Disagreement is a healthy part of democratic and academic discourse - but social media's greatest strength is also its most dangerous quality: it can rapidly amplify differences of opinion, sometimes in unpredictable ways. Its remoteness can mean what seems like expression of opinion to one person can feel like bullying or intimidation to others, especially when large groups of users become involved.

Your responsibilities as a student
When you enrol as a student you agree to abide by the University Regulations and the Student Charter. These refer to acceptable standards of behaviour, including the University's stance on bullying and harassment, and the ICT Acceptable Use Policy. The University will take action where students are found to be in breach the Regulations, including in their behaviour on social media or other online platforms. Breaching these policies could result in removal of IT access, suspension or, in the most serious cases, expulsion.

Freedom of speech within the law
Academic freedom and freedom of speech are defining principles of the University and protected in law. Staff, students and visiting speakers should feel able to express their views and opinions within the law - even if those views could be controversial or unpopular. The University takes steps as far as is reasonably practicable to safeguard freedom of speech *within the law* - which means for staff and students these rights come with responsibilities too. As a student, you should aim to ensure that your online behaviour – including use of social media - complies with policies designed to protect you and others in the University's community. Special attention needs to be paid to issues around 'cyberbullying'. Laws on public order, intellectual property, data protection and defamation are also relevant.

Staying within the law
In general, expected standards of conduct in social media use are no different to standards expected in any public place. UK legislation, University policies and social media providers' own terms of use recognise that bullying, harassment, threats and grossly offensive behaviour are unacceptable online. Legislation tends to define offences by the effect, not the intention. To be safe in your use of social media (and other electronic communications) you should aim to:

> - Avoid online behaviour which could make someone feel they are being **bullied, threatened or harassed.**
> - Avoid online behaviour which could be **grossly offensive** to someone else, including people of different views or backgrounds to you

- Treat other people with **dignity and respect** - even if you disagree with them
- Avoid use of language or imagery which could **discriminate** against someone on the basis of any protected characteristic, such as gender, sexuality, race or religion.
- Avoid presenting as fact statements which you know or suspect to be **untrue** and which could be harmful to someone else's reputation or interests
- Never publish or share intimate or **personal information** or images relating to somebody else
- Never publish or share online material which might **incite hatred** or glorify extremist views
- Ensure your online behaviour **does not break the law** in any other way, such as infringing someone's copyright.

Protecting your personal data

Millennials are the first generation in history to have lived most of their lives under the spotlight of social media. Nobody yet knows what effect this will have over the course of a person's lifetime. Taken together, social media profiles can map out many of the most important moments and details of your life: your 18th birthday, your first week at University, your job and workplace, the name of your family's pet dog. Think carefully about just how much information you make available publicly, and how it might be useful if a scammer were to piece together the jigsaw. Be conscious of privacy settings, location services and the content of posts and photos. Make sure passwords are strong and secure (a password manager can help with that) and check your account recovery settings. When making a post ask "Who do I really want to see this"? If it's a message intended for family or close friends only, why not send it as a private message?

Future career prospects

Remember too that your behaviour on social media leaves a trace which is not easily erased. Future employers will check the online profiles of prospective employees - and not just the places you choose to present your 'professional' profile. Recent headlines show the impact that ill-conceived social media posts from years ago can have on people's careers. As a rule of thumb, do not post anything you would not want to have presented back to you in a news article or a job interview. Remember too that even text messages, posts in closed groups and chats in messenger services can end up in the public domain through screengrabs. Don't leave the editing up to someone else.

Distinction between personal and 'official' profiles

Staff and students should take reasonable steps to ensure their personal views are not perceived as representative of the University or the Students' Union (including official SU clubs or societies). This distinction is important under UK charity law. Both the University and Students' Union have separate social media protocols for people running their official and affiliated social media accounts. If there is potential ambiguity between your personal profile and any official duties (e.g. as a student representative or ambassador), you should add a statement clarifying "views are my own" to your personal profile.

Help and advice

Technical support and information about the ICT Acceptable Use Policy are available from the University's ICT department. If you have any concerns about the online behaviour of others, or believe you have been a target of cyberbullying, you can access confidential advice from Student Services (via the Student Support Centre) or the Students' Union Advice Centre. The University also offers help and resources to enable students to enjoy the many benefits of social media and the web in your academic work and wider University experience. Contact the Digital Education and Student Life teams for more information on these services. The University's primary social media accounts are managed by the University's Communications, Development and Marketing department.

ICT Services, First Floor Minerva Building

Tel: 01522 886500

Email: ict@lincoln.ac.uk

Student Support Centre, Ground Floor Minerva Building

Tel: 01522 837080

Email: studentsupport@lincoln.ac.uk

Students' Union Advice Centre, Student Centre

Tel: 01522 837000

Email: advice@lincolnsu.com

Digital Education and Student Life, One Campus Way

Tel: 01522 837306

Email: lalt@lincoln.ac.uk

Communications, Development & Marketing

Tel: 01522 886644

Email: webteam@lincoln.ac.uk

Selected Relevant University Policies

- Student Policy on the Use of Social Media
- University Regulations
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Respect Charter

- Student Charter
- Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations
- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech
- Statement on Academic Freedom

Selected Relevant UK Legislation

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Order Act 1986
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Defamation Act 2013
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- General Data Protection Regulation