FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL MEDIA GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

This Good Practice Guide is intended to minimise the risks that social media poses so that students and staff can enjoy the benefits of social networking whilst understanding the standards of conduct expected by Falmouth University.

INTRODUCTION

Falmouth University recognises that social media has the potential to support and advance learning opportunities and collaborative working both within the University between current students and staff and externally with our partners, alumni and prospective students. The University also recognises that students and members of staff may wish to use social media for personal use.

It is important to recognise that the use of social media can pose risks which impact on the wellbeing of students and staff and the reputation of the University.

The guidelines should be applied to all use and all forms of social media where there is a potential impact on the University, whether for work-related or personal use, whether during working hours or otherwise, whether the social media is accessed using the University's IT facilities and equipment, or equipment belonging to members of staff or any other third party. Students and staff should apply the same standards of conduct online as they are expected to apply offline. In summary: **Think before you post!**

RESPONSIBILITY

Students and staff are responsible for their words and actions in an online environment and are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, photography or video they are about to post on a social networking site, is something that they would want fellow students, colleagues and other employees of the University, their manager or people outside the University to read.

Social networking platforms are in the public domain and it is not possible to be sure what is being viewed, shared or archived, even if material is posted on a closed profile or group. There can be no reasonable expectation that posts will remain private and will not be passed on to other people, intentionally or otherwise. Material published online may have the potential to be available publicly, indefinitely.

Honest and appropriate transparency should be used in online conversations. The University discourages students and staff from posting online anonymously or using pseudonyms. You should never impersonate another individual.

You should not post anything **anonymously** or under a **pseudonym** that you would not be prepared to post under your own name, as **you are still accountable for it**.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The University may take action under the student/staff disciplinary procedures against a student or member of staff whose use of social media includes comments, videos or photos which have been posted on social media sites about the University, fellow students, work colleagues or managers which can be considered to be:

derogatory	**defamatory**
discriminatory	**offensive**
bullying	**intimidating**
threatening	**harassing**
creating legal liability for the University	**bringing the University into disrepute**
extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism	
breaching any other University policy or procedure	

UNIVERISTY RESPONSE TO MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The University's response to any misuse of social media in a personal capacity will be reasonable and proportionate to the perceived offence; the nature of the postings/comments made and the impact or potential impact on the University.

Social networking sites may be referred to when investigating possible misconduct/gross misconduct.

The University may require staff to remove social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of these standards and failure to comply with such a request may, in itself, result in disciplinary action.

Where students or staff access social media for work-related purposes or personal use using the University's IT facilities and equipment, the University's IT regulations will apply.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK

The University recognises that members of staff may occasionally wish to use social media for personal use at their place of work, by means of the University's computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. Such incidental and occasional use of these systems is permitted, provided that:

- it is not excessive

- it does not disrupt, distract or is intrusive to the conduct of University business and/or work colleagues (for example, due to volume, frequency or cost)

- such communications do not bring the University into disrepute

Where appropriate, in accordance with the IT regulations and where the law permits, the University reserves the right to monitor use of social media platforms and take appropriate action to protect against any misuse that may be harmful to the University.