



University of Lincoln Students' Union Student Social Media Policy

Introduction

The University of Lincoln Students' Union (ULSU) is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we communicate. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way communication is given and received, and used to reach out and interact with the different communities served.

ULSU has the expectation that all students and members follow this policy to avoid incidents which could result in reputational and legal issues.

ULSU recognises that its members make use of social media in a personal capacity. Whilst they are not acting on behalf of ULSU or the University, members must be aware that they can damage the reputation of ULSU if they are recognised as being a member of a ULSU Group.

To minimise these risks, avoid loss of productivity, and to ensure that IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate purposes; all members must adhere to this policy.

Aims

This policy aims to provide all students and members with information concerning the use of, or the development of, any social media application, and to help them get the best out of the tools available whilst maintaining a safe professional environment, protecting themselves as well as ULSU.

It is also the aim of this policy to prevent and safeguard members, students and members of the public from harm, and is not intended to limit Freedom of Speech, as per Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998. When sharing data, all members must comply with current Data Protection legislation. It is the responsibility of all members to abide by the law.

Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of this policy and guidance, social media is defined as a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data, whether publicly or privately. This includes, but is not limited to:

- e-mail
- group chats
- instant messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp)
- online social forums
- blogs
- video and image sharing websites and similar facilities.

The above list is not exhaustive and all members should be aware that this is a constantly changing area. This policy applies to any instance in which you are identified or acting as a student or member of ULSU.

Responsibilities

All members are responsible for their adherence of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported via the ULSU Complaints Procedure and could lead to disciplinary action as per the ULSU Student Disciplinary Procedures for member(s), Committees, Societies and Sports Clubs forming part of the Code of Conduct of the Students' Union (hereinafter referred to as the ULSU Student Disciplinary Procedure) All members are required to use Social Media with care and caution and any unacceptable behaviour may lead to a student having their IT access removed or suspended by the University, or in the most serious cases, they may be unable to continue their studies at the University of Lincoln.

If you believe you have witnessed any activity that violates current legislation and laws, this may be reported to the Police. Likewise, ULSU may report activity to the University or the Police if deemed necessary.

* When concerning information shared via group chats; should you be the recipient of any material that violates this policy, and/or current legislation and laws, this must be reported to ULSU immediately. Failure to do this may be deemed as a disregard of the policies, and/or current legislation and laws in place, and they member in question may be subjected to disciplinary action.

Use of Social Media

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any other policy or legislation. It is prohibited to use social media to;

- Breach obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
- Breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality
- Breach any Disciplinary Rules
- Breach the ULSU Data Protection Policy
- Bring ULSU or the University into disrepute by;
 - Making defamatory comments about individuals, other organisations, ULSU or the University; or
 - Posting images that are inappropriate or explicit, or links to inappropriate content or;
- Harass, discriminate against or bully any individual, demographic or group in any way, this includes, but is not limited to;
 - Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age, or any other protected characteristics;
 - Using social media to bully another individual or;
 - Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.
- Breach any other law or ethical standards.

Social Media used by ULSU Activities Group Members

The extension to this policy applies to the following Groups:

- Sports, Societies, Campaigns Network, Volunteer Groups and Representatives
- Students partaking in Academic Opportunities

Use of Social Media by Groups

All Group Members should always be aware that, when contributing to or utilising social media in any way associated with ULSU, all of their connected pages (even those independently run) are representing ULSU. There are several safeguards to consider, including, but not limited to;

- ensuring that the communication has a purpose
- obtaining consent if using images of others
- maintain the authenticity of the corporate logo and brand
- getting another member of the group to check the content before it is published

Sports Clubs, Societies and Campaigns Network Groups also have their own mini websites which can be viewed by the public. These must always be kept professional and adhere to policies.

Amendments to the information on the mini website can be made via ULSU Student Dashboard.

All content in relation to Sports Clubs and Societies is approved by the ULSU Activities Department. Content in relation to Campaigns Networks is approved by the ULSU Campaigns Department.

Any members found to have been involved in the establishment of any social or physical media under the ULSU name or using the ULSU logo without prior approval will be subject to the ULSU Disciplinary Procedure.

Social media in personal life

ULSU recognises that Group Members make use of social media in a personal capacity. Whilst they are not acting on behalf of ULSU or the University, members must be aware that they can damage the reputation of ULSU if they are recognised as being a member of a ULSU Group.

They are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media. Remember that what is published might be available to be read by the masses (including future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time. They must keep this in mind before content is posted.

Any member who is involved in ULSU Activities are encouraged to include disclaimers alongside any public posts regarding Political Activity, stating that the opinions are their own and not that of ULSU.

Any communications they make in a personal capacity through social media must:

- Not post anything that anyone would find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenities.
- Not post anything related to your committee, members or specific individuals that you represent without their written permission.

Monitoring and review of this policy

All members must adhere to this policy and guidance, and be aware that use of Social Media in a way that may be deemed as deliberate or inadvertent misuse which could be a breach of these guidelines, may lead to disciplinary action as per the ULSU Student Disciplinary Procedure.