

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Version: JUNE 2021

Summary	Updated Social Media Policy to guide social media use within at Hull University Students' Union	
Keywords	Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Engagement, Community	
Target audience	Staff and Students	
Date issued		
Approved by		Date of meeting:
Next review date		
Author	Marianne Lewsley-Stier	
Senior Leadership team		

Equality Impact Assessment (for policies only)

The Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The assessment document is held centrally and is available by contacting HUSU-Enquiries@hull.ac.uk

Version control

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for change

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
Marianne Lewsley-Stier	Marketing Manager	Version 1, April 2021

Social Media Policy Information on a page

The document provides an overview and guidance to the safe use of Social Media and other platforms, as well as advice on how to conduct oneself and represent the Hull University Students' Union online.

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1. Introduction

Hull University Students' Union (HUSU) recognises the benefits and opportunities that social media can provide. It can be used to share news and information, to communicate relevant messaging including events, projects and campaigns and to encourage participation with HUSU activities.

HUSU encourages appropriate use of social media by student activities. We want student groups to learn, grow, connect and develop through the use of online communications, whilst being aware of the potential risks to the reputation of HUSU, its student groups and individual members, as well as overall compliance to the law. To minimise such risks, HUSU expects its students to comply with this policy in relation to the use of social media.

Social media is defined as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking." This includes Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Tiktok and LinkedIn. This list is not exhaustive.



Student groups shall, for this document, be used as an all-encompassing term for all Sports clubs, Societies, and Standing Committees that operate from Hull University Students' Union (HUSU), which also includes standing committees.

2. Scope

What is the policy for?

The policy requires HUSU members to use social media in a sensible manner for appropriate student activities purposes, or where used for recreational reasons, used with diligence and care. The policy aims to:

- Provide protection for HUSU, avoiding any matter which could result in HUSU's name being brought into disrepute.
- Protect HUSU's legal obligations.
- Protect HUSU's members
- Protect HUSU's student activities

3. Duties and responsibilities

Who is included in the policy?

All individuals involved with student activities at HUSU, including associate members, coaches and anyone connected with the activity. Third party individuals who have access to the electronic communication are also required to follow this policy (for the purposes of this policy, we will refer to all of the above collectively as members). All members involved in social media activity for HUSU activities or personal usage should be aware of these policy implications.

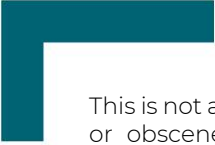
4. Main content (plus sub headings)

Appropriate Usage

Social media should not be used to post offensive or abusive content, to intimidate students or staff and should never create or share inappropriate content. When a page shares offensive content, it is endorsing the content, unless it specifically states that it disagrees with the messaging of the post.

Inappropriate social media usage could include:

- Defamatory or offensive language about people or organisations
- Discriminatory or could be construed as discriminatory to any group.
- Engaging with criminal activity
- Dishonest or misleading
- Inappropriate with images, video or text



This is not an exhaustive list. Offensive content is defined as hurtful, derogatory or obscene comments made to, or materials about a student group or organisation.

We have created a separate appendix (Appendix 1: HUSU Social Media Community Behaviour guidelines) which covers all aspects of community interaction and moderation on the HUSU website and associated media channels. These community standards are 10 simple guidelines which we expect all participants in the community areas of HUSU's website and Social Media channels to abide by. These apply across our site, while moderation decisions are also informed by the context in which the comments are made.

Policy Compliance

All of HUSU's other policies which might apply to the use of social media remain in full force and effect e.g. Zero Tolerance Policy and Alcohol, initiations & social events Policy. This is not an exhaustive list. Social media should never be used in a way that violates any other HUSU policies or obligations relating to students. If your post would violate any of HUSU's policies in another forum, it will also violate them in an online forum. If there is any conflict between this policy and any of the other relevant HUSU policies, then the more restrictive policy shall take precedence.

Anybody is free to talk about HUSU on social media sites. However, please be aware that disparaging or untrue remarks which may bring the HUU, its staff or students into disrepute may constitute misconduct and disciplinary action may be applied. Please refer to HUSU's Disciplinary Policy for further details; this policy does not vary the existing student disciplinary procedures.

You should avoid posting any communications which might be misconstrued in a way that could damage HUSU's standing within the community or reputation, even indirectly.


Consent

Before recording, posting or sharing content or footage of another person you should obtain their consent. None of the footage should violate any HUSU, University of Hull policies or UK laws. Consider the recent laws around the sharing of sexually explicit images or video without their consent - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-law-to-tackle-revenge-porn>

Responsibility

If your student group wishes to have a social media presence, or already has a presence in place which refers to HUSU or from which HUSU can be identified, please make sure it is clear that you are speaking on your activity's behalf.

You are personally responsible for what you communicate in social media. Remember that what you publish may be readily available to the public



(including the HUSU, prospective future employers, the media and social acquaintances) for a long time. Keep this in mind when posting content. Inappropriate posting of content can damage your career potential, since potential (and current) employers often screen social media sites when considering applications.

Issue Reporting

If you are approached by a media contact about content on a site relating to HUSU you should contact the relevant Student President, who will liaise with the Marketing Department of HUSU before taking any action.

If you wish to complain about any inappropriate posting of content, which identifies HUSU, you should contact the relevant Student President or the HUSU Marketing team who will investigate the matter on behalf of HUSU to ascertain what action, if any, may be appropriate.

Togetherhness

Each student group wants to gain new members and grow. We encourage you to use social media to communicate, share experiences and raise the profile of other student groups. By engaging with others, you'll reach new people and give a great impression of your group for potential new members!

Online Conduct

'We need to treat our social networks and the conversations that we have in them as if they were conversations on a crowded train, very likely to be overheard, rather than hushed intimacies discussed in private.' (Brown, 2009)

- Be Honest - Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading.
- If you make a mistake or think you may have done so, we encourage you to be up front and inform the HUSU Marketing Team or your relevant Student President, to rectified as quickly as possible.
- Be aware of consequences - Inappropriate remarks could damage HUSU, your activity or even your own reputation.
- This policy is intended to apply to personal use of social media by members of HUSU. If such personal use does not make any reference to HUSU and HUSU cannot be identified, then the content is not likely to be of concern to HUSU.
- Posts even in secret, private or closed groups are still subject to the policies of HUSU.
- You need to be aware that information that you may post, originally intended for other members, can be forwarded on - even if the original post is deleted. A screen shot, screen recording, or photo of original post can be used as evidence.
- The information you put on social media should not bring HUSU, the University of Hull, your individual activity or members into disrepute. If you do so, you must be aware that this could have consequences that may result in disciplinary proceedings.

- If you make a mistake or think you may have done so, we encourage you to be up front and inform the HUSU Marketing Team or your relevant Student President, to be rectified as quickly as possible.
- On accounts that make reference to HUSU or represent the club or society as a whole, content should not be posted that shows account holders, or members drinking excessively, taking part in illegal acts or that violating the Alcohol and Initiations Policy.
- Finally: If your message/posting gives you reason to pause, then pause! If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, you need to take time to review these guidelines, or just not send. Think. Would you be happy to receive it? Would you be happy for a prospective employer to see it? If in doubt, do not send!

Remember that social media use is:

- Public: once published, any content posted on social media legally enters the public domain and is available to others, including journalists, to republish. Even posts in private groups are still legally considered to be in the public domain and are not exempt to this policy. There are certain limits to what journalists can post and what is considered public.
- Permanent: even if the original post has been removed – content can be brought offline in the form of a screen shot, screen recording or photo, which can be circulated and republished on other media.

Online Harm

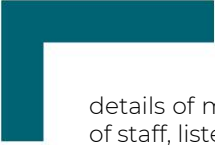
Social media content on official or individual channels should not bring about online harm to an individual, group or organisation. Behaviours that can cause online harm include:

- Extreme/revenge pornography
- Harassment and cyberstalking
- Hate crime
- Incitement of violence
- Cyberbullying and trolling
- Intimidation
- Violent conduct

This is not an exhaustive list. You can find the full list in the Government's Online Harm White Paper. Disciplinary action may be taken if content is found to cause online harm

Access to Social Media accounts

The committee of the student group, particularly the President/Chair and Social Secretary, is responsible for monitoring access and keeping information such as usernames and passwords secure to prevent unauthorized access. Login details must be changed each academic year and you must provide



details of members who have access to the account to the relevant member of staff, listed below. Passwords must not be disclosed to other students.

Sports Teams – husu-sport@hull.ac.uk

Societies & Standing Committees – husu-activities@hull.ac.uk

Volunteer Groups – husu-volunteering@hull.ac.uk

By signing the accompanying “President Letter Social Media Responsibility”, you are confirming agreement to use Social media in line with this policy and also confirming that you have changed the password on all accounts relating to your student group social media accounts and that only current committee members have access to the collective account.

The committee is accountable for the content of information sent or posted via social media relating to the student group. Whilst we encourage you to use social media for your student group, we encourage you to use it with sound judgement and common sense.

It is understood that the posts by members in groups such as Facebook groups are hard to control or monitor, but posts that break any of our policies are unacceptable and must be reported to the HUSU Marketing team or your relevant president as soon as possible, before deletion.

It is expected that all members know what is acceptable to post in a group, including a secret, private or closed group, as well as messaging apps such as Whatsapp.

The Student President responsible for the zone of your student group may request access to content of all social media relating to the student group, when deemed necessary by HUSU Executive Committee. At that point the Student President must be made an administrator of the group if this option is available. In this case, no posts should be deleted until the Student President or HUSU Marketing team has been made aware.

Public facing social media accounts must remain visible to HUSU main accounts and Student President accounts. These accounts must not be blocked and are listed at the end of this policy.

Responding to Posts on Third Party Sites

Posting on third party sites like ‘Hullverheard’ and alike should be by exception only. On the rare occasion where signposting is required to point students in the direction of HUSU help and support, all posts on third party sites must be posted by the Marketing Team using the official HUSU accounts only. Members of HUSU staff and volunteers are not permitted to post on behalf of the organisation using their own personal accounts.



Copyright Infringements

Members who use social media as a resource must respect copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights including user-generated content (UGC).

HUSU has the right to monitor such developments and ask for copyright infringements to either be removed or re-edited. Compliance with this is crucial.

Give credit where credit is due and do not violate others' rights. DO NOT claim authorship of something that is not yours. If you are using another party's content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you utilising their content. Where appropriate, reference sources of particular information you post or upload and cite them accurately.

Do not use the copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, or other rights of others without the necessary permissions of the rights holder(s). Do not use HUSU logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission.

Accessibility

In order to be inclusive and accessible to all members, HUSU has introduced a captioning policy for all its video content. Please liaise with Marketing if you have any questions or queries about this and Marketing can advise on software and tools to use for your short videos you might want to share. Image caption is available on most social media platforms and where possible we encourage you to use image caption to make your content more accessible.

Defamatory Statements

HUSU deplors all forms of defamatory statements made about its members, staff and any other person. Any defamatory statements will be regarded as extremely serious. If you believe that a statement may be defamatory of them or of others, you must bring it to the attention of a Sabbatical Officer as soon as possible. If you believe that a defamatory statement has been made on any discussions which you have initiated, you should remove the post.

What is a defamatory statement?

A defamatory statement is one which tends to lower the complainant in the estimation of members of society generally. A defamatory statement must identify or refer to the complainant and be published by the offender to a third party.

There is a difference between general abusive and insulting statements and defamatory statements. The use of expletives to describe a person will not necessarily give rise to a claim in defamation. In addition, a potentially defamatory statement does not need to explicitly refer to a person. Sometimes, it may be obvious who the statement refers to from the context of the content.



Some simple examples of defamatory statements are:

“Peter is a liar”

“Julie is racist”

“Simon did not write any of his essays. He copied all of his coursework from a very good internet source”

“Jill has a job which is cash-in-hand and doesn't pay any tax”

Procedure

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy. You should be aware that HUSU takes breaches of any part of this or any policy very seriously and could result in disciplinary action. If you become aware of information relating to HUSU posted on the internet, you should bring this to the attention of the relevant Student President.

Contacts

Hull University HUSU Marketing Department

– [hUU-marketing@hull.ac.uk](mailto:huu-marketing@hull.ac.uk), 01482 466243

HUSU Social Media Accounts

Twitter:

@HullUniUnion

@HUSUPresident

@HUSUSport

@HUSUEducation

@HUSUInclusivity

@HUSUActivities

Helpful Links

Government Online harms White Paper –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1510/social-media-public.pdf>

5. Training requirements

If any training associated with this policy forms part of the statutory and mandatory* training provision for HUSU and/or HUUS Ltd or other training 'required by role*' then employees will complete this as per their role and contractual requirements.

Please contact HR for all your statutory, mandatory and role requirements. If training associated with this policy is a professional and/or developmental requirement this will be identified with your line manager. If the policy author/reviewer have identified a need for an element of training associated with this policy that might impact mandatory training they must contact the Finance and HR Director to discuss. Any approvals required will come through the policy approval process.

6. Monitoring Compliance

Element to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting arrangement
Accessibility	Marianne Lewsley-Stier	Online research	Annual	

7. Document review

The document will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if changes in legislation occur or new evidence to best practice becomes available.

8. Associated HUSU and/or HUUS Ltd

9. Supporting references

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
HUSU	Hull University Students' Union
Social media	Social media is defined as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking." This includes Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Tiktok and LinkedIn. This list is not exhaustive.
Student groups	Student groups shall, for this document, be used as an all-encompassing term for all Sports clubs, Societies, and Standing Committees that operate from Hull University Students' Union (HUSU), which also includes standing committees.
Members	All individuals involved with student activities at HUSU, including associate members, coaches and anyone connected with the activity. Third party individuals who have access to the electronic communication are also required to follow this policy (for the purposes of this policy, we will refer to all of the above collectively as members).

Appendix 1: HUSU Social Media Community Behaviour guidelines

HUSU SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

Scope

This document covers all aspects of community interaction and moderation on the HUSU website and associated social media channels.

Moderation aims

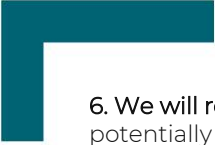
The Social Media channels and website of HUSU provides a growing number of opportunities for audiences who wish to discuss content we publish, or debate issues more generally. Our aim is to ensure this platform is inclusive and safe, and that the HUSU website and social media channels are the place on the net where you will always find lively, entertaining and, above all, intelligent discussions.

Community standards

There are 10 simple guidelines which we expect all participants in the community areas of HUSU's website and Social Media channels to abide by, all of which directly inform our approach to community moderation (detailed below). These apply across the site, while moderation decisions are also informed by the context in which comments are made.

- 1. We welcome debate and dissent, but personal attacks (against authors or other users), persistent trolling and mindless abuse will not be tolerated.** The key to maintaining HUSU's website and Social Media platforms as an inviting space is to focus on intelligent discussion of topics.
- 2. We acknowledge criticism of the posts and articles we publish, but will not allow misrepresentation of HUSU and our staff to be published on our website.** For the sake of robust debate, we will distinguish between constructive, focused argument and smear tactics.
- 3. We understand that people often feel strongly about issues debated on the site, but we will consider removing any content that others might find offensive or threatening.** Please respect other people's views and beliefs and consider your impact on others when making your contribution.
- 4. We reserve the right to redirect or curtail conversations which descend into "flame-wars" based on ingrained partisanship or generalisations.** We don't want to stop people discussing topics they are enthusiastic about, but we do ask users to find ways of sharing their views that do not feel divisive, threatening or toxic to others.
- 5. We will not tolerate racism, sexism, homophobia or other forms of hate-speech, or contributions that could be interpreted as such.** We recognise the difference between criticising a particular government, organisation, community or belief and attacking people on the basis of their race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.

Commented [JS1]: How do we determine the definition of this should it just say offensive or threatening?



6. We will remove any content that may put us in legal jeopardy, such as potentially libellous or defamatory postings, or material posted in potential breach of copyright.

7. We will remove any posts that are obviously commercial or otherwise spam-like. Our aim is that this site should provide a space for people to interact with our content and each other, and we actively discourage commercial entities passing themselves off as individuals, in order to post advertising material or links. This may also apply to people or organisations who frequently post propaganda or external links without adding substantively to the quality of the discussion on HUSU's website and social media platforms.

8. Keep it relevant. We know that some conversations can be wide-ranging, but if you post something which is unrelated to the original topic ("off-topic") then it may be removed, in order to keep the thread on track. This also applies to queries or comments about moderation, which should not be posted as comments.

9. Be aware that you may be misunderstood, so try to be clear about what you are saying, and expect that people may understand your contribution differently than you intended. Remember that text isn't always a great medium for conversation: tone of voice (sarcasm, humour and so on) doesn't always come across when using words on a screen. **You can help to keep the HUSU community areas open to all viewpoints by maintaining a reasonable tone, even in unreasonable circumstances.**

10. The platform is ours, but the conversation belongs to everybody. We want this to be a welcoming space for intelligent discussion, and we expect participants to help us achieve this by notifying us of potential problems and helping each other to keep conversations inviting and appropriate. If you spot something problematic in community interaction areas, please report it. **When we all take responsibility for maintaining an appropriate and constructive environment, the debate itself is improved and everyone benefits.**

In short:


- If you **act with maturity and consideration** for other users, you should have no problems.

- **Don't be unpleasant.** Demonstrate and share the intelligence, wisdom and humour we know you possess.

- **Take some responsibility for the quality of the conversations in which you're participating.** Help make this an intelligent place for discussion and it will be.

We will, when necessary, remove user postings or comments from our articles, and blog posts.*

If a contribution to the HUSU website and social media channels is perceived as breaching the community guidelines set out above, then it will be removed by the Marketing team, in the interests of keeping our platforms appropriate for the people who visit.



(*NB: We will not edit user posts to change the meaning, spelling, or anything else intended by the user. Even if only part of a comment or posting is perceived as breaching the community guidelines, the whole thing may be removed. Also, when a comment or post is removed for any of the reasons above, it is sometimes necessary to delete subsequent messages which refer to explicitly or quote from the original (removed) comment, in order to preserve some notion of conversational thread. This may also happen because a later comment quotes directly the problematic bits of the original comment, which just perpetuates the problem. In such cases not every deletion will be marked individually.)

We reserve the right to take steps or implement measures which we hope will benefit the whole community of the HUSU audience.

Because we are ultimately responsible for everything which appears on this site, all actions and decisions taken by us are final.

If you have suggestions or questions about any aspect of this policy, you can write to