

Employee Social Media Guidance

While acknowledging the right of staff to freedom of expression, the University has an obligation to protect the reputation of both individual members of staff and the institution as a whole.

As a member of staff at Lancaster University you are reminded that you continue to be a representative of the University even outside work and especially where you promote your own social media activities via a University system i.e. PURE portal, Twitter widget on departmental homepage, email signature etc.

The University is a charity and subject to charity law. This means that the university may not endorse or oppose political parties or candidates from accounts associated with the University. You should therefore take care not to present, expressly or by implication, any personal views as those of the University. It would be good practice to use a disclaimer i.e. 'all views my own' in your social media bios.

What is classed as social media?

Any dynamic and socially-interactive networked platform on the internet i.e. blogs, forums, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Mendely (academic social network) and You Tube etc.

Use of Personal Social Media – what to do and what to avoid

Do

- Use social media where it offers real value to potential, current or past students, colleagues or research/business partners;
- Offer advice, support or comment on topics that are within your area of expertise or responsibility as a University employee;
- Exercise good judgement when entering any debates or offering opinions - be restrained when interacting with, and responding to, potentially contentious posts on social media sites;
- Be aware of who might be reading your posts
- Make sure that your official channel is obviously official
- Contact the press office for advice (before responding) if someone from the media contacts you about posts on your account which relate to University.

Things to avoid

- Do not re-use your University email address, username and password as your login to social networking sites.

- Keep your personal / work social media accounts separate. Do not use personal accounts for work purposes - use your University email address for work-related correspondence.
- Never share any restricted information or personal data (such as personal details of students or staff) on social networks.
- Any information submitted to social media sites should be regarded as being published information (and remember that once published by you it can often quickly be republished by others).
- If you are a member of staff, you must not require that students become your “friends” in order to work collaboratively.
- Be aware of the security controls and privacy setting within any social network service you use.

Please note, in addition to the guidelines above, all existing Lancaster University policies concerning members of staff also apply to staff use of social media. These include HR policies, codes of conduct, corporate branding policies and the Information Security Policy.