LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction and purpose

1.1. London Metropolitan University (the University) recognises the benefits and opportunities that a social media presence offers as a channel for interactive engagement between staff, students, and the public. We also acknowledge the opportunities social media provides for the exercise of free speech, intellectual or policy debate and the rapid provision of useful information and advice.

1.2. There is an inherent risk involved in using social media in that, as an instantaneous and far-reaching form of communication, inappropriate use can impact on staff, students and the reputation of the University. The University encourages you to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media but, wherever and however you do this, you must be aware of the potential impact on both you and the University.

1.3. Staff and students are expected to be aware of and adhere to this policy and other relevant University policies and procedures that apply in this context, particularly the Acceptable Use Policy, Password Policy and Guidelines, Equality and Diversity Policy, Harassment Policy (staff login required), and Discipline and Student Conduct Procedures.

1.4. The University encourages staff and students to act as responsible advocates online. Sharing positive stories, research, achievements, and community engagement helps promote the University's mission and values, provided content aligns with this policy.

2. Scope

2.1. For the purpose of this this policy, social media is defined as any type of online media that allows users to create, share, communicate and interact with content and other users. This includes but is not limited to sites such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn,

YouTube, TikTok, Threads and BlueSky as well as blogs, forums and instant messaging platforms.

2.2. This policy applies to all staff and students of the University and includes actions taken within or outside working/teaching hours, on or off the University premises, whether using University--provided IT hardware, software, networks or not, and whether or not the social media activity is overtly related to the University or not.

3. Freedom of speech

3.1. This policy does not limit lawful freedom of speech or academic freedom. However, staff and students should be mindful that London Metropolitan University is a publicly accountable institution, and communications especially via University-affiliated accounts should reflect this responsibility with professionalism and respect.

3.2. A University-affiliated social media account is defined as any site that could reasonably be perceived to be associated with or represent the University. This includes:

- The main University social media channels (@LondonMetUni)
- Accounts that represent a course, School or department (@LdnMetArts)
- Any account that by their content or look, could be perceived as being associated with the University
- Student societies registered with the Students' Union
- The Students' Union

3.3. There are two types of University-affiliated accounts, defined as follows:

- **Authorised Accounts:** accounts that have been approved by the Marketing and Communications team and a relevant Dean

of School. These accounts are registered with the University, follow branding guidelines, and are managed in line with this policy. They are permitted to represent the University publicly and do not require disclaimers about personal views.

- **Unauthorised Accounts:** accounts that may appear to be associated with the University such as personal accounts of staff or students referencing their role at London Met, or informal community pages but have not been formally approved. While these accounts are not prohibited, they must not present themselves as official University channels and should include a disclaimer where appropriate, clarifying that views expressed are personal and not those of the University.

4. Posting on social media

4.1. When using University-affiliated accounts, staff and students are expected to use social media responsibly and in a way that reflects the University's values. This includes fostering inclusive dialogue, showing respect for others, and avoiding content that could undermine London Met's reputation or commitment to social justice, equity, and civic engagement.

4.2. Staff and students should post content with the understanding that everything will be public and permanent, regardless of the privacy settings they assume are applied.

4.3. Staff and students should be aware that social media content may easily be shared with the public, including the University's students and the media, and inappropriate use could damage their own reputation and career prospects, as well as the reputation of the University.

4.4. Staff and students should be familiar with the terms and conditions for any social media platforms they use and be aware that many social networking

companies specify that, by posting on their systems, the company is granted irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive license to use and distribute content for any purpose, be it commercial, advertising or otherwise.

4.5. Social media should not be used for the purposes of recruitment or selection of staff or students, other than to advertise positions at the University and to deal with enquiries from prospective staff and students through official University websites and accounts, or if a specific network is identified as part of a recruitment process and the applicant is notified it will be used.

4.6. The following standards must be used when posting to any social media account for any purpose, whether the content is text, images, video, audio, or links to other sources:

- Staff and students should respect the dignity and privacy of others and should always consider how their online behaviour may affect others, themselves and the University.
- Staff and students should adhere to the official University Copyright License Agency Higher Education Licence and check permissions on any content being shared. Staff and students should also adhere to UK copyright law, data or intellectual property protection law and any other relevant legislation. Any needed permission should be secured prior to posting, sharing or distributing any third-party materials.
- Staff and students should not use the University logo or branding on their personal accounts.

4.7. Staff and students must not use social media for any of the following:

- To post material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, defamatory, libellous, or hostile towards any individual or entity.

- To express support for illegal activities or organisations.
- To air internal grievances, infringe on the rights and privacy of colleagues or students or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff or students.
- To share confidential or sensitive information about the University and its associated entities, such as funding bids, personnel matters, business strategy, sensitive data exposure, or non-public news.
- To infringe or violate someone else's rights.
- To post personally identifiable information that could be used to locate any individual without that person's written permission.
- To post spam, which is unwanted content appearing such as bulk messages, profanity, insults, hate speech, malicious links, fraudulent reviews, fake friends, and or personally identifiable information.
- To post another person's personal information, including photographs and/or videos without the consent of the individual to whom it relates.
- To post content likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the University's reputation.
- To post content that could create a security risk for the University, its staff or students.
- To post content that is in any way unlawful, which includes any violation of copyright law mentioned above.
- To post content that represents themselves or the University in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading, and all claims must be substantiated.

4.8. Staff should seek guidance from the University's Communications Team

before posting on social media when the topic being discussed may be considered sensitive, eg a crisis situation, intellectual property, issues that may impact on the University's reputation.

4.9. Where staff or students use personal social media accounts to discuss University-related matters, they should be clear that their views are personal and do not represent the University. Where appropriate, a disclaimer such as "views are my own" is recommended to avoid confusion.

4.10. The University reserves the right to monitor any social media accounts and sites that affiliate themselves with the University and, where necessary, to request the removal of sites that reflect negatively on the University or the removal of content that infringes on the University's copyright or implies an unauthorised association, eg references the University's logo and related imagery.

4.11. University-affiliated accounts should follow best practice for digital accessibility. This includes using alt text for images, captions or transcripts for videos, accessible colour contrasts, and using camelCase for hashtags to support screen readers.

5. Responsibilities of account administrators

5.1. Anyone wishing to create a University-affiliated social media account must obtain approval from their Head of School or Director of their professional service department and from the Director of Marketing and Communications.

5.2. If you set up a University-affiliated social media account, you become the administrator for that account on behalf of the University and are responsible for maintaining and moderating the account and content. It is important that you register the account with a generic (not a personal) email address, eg **marketing@londonmet.ac.uk**, and at least one other

member of staff has the log in details to the account in order to ensure continuity and to assist with moderation.

5.3. The marketing team will need to be provided with the log in details as a back-up for University access as needed for issues pertaining to this policy.

5.4. University-affiliated accounts must be registered by emailing **social@londonmet.ac.uk.** Please note that confirmation that the Head of School or Director has approved the creation of the account is required and you must include contact details of all account administrators.

5.5. Administrators are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for University social media accounts are of adequate strength and kept secure, and are fully responsible for any actions that take place using the account. Passwords should be regularly changed in line with University regulations, should be changed when staff leave or change responsibilities, and under no circumstances should passwords be shared.

5.6. Staff and students should be familiar with privacy settings and ensure that these are appropriate for both content and the intended audience.

5.7. If an account is no longer required or has been inactive for three months or more, the administrator will be required to deactivate or permanently delete the account as appropriate and contact **social@londonmet.ac.uk** to inform the marketing team that the account is no longer active.

5.8. Care should be taken when setting up accounts to maintain consistency and to ensure accounts can be easily identified as authorised University-affiliated accounts. Please note that the abbreviation LMU is not associated with London Met. Please see **our guidelines for branding University-affiliated social media accounts**.

5.9. Account administrators must have an understanding of the basic principles and etiquette associated with the management of an effective social media account. The University has the right to delete unsupervised accounts.

6. Moderating social media accounts

6.1. Authorised University-affiliated accounts should regularly monitor notifications, comments and direct messages received and be updated regularly.

6.2. The following standards should be followed then moderation social media accounts:

- Typically, comments, content and/or direct messages by genuine social media users that are accurate but deemed negative towards the University will be left online. This will encourage debate, demonstrate transparency and establish authenticity.

- Comments should be relevant to the topic being discussed.

- Comments should be constructive and absent of expletives, obscenity and vulgarity.

- Posts that are off-topic, abusive, incite hatred and violence, contain profanity, are threatening in tone or devolve into personal attacks should be deleted immediately, where applicable, and reported to the Communications Team and on the relevant social media site, if necessary.

- Any comments, content or direct messages directed to the University account that fall into any of the categories mentioned in 4.6 may be removed or reported and the account responsible for posting these comments or replies may be blocked or restricted by the University.

- Posts with links that are determined to be spam, sales, advertising or infringe copyright should be removed immediately.

- If in doubt about what to do with questionable content,

especially anything directed at the University, seek the advice of the marketing team by contacting **social@londonmet.ac.uk**. At the same time, you should also inform your line manager.

- Where possible, complaints should be dealt with privately via direct message or email, not in a public forum.
- Where a user's post raises a duty of care issue, site administrators should seek advice from the appropriate unit, eg student services.

6.3. In cases where safeguarding concerns are identified for example, where a user shares information suggesting they may be at risk, administrators should escalate immediately to the University's Designated Safeguarding Officers or seek advice from Student Services.

7. Line manager's responsibility

7.1. Knowing the contents of this and other relevant policies and their procedures.

7.2. Addressing concerns or questions regarding posts and comments via official or personal accounts.

7.3. Reporting outcomes to the marketing team via social@londonmet.ac.uk or escalating the matter to involve appropriate external agencies where required.

8. Breach of Policy

8.1. Where a breach of this policy is identified, the University will address the matter through its internal procedures. This may include informal resolution, investigation by a line manager or relevant department, or escalation to formal processes. If the breach is serious or repeated, it may result in

disciplinary action in line with the University's HR procedures, including the **Staff Disciplinary Procedure** or **Student Conduct Regulations**, as appropriate.

8.2. Where a breach involves potentially illegal activity, the University may report the matter to the police or other relevant external agencies. The University's response will be proportionate to the nature and impact of the breach, and will be guided by principles of fairness, confidentiality, and due process.

8.3. Staff wishing to make a complaint about a potential breach of the University's Social Media Policy may do so through the University's **staff grievance procedures**. Students can make a complaint about other students through a **Report of Alleged Misconduct** or about staff through the University's **Student Complaints Procedure**.

8.4. 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.

9. Ownership

9.1. Any questions relating to this policy should be referred to the Marketing and Communications team by emailing social@londonmet.ac.uk.

9.2. The impact of this policy will be monitored regularly to reflect the changing online environment and technologies.

10. Feedback

10.1. The University welcomes all constructive feedback on this and any other policy. If you would like further information on social media or wish to send us your comments on our Social Media Policy, please contact

social@londonmet.ac.uk

10.2. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current with emerging technologies, legal obligations, and the evolving digital landscape. Feedback will inform future updates.