

Social Media Policy

Social media provides a range of essential benefits and opportunities for the University to communicate and engage with audiences and stakeholders. For this guidance, social media is defined as interactive online media that allows instant communication or sharing data in a public forum for this guidance. Social media includes online social forums, anonymous apps, blogs, video and image-sharing websites. It can share news, information, and successes, keep staff and students up to date with meaningful developments, and encourage progressive academic discussions.

However, there is an inherent risk involved in using social media. It is a quick and far-reaching form of communication, and inappropriate use can impact staff, students, and the reputation of the University.

The University encourages employees to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media; however, wherever and whenever the employee does this, they must be aware of the potential impact on themselves and the University. Staff should be aware of the [Dignity at Work procedure](#) which provides a framework within which employees of the University are expected to conduct themselves

Purpose of guidance

This policy aims to provide guidelines for the appropriate use of social media by staff, students, and affiliates of Richmond American University London in a way that promotes the University's values, protects its reputation, and complies with UK laws and university regulations. This guidance also aims to minimise the risks of social media, which can impact the wellbeing of students and staff of the University so that students and staff can enjoy the benefits of social networking whilst understanding the standards of conduct expected by the University. The guidance also outlines various procedures for using social media.

Richmond American University London Staff

The guidance applies to all employees of the University. However, it also applies to those operating on behalf of the University, such as contractors, agency staff and visiting academics. In these situations, the Manager responsible for the contractor, visitor or agency member of staff will be responsible for making these staff aware of the University's policies and guidelines.

Use of social media

This guidance outlines what the University views as unacceptable use of social media. The guidance does not undermine the principles of **academic freedom or freedom of speech** which is set out in our [Freedom of Speech code \[link TBC\]](#). However, staff should be aware that social media can blur the boundary between personal and professional life. Information shared publicly might be used in ways that were not intended.

The use of social media must be consistent with other University policies, such as the [Data Sharing Guidance](#), [Privacy Policy](#) and [Information Security Policy](#). In particular, the [University Freedom of Speech code \[link TBC\]](#) applies to speech expressed via social media.

The same standards of behaviour and conduct should be adhered to when interacting with other people or posting opinions on social media as would be applied in face-to-face or any offline interaction.

The University believes that that all students and staff have the right to study and work in an environment in which they are respected for the contributions they make, free from any form of sexual and gender-based violence, abuse or harassment. Please be aware that bullying is defined by the recipient of the unwanted commentary.

General principles

- All social media communications which represent or could be said to represent the University must comply with relevant University conduct policies. Staff should never represent themselves or the University false or misleadingly. All statements must be factual and substantiated.
- All users should ensure they have permission or other justification to share any content, including images rights, patents, copyright, rights associated with collaborative outputs. There is an increased risk where content is commercially valuable, confidential and or sensitive.
- Staff must protect the reputation of the University, their privacy, the privacy of colleagues and students and the confidentiality of university information/data in any communications or statements they make available to members of the general public, which includes family and friends outside of the University.
- Staff must not do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example, by:
 - Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, race, gender, gender reassignment, race, nationality, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.
 - Using social media to bully an individual.
 - Posting content or links to content that is discriminatory or offensive.
- Staff and students should remember that including a disclaimer (“all views are my own”) can help clarify the status of a personally managed account but does not give licence to use social media irresponsibly.
- Staff are discouraged from having students as ‘friends’ on social media.

Official University social media accounts

Members of staff can contribute to the social media activities of the University by writing for blogs, contributing content to official University social media accounts, or helping with the running of official University social media accounts.

If you wish to set up a new official University social media account, you should, in the first instance, discuss with the Communications team. The PR and Content Manager, communications@richmond.ac.uk must give final approval for creating new official University social media accounts.

Responsible Department: Marketing, Recruitment and Communications		
Approving body: University Board		
Version	Key changes	Date

