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## Social Media Policy for the BU Community

### 1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all members of the Bournemouth University (BU) community, including staff, agency workers, part-time-hourly-paid (PTHP) staff, trustees, students, suppliers and contractors, volunteers, directors of BU subsidiary companies, and official visitors.
- 1.2 This Policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary, in line with changes to social media platforms and guidance, as well as updates to BU's other policies. Social media is defined as a website or application that enables users to participate in social networking. This includes, but is not limited to, platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Discord and LinkedIn.
- 1.3 The use of social media at BU is actively encouraged as a tool to engage, innovate, inspire, connect to BU's audiences, build networks, and to showcase the best of BU. The purposes of this Policy are to encourage good practice; protect and support the BU community; to protect the reputation of BU; to clarify where and how existing policies and guidelines apply to social media; and to promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of BU activities. It is not intended to govern conduct or interfere with lawful freedom of speech as set out in the [University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#).
- 1.4 Responsibility for BU's corporate social media channels sits with the department of Marketing & Communications (M&C), with daily monitoring and posting on BU's corporate channels delivered by members of the M&C team. The team has governance responsibility for social media at BU, including an awareness of all channels representing an area of BU business.
- 1.5 The Director of M&C is responsible for the management of this Policy. Any instances of crisis which may involve social media will be dealt with by the Major Incident Group. Any questions or queries about this Policy, or social media use at BU, should be directed to [socialmedia@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bournemouth.ac.uk).

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.6 It is the responsibility of all members of the BU community to read and act in accordance with the principles of this Policy.
- 1.7 M&C is permitted to monitor social media for references to BU, through specific keywords related to BU. Any monitoring of social media is only conducted to ensure BU's reputation is not falsely represented.
- 1.8 If concern is raised about a social media post or comment through BU's monitoring process, or a complaint is made about a social media post or comment that relates to BU, or a member of the BU community, where appropriate the matter will be considered under the relevant BU Policy or Procedure.

## Policy

### 2. LINKS TO OTHER BU DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of BU's other policies for [staff](#) or [students](#), including, but not limited to:

[Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\)](#)

[BU Branding Guidelines](#)

[BU Security policy](#)

[Code of Ethical Fundraising](#)

[Code of Practice – Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#)

[Dignity and Respect \(Harassment\) Policy and Procedures](#)

[Confidential Information and the Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Conflict of Interest](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

[General Conduct Policy](#)

[Grievance Procedure](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Safeguarding Procedure](#)

[Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy](#)

[Staff Disciplinary Procedure](#)

[Student Agreement](#)

[Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)

[Whistleblowing Policy](#)

- 2.2 In addition, any social media output should adhere to relevant UK law. Examples, which include but are not limited to, are: The Data Protection Act 2018, Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, Defamation Act 2013, Equality Act 2010, The Human Rights Act 1988, and to the platform's own terms, rules and any codes of conduct. Platform terms, rules and any codes of conduct can be found on the social media website you are using. Breach of platform policies may result in investigation by the platform provider.
- 2.3 Publishing certain content can result in a criminal offence, which is a police matter. Examples of criminal offences include, but are not limited to; communications which constitute hate crime or are malicious, threatening, indecent or grossly offensive.

### 3. POLICY WORDING

- 3.1 As a member of the BU community, you are an ambassador of BU both online and offline. Please be aware that any content you post is a reflection of the university.
- 3.2 If you are managing an account connected to BU, or creating content for a social media channel connected to BU, you are representing the organisation and have a responsibility to manage and maintain the channel, in accordance with BU's policies and brand guidelines. Any BU-owned or BU-managed account must adhere to [BU password guidance](#) to protect the account.
- 3.3 BU reserves the right to:
- Delete or require the removal of any post or comment that is in breach of a BU policy or procedure (including offensive material, as outlined in the relevant disciplinary procedure).
  - Delete or require the removal of a social media account set up to represent an element of BU's business. Examples of when this is appropriate may include, but is not limited to; if a social media account has not been updated for a period of at least six months, contains abusive or inappropriate content, or contains any content which may bring BU into disrepute or damage BU's reputation.
  - Delete or require the removal of any post that is deemed, in the reasonable opinion of BU, to be offensive, abusive, or derogatory, as outlined in the relevant disciplinary procedure.
  - Ban or block from BU social media channels any user that commits a material breach of, or is found to be regularly breaching, BU's policies, brand guidelines or [values](#).
- 3.4 BU does not conduct monitoring of personal social media accounts and only actively monitors mentions of BU on social media sites. Generally, if a personal social media

presence does not refer to and does not identify its owner as being a member of the BU community; the content is likely to be of little concern to BU. However, where a social media account or post has a negative effect on BU or the BU community, the content of section 4.2 applies. There is potential for an individual's personal use of social media to impact on BU due to their status in the BU community, even if the content does not make reference to and does not identify its owner as being a member of the BU community. This is especially the case for senior and executive BU staff and individuals in other BU roles that involve significant contact with external organisations and/or members of the public.

- 3.5 You should not unlawfully disclose confidential or personal information. Permission might be needed if posting multimedia content (images or videos) including individuals, and consent may be required from a parent or guardian for any individual under the age of 18. For more information, read the [Data Protection Policy](#).
- 3.6 The use of artificial intelligence to create content intended for use on social media is still the responsibility of the individual posting. Any artificial intelligence used to create content on BU's corporate social media channels will be clearly marked as such.
- 3.7 If someone offers to pay BU staff for personal site content or endorsement that staff member must consult their manager immediately to determine if it is permissible under BU's [Exclusivity of Service](#), [Sponsorship Policy](#) and [Conflict of Interest](#) policies. Any sponsored posts should be clearly designated as such and not imply any endorsement by BU.
- 3.8 BU uses external social media monitoring organisations to assist in monitoring references to BU on social media. This may be done through keyword analysis through social media channels for instances including feedback, responding to complaints or enquires, and reputation management.
- 3.9 In instances of concern, BU may obtain evidence from social networking sites when investigating breaches of discipline and/or grievance complaints, e.g. harassment, anti-social behaviour or bullying, including cyber bullying.
- 3.10 BU reserves the right to take any necessary steps to protect its facilities, employees and students from malware (malicious software) including blocking sites where this is an issue.
- 3.11 Please be aware of scams, which are a regular and unwanted part of social media use. This may include the use of bot accounts, phishing, catfishing, spoof accounts or malware attempts. Attempts will be made to protect BU from such activity through regular monitoring, but it is the responsibility of individuals to remain vigilant. Please

note, any attempt to undertake such activity, even if it is meant in jest, could result in action through the relevant disciplinary procedure.

- 3.12 Only the BU Executive Team (UET) and designated members of M&C are authorised to speak on behalf of BU. Other members of the BU community should not make comments on behalf of BU without prior authorisation from UET or M&C.
- 3.13 Training can be provided on social media for any member of the BU community wishing to understand more about the benefits or dangers of social media, or the guidance outlined in this Policy. Training can be requested through [socialmedia@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bournemouth.ac.uk).

For information and support, or any questions about this Policy, please email [socialmedia@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bournemouth.ac.uk).

**This Policy has been approved by the Director of Marketing and Communications, the Information Governance Committee and University Executive Team (UET).**