

# OFFICER SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Your Durham SU Officer accounts are owned and branded by Durham SU. They are part of your position at the SU; remember you also have legal responsibilities as a Trustee and member of staff. Comments made through these accounts must align with our values.

## ADVICE

- Think before you post
  - Is it a knee jerk reaction?
  - Do I need to make a clarification?
  - Will this post affect existing relationships?
  - Is this information public?
  - What would student media think?
  - Is this negative or derogatory towards the SU or students?
  - Check which account you are posting from!
- Be careful about what you post anywhere because the media is watching – if you have stuff you don't want reporters (including student journalists) on your friends list to see, restrict it from them and don't post it on public platforms like Twitter or Instagram
- Social Book Post Manager for Google Chrome can help you get rid of old Facebook posts for free, or you can keyword search and delete controversial content
- Remove information about your address, telephone number etc. from social media. This makes it harder for others to discover your location or phone number if they're trying to harass you
- If students send you messages on your personal accounts ask them to send you an email instead and say this is because it's easier to keep track

## RISKS

**RED-** Any communication made via social media must avoid the following:

- Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassing of, any individual e.g. making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.
- Contain images or other content that is sexually explicit or illegal.
- Bring discredit to the Students' Union in any way e.g. by insulting fellow students or other individuals; making/sharing defamatory or offensive comments about individuals or groups; liking/posting/sharing/linking to images or other content that is inappropriate, sexually explicit or illegal.
- Breach copyright: e.g. by using someone else's images or content without permission, or by failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce. This means, for example, not posting articles or pictures scanned from newspapers or magazines. Posting such content may result in legal action by the copyright owner.
- Breach confidentiality: for example, by revealing confidential information owned by the Students' Union; posting confidential information about an individual, business or other organisation; posting contact details, pictures or personal details of other students or members of staff or members of the public without their prior permission.

Students must seek prior advice from the Students' Union if unclear about what information might be deemed confidential.

### Amber- go easy

Although the Students' Union must remain neutral, we will not prevent Student Officers from taking a stance on important issues that are of relevance to students.

Please think before you post when commenting on Durham SU, NUS, University policies etc.

### Green- go ahead

- What you're up to, nice dinners, interesting events/meetings etc.
- People love behind-the-scenes
- Be creative! Introduce yourself, fun content
- Sharing posts from Durham SU account

## PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Here's a few pointers to think about when posting from your personal account:

- Don't openly reflect opinions that could be conceived as negative or derogatory towards the SU or students
- Sharing from a Durham SU owned account is ok but avoid generating new posts from your personal account
- Use your Durham SU owned account to have direct communication with student members, stakeholders or partners
- If you have both accounts on your phone, tablet or computer please make sure you're posting from the right account

## MEDIA LAW

### Libel

An online comment, such as a tweet, is potentially libellous in England and Wales if it damages someone's reputation. These rules also apply to a 'retweet'. You may not have made the original allegation, but retweeting it could be seen as an endorsement.

You can also be sued even if you do not name a person in a defamatory statement, if they can be identified from what you have said.

Any material published in the UK – including online content – is subject to defamation, privacy and contempt laws and could even be a racism or terrorism offence. Even if you delete a defamatory post then you can still be sued.

### Photo consent

It would not be considered an unjustified invasion of students' personal privacy if images were taken on campus or inside the Union building as it is a public space. However, it is good practice to ask for consent to use the image in the first instance where reasonable.

For photos from an event this can be done at the beginning so students' are aware that photos are being taken. They may ask us later to delete images which have been shared through social media after the event, which we must comply with.

## CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is rapidly becoming commonplace on our campuses. And where elected officers are concerned, people often deliberately attempt to blur the lines between accountability and abuse. If Officers experience anything that makes them feel uncomfortable on social media, they should tell a member of staff who will review the situation.

Social media can be a really great resource for gauging student opinion on issues. It can also be difficult to deal with, especially if you see a post that is critical of something you have worked hard on. Unfortunately, you're never going to make every student happy. If you see a negative comment, it's worth remembering just how many students there are in Durham, and that this comment has likely come from just one student.

So, if you see something critical on social media, have a think: is this something I can address and use as constructive feedback to improve my work? Have they misunderstood something that you can work with the marketing team to correct? Is this something I should just ignore? Or is it something that's making me uncomfortable and I would like some advice about?

If you do ever feel uncomfortable about social media posts, please speak to a staff member you trust and we will help you.