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| **Policy Name** | **Social Media Policy** | **Policy Number** | HR008 |
| **Approval date** | June 2019 | **To be reviewed** | June 2022 |
| **Approved by** | UCB Guild HR Subcommittee | | |
| **Noted/endorsed** | Guild Manager | | |
| **Applicable to** | Separate Staff Policy and Officer Policy, both detailed | | |
| **Related policies** | HR015 Disciplinary Policy | | |

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| **REVIEW HISTORY** | | | |
| **Date** | **Name** | **Role** | **Notes** |
| 28/06/2019 | Sarah Kerton | Guild Manager, UCB Guild | Creation of new policy and approval by HR Subcommittee |
| 31/10/2019 | Sarah Kerton | Guild Manager, UCB Guild | Ratified by Trustee Board |

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**STAFF POLICY**

1. **Introduction**

The Guild recognises that social media is everywhere, is for everyone, and can strengthen our efforts to engage with our members. It is a form of customer service and is changing the way that we work.

We do have a responsibility, however, to effectively manage our reputation online. We are therefore, very keen that all staff members are given appropriate support and guidance on the use of social media in the workplace. This will be during inductions, if they are new to the Guild, or for existing staff with, for example, the development of a service or job description/role.

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs. It also applies to website use, including the UCB and UCB Guild website, Canvas and Portal.

It applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or otherwise.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

1. **Scope**

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time staff and volunteers, including but not exclusively student staff, student officers, society leaders and chairs of UCB Guild.

1. **Compliance with related policies**

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum.

For example, employees are prohibited from using social media:

* in breach of our Equality and Diversity policy;
* in breach any obligations you may have relating to confidentiality;
* in breach our Disciplinary Rules;
* to defame or disparage the Guild or its affiliates, customers, clients, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders;
* to bring the Guild into disrepute;
* to harass or bully other staff in any way or breach our Dignity at Work policy;
* to unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties;
* in breach of our Data Protection Policy;
* in breach of any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

Employees who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

1. **Personal use of social media**

For staff, if your duties require you to speak on behalf of the Guild in a social media environment, you must still seek approval for such communication from your Manager who may require you to undergo training before you do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to your activities.

Likewise, if you are contacted for comments about the Guild for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, direct the inquiry to the Guild Manager and do not respond without written approval.

The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

1. **Responsible use of social media**

The following sections of the policy provide staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

Protecting our business reputation

Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

* our organisation;
* our clients;
* suppliers and vendors; and
* other affiliates and stakeholders,

Staff should make it clear in social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf, write in the first person and not on behalf of the Guild, and use a personal email address when communicating via social media.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media.

If you disclose your affiliation as an employee of the Guild, you must also state that your views do not represent those of your employer. Even if you make it clear that your views on such topics do not represent those of the Guild, your comments could still damage our reputation.

If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with your manager.

If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the Guild or our stakeholders, you should contact your manager. All staff are responsible for protecting our business reputation.

Respecting intellectual property and confidential information

Staff should not do anything to jeopardise our organisation and other confidential information and intellectual property through the use of social media.

In addition, staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other companies and individuals, which can create liability for the Guild, as well as the individual author.

Do not use our logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission.

To protect yourself and the Guild against liability for copyright infringement, where appropriate, reference sources of particular information you post of upload and cite them accurately.

If you have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, ask before making the communication.

Respecting colleagues, clients, partners and suppliers

Do not post anything that your colleagues or our members, clients, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders would find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity.

Do not post anything related to your colleagues or our customers, clients, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders without their written permission.

**OFFICER POLICY**

1. **Introduction**

In the expanding digital community, social media plays a crucial role in UCB Guild’s communication, both in how students and interested parties interact with the organisation, and in messages being broadcast to students. Furthermore, the close-knit nature of University College Birmingham has led to social media acting as a primary vehicle for information dissemination and discussion.

As Student Officers, social media will play a large role in your interactions with students and the wider community. The visibility of these platforms and the difficulties involved in separating personal use from representative actions means that officers must officers think carefully about their use of social media. The negative impacts include damage to the officer’s reputation and to the reputation of the Guild

Remember that social media is:

* Public: Content posted is visible in the public domain, with the likelihood of being shared with large numbers of users in a short period.
* Permanent: All content posted may be copied and republished elsewhere.

Officers who are unsure of any elements of this policy, or wish to check their actions abide by the terms set out, are encouraged to speak to the Guild Manager

1. **Scope**

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time officers of UCB Guild.

1. **Definitions**

The term ‘social media’ is used here to describe the various online platforms that allow users to communicate and share information and resources. This policy applies to all social media platforms, including websites and forums.

1. **Policy Aims**

The purpose of this policy is:

* to encourage good practice in officer social media usage;
* to recognise the difference between staff and officer engagement with students and policy via social media, as elected representatives of the Guild;
* to protect UCB Guild and its officers;
* to promote effective use of social media as part of the Guild’s activities;
* to clarify an appropriate code of conduct when using social media in a personal capacity.

1. **Personal Usage**

Officers must be mindful of who can view their social media content and act accordingly. Friends, followers and connections may include colleagues, students, prospective students or University partners, and officers should therefore carefully consider all posted content relating to the Guild.

As elected representatives, officers will influence and form part of the Guild’s online reputation. As such, it is expected that officers will act as natural ambassadors for the Guild. Student Officers are the public face of the student community, and should interact online in the same way they would in person – responsibly and professionally.

Officers are free to talk about the Guild, however instances where the Guild is brought into disrepute may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct, and disciplinary action will be applied.

Comments published cannot be isolated from your representational role and will still be picked up by media and students. As such, you can still be held to account for views expressed.

As elected representatives, all of your behaviour and actions both currently and in the past reflect upon your role as an elected leader. It is your responsibility to comply with the policies of the Guild and ensure your behaviour on social media is upstanding. Your previous behaviour and conduct on social media as well as your current conduct can both bring the guild into disrepute and fall foul of this and other policies.

Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about Guild staff, University College Birmingham students or UCB Guild in general.

1. **Acceptable behaviour**

Officers must refrain from posting content which could be classed as bullying, harassment or discriminatory against students or staff of the Guild for example, by:

* making offensive or derogatory comments in relation to race, sex, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age;
* using social media to bully another individual;
* criticising or arguing with students or staff;
* posting images considered discriminatory or offensive, or links to such content, in relation to students or staff.

Social media postings should not disclose any information that is confidential to UCB Guild. This may include aspects of Guild policy or information received from internal discussions.

Where there is cause of concern that something on a personal social media presence gives rise to a conflict of interest or concerns about confidentiality or impartiality, this must be discussed with the Guild Manager.

If contacted by the media or press about content posted publicly which relates to UCB Guild, officers must refer to the Guild Manager before giving statements or interviews.

1. **Interacting as UCB Guild**

All of our social media channels allow our audiences to engage in a range of topics. Whilst we are pleased that officers would like to participate in our conversations, we remind officers that they are expected to conduct themselves appropriately.

When engaging with official UCB Guild channels, officers must abide by all of the terms outlined in the previous sections

Officers should protect the UCB Guild brand when posting on any official Guild social media presence. Officers are seen to be representing the Guild and therefore will have a responsibility to ensure communications are appropriate (both for audience and purpose).

The Guild reserves the right to request that certain subjects are avoided, withdraw certain posts, and remove inappropriate comments.

Guild Officers must consult with the Guild Manager before setting up any official online presences.