



# HULL UNIVERSITY HUU SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & GUIDELINES

Student groups shall, for this document, be used as an all-encompassing term for all Sports clubs, Societies, and Standing Committees that operate from Hull University HUU (HUU), which also includes standing committees.

HUU recognises the benefits and opportunities that social media can provide. It can be used to share news and information, to communicate relevant messaging including events, projects and campaigns and to encourage participation with HUU activities.

HUU encourages appropriate use of social media by student activities. We want student groups to learn, grow, connect and develop through the use of online communications, whilst being aware of the potential risks to the reputation of HUU, its student groups and individual members, as well as overall compliance to the law. To minimise such risks, HUU expects its students to comply with this policy in relation to the use of social media.

Social media is defined as “websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.” This includes Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Tiktok and LinkedIn. This list is not exhaustive.

## **What is the policy for?**

The policy requires HUU members to use social media in a sensible manner for appropriate student activities purposes, or where used for recreational reasons, used with diligence and care. The policy aims to:

- Provide protection for the HUU, avoiding any matter which could result in the HUU’s name being brought into disrepute.
- Protect the HUU’s legal obligations.
- Protect HUU’s members
- Protect HUU’s student activities

## **Who is included in the policy?**

All individuals involved with student activities at HUU, including associate members, coaches and anyone connected with the activity. Third party individuals who have access to the electronic communication are also required to follow this policy (for the purposes of this policy, we will refer to all of the above collectively as members). All members involved in social media activity for HUU activities or personal usage should be aware of these policy implications.



# General Principles

## Appropriate Usage

Social media should not be used to post offensive or abusive content, to intimidate students or staff and should never create or share inappropriate content. When a page shares offensive content, it is endorsing the content, unless it specifically states that it disagrees with the messaging of the post.

Inappropriate social media usage could include:

- Defamatory or offensive language about people or organisations
- Discriminatory or could be construed as discriminatory to any group.
- Engaging with criminal activity
- Dishonest or misleading
- Inappropriate with images, video or text

This is not an exhaustive list. Offensive content is defined as hurtful, derogatory or obscene comments made to, or materials about a student group or organisation.


## Policy Compliance

All of HUU's other policies which might apply to the use of social media remain in full force and effect e.g. Zero Tolerance Policy and Alcohol, initiations & social events Policy. This is not an exhaustive list. Social media should never be used in a way that violates any other HUU policies or obligations relating to students. If your post would violate any of HUU's policies in another forum, it will also violate them in an online forum. If there is any conflict between this policy and any of the other relevant HUU policies, then the more restrictive policy shall take precedence.

Anybody is free to talk about HUU on social media sites. However, please be aware that disparaging or untrue remarks which may bring the HUU, its staff or students into disrepute may constitute misconduct and disciplinary action may be applied. Please refer to HUU's Disciplinary Policy for further details; this policy does not vary the existing student disciplinary procedures.

You should avoid posting any communications which might be misconstrued in a way that could damage HUU's standing within the community or reputation, even indirectly.

## Consent



Before recording, posting or sharing content or footage of another person you should obtain their consent. None of the footage should violate any HUU, University of Hull policies or UK laws. Consider the recent laws around the sharing of sexually explicit images or video without their consent - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-law-to-tackle-revenge-porn>

## Responsibility

If your student group wishes to have a social media presence, or already has a presence in place which refers to HUU or from which HUU can be identified, please make sure it is clear that you are speaking on your activity's behalf.

You are personally responsible for what you communicate in social media. Remember that what you publish may be readily available to the public (including the HUU, prospective future employers, the media and social acquaintances) for a long time. Keep this in mind when posting content. Inappropriate posting of content can damage your career potential, since potential (and current) employers often screen social media sites when considering applications.

## Issue Reporting

If you are approached by a media contact about content on a site relating to HUU you should contact the relevant Student President, who will liaise with the Marketing Department of HUU before taking any action.

If you wish to complain about any inappropriate posting of content, which identifies HUU, you should contact the relevant Student President or the HUU Marketing team who will investigate the matter on behalf HUU to ascertain what action, if any, may be appropriate.

## Together

Each student group wants to gain new members and grow. We encourage you to use social media to communicate, share experiences and raise the profile of other student groups. By engaging with others, you'll reach new people and give a great impression of your group for potential new members!




## Online Conduct

'We need to treat our social networks and the conversations that we have in them as if they were conversations on a crowded train, very likely to be overheard, rather than hushed intimacies discussed in private.'  
(Brown, 2009)

- Be Honest - Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading.
- If you make a mistake or think you may have done so, we encourage you to be up front and inform the HUU Marketing Team or your relevant Student President, to rectified as quickly as possible.
- Be aware of consequences - Inappropriate remarks could damage HUU, your activity or even your own reputation.
- This policy is intended to apply to personal use of social media by members of HUU. If such personal use does not make any reference to HUU and HUU cannot be identified, then the content is not likely to be of concern to HUU.
- Posts even in secret, private or closed groups are still subject to the policies of HUU.
- You need to be aware that information that you may post, originally intended for other members, can be forwarded on - even if the original post is deleted. A screen shot, screen recording, or photo of original post can be used as evidence.
- The information you put on social media should not bring HUU, the University of Hull, your individual activity or members into disrepute. If you do so, you must be aware that this could have consequences that may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- If you make a mistake or think you may have done so, we encourage you to be up front and inform the HUU Marketing Team or your relevant Student President, to rectified as quickly as possible.
- On accounts that make reference to HUU or represent the club or society as a whole, content should not be posted that shows account holders, or members drinking excessively, taking part in illegal acts or that violating the Alcohol and Initiations Policy.
- Finally: If your message/posting gives you reason to pause, then pause! If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, you need to take time to review these guidelines, or just not send. Think. Would you be happy to receive it? Would you be happy for a prospective employer to see it? If in doubt, do not send!

Remember that social media use is:

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- Public: once published, any content posted on social media legally enters the public domain and is available to others, including journalists, to republish. Even posts in private groups are still legally considered to be in the public domain and are not exempt to this policy. There are certain limits to what journalists can post and what is considered public.
  - Permanent: even if the original post has been removed – content can be brought offline in the form of a screen shot, screen recording or photo, which can be circulated and republished on other media.

## Online Harm

Social media content on official or individual channels should not bring about online harm to an individual, group or organisation. Behaviours that can cause online harm include:

- Extreme/revenge pornography
- Harassment and cyberstalking
- Hate crime
- Incitement of violence
- Cyberbullying and trolling
- Intimidation
- Violent conduct

This is not an exhaustive list. You can find the full list in the Government's Online Harm White Paper. Disciplinary action may be taken if content is found to cause online harm

## Access to Social Media accounts


The committee of the student group, particularly the President/Chair and Social Secretary, is responsible for monitoring access and keeping information such as usernames and passwords secure to prevent unauthorized access. Login details must be changed each academic year and you must provide details of members who have access to the account to the relevant member of staff, listed below. Passwords must not be disclosed to other students.

Sports Teams – [huu-sport@hull.ac.uk](mailto:huu-sport@hull.ac.uk)

Societies & Standing Committees – [huu-activities@hull.ac.uk](mailto:huu-activities@hull.ac.uk)

Volunteer Groups – [huu-volunteering@hull.ac.uk](mailto:huu-volunteering@hull.ac.uk)

By signing the accompanying “President Letter Social Media Responsibility”, you are confirming agreement to use Social media in line with this policy and also confirming that you have changed the password on all accounts relating to your student group social media accounts and



that only current committee members have access to the collective account.

The committee is accountable for the content of information sent or posted via social media relating to the student group. Whilst we encourage you to use social media for your student group, we encourage you to use it with sound judgement and common sense.

It is understood that the posts by members in groups such as Facebook groups are hard to control or monitor, but posts that break any of our policies are unacceptable and must be reported to the HUU Marketing team or your relevant president as soon as possible, before deletion.

It is expected that all members know what is acceptable to post in a group, including a secret, private or closed group, as well as messaging apps such as Whatsapp.

The Student President responsible for the zone of your student group may request access to content of all social media relating to the student group, when deemed necessary by HUU Executive Committee. At that point the Student President must be made an administrator of the group if this option is available. In this case, no posts should be deleted until the Student President or HUU Marketing team has been made aware.

Public facing social media accounts must remain visible to HUU main accounts and Student President accounts. These accounts must not be blocked and are listed at the end of this policy.

### **Copyright Infringements**

Members who use social media as a resource must respect copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights including user-generated content (UGC).

HUU has the right to monitor such developments and ask for copyright infringements to either be removed or re-edited. Compliance with this is crucial.

Give credit where credit is due and do not violate others' rights. DO NOT claim authorship of something that is not yours. If you are using another party's content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you utilising their content. Where appropriate, reference sources of particular information you post or upload and cite them accurately.

Do not use the copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, or other rights of others without the necessary permissions of the rights holder(s). Do not use HUU logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission.



## Defamatory Statements

HUU deploras all forms of defamatory statements made about its members, staff and any other person. Any defamatory statements will be regarded as extremely serious. If you believe that a statement may be defamatory of them or of others, you must bring it to the attention of a Sabbatical Officer as soon as possible. If you believe that a defamatory statement has been made on any discussions which you have initiated, you should remove the post.

What is a defamatory statement?

A defamatory statement is one which tends to lower the complainant in the estimation of members of society generally. A defamatory statement must identify or refer to the complainant and be published by the offender to a third party.

There is a difference between general abusive and insulting statements and defamatory statements. The use of expletives to describe a person will not necessarily give rise to a claim in defamation. In addition, a potentially defamatory statement does not need to explicitly refer to a person. Sometimes, it may be obvious who the statement refers to from the context of the content.

Some simple examples of defamatory statements are:

“Peter is a liar”

“Julie is racist”

“Simon did not write any of his essays. He copied all of his coursework from a very good internet source”

“Jill has a job which is cash-in-hand and doesn't pay any tax”

## Procedure

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy. You should be aware that HUU takes breaches of any part of this or any policy very seriously and could result in disciplinary action. If you become aware of information relating to HUU posted on the internet, you should bring this to the attention of the relevant Student President.

## Contacts

**Hull University HUU Marketing Department**

- [huu-marketing@hull.ac.uk](mailto:huu-marketing@hull.ac.uk), 01482 466285

HUU Social Media Accounts

Twitter:

@HullUniUnion

@HUUPresident

@HUUSport

@HUUEducation

@HUUInclusivity



@HUUActivities

## Helpful Links

Government Online harms White Paper -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1510/social-media-public.pdf>