

# SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR STUDENTS



Social media can bring many benefits and opportunities, such as the ability to understand the views and opinions of others, and to share your experiences of student life. It also brings with it significant risks, including potential legal, ethical or misconduct issues. These could ultimately result in significant harm, and sometimes unintended long-term, consequences for you, other students, and staff.

We encourage all students to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media, and to be aware of the potential impact your content can have on yourself and others. You should read the [Online and Social Media Communications Policy](#) to get a better understanding of our approach to social media at Warwick.

## What do we mean by social media?

Social media is any online interactive tool which encourages participation, interaction and exchanges, such as blogs, discussion forums, instant messaging and any website that allows public commenting or posting.

Because the University is not responsible for and does not own any content you post on social media, you should make it clear that you are posting in a personal capacity on all your profiles

## Professional courses

If your course will result in a professional qualification you may have to meet standards of behaviour set by the national professional body or by an institution you are working for (eg the General Medical Council or a school), and those set by the University under the Fitness to Practice regulations. These standards apply to your activity on social media.

## Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom

Freedom of speech and academic freedom are vital components of who we are and what we represent at Warwick. This includes social media content, and nothing in this guidance is intended to compromise these fundamental freedoms.

Encouraging free and open debate is critical to learning, challenging assumptions and understanding different perspectives. It must be done with respect and without language or other content which could be deemed to be offensive, threatening or humiliating to others, or incites hatred of any kind.

## What do we mean by social media?

Speak and act in a way you would face-to-face. Remember that, even if you are having a private conversation on social media, someone can make the conversation public, and you will likely lose control of who sees it once that happens. It may also be difficult to remove.

Before you publish, think about:

- How widely your post could be read?
- People can, and do, screenshot and repost social content and conversations. People that you didn't intend could see what you're about to post. Would that be OK?
- Are you happy for this to remain accessible for a long time, outside of your control?
- If you are posting something you have heard or read, are you sure it is correct?
- Are you posting confidential or personal information about someone else?
- Have you got permission from the person you have filmed or photographed? Everyone in our community has a right to privacy.
- Could your post be considered offensive or malicious?
- How are you feeling? If you're angry or hurt, you might regret posting later on.
- Be careful not to infringe copyright by posting others' content online without permission.

## Future Employment

Many employers carry out an internet search before making offers of employment. Keep this in mind when posting, and when deciding on the privacy settings for your social media accounts. Are you happy for a potential employer to see your posts?

## Consequences of posting inappropriate material

Posting comments, images or other content that others may find offensive may:

- be a breach of our Online and Social Media Communications Policy and result in disciplinary action
- result in you losing the opportunity to pursue your chosen profession
- result in a civil claim, including actions for defamation, harassment, breach of intellectual property rights, fraudulent misrepresentation or breach of confidence
- be a criminal offence, including harassment, stalking, hate crimes, coercive or controlling behaviour, disclosing private sexual images without consent, blackmail, malicious communications and terrorism offences.