

Open SU Social Media Policy

Purpose of this policy

This policy has been created to support the values and vision of Open SU, providing both instruction and guidance around the use of social media and online platforms in respect of Open SU.

All students of The Open University are bound by OU regulations, and when participating on social media should refer to [The Open University's social media policy](#).

1. Social media

“Social media” refers to any online platform or tool that enables users to create, share, or engage with content and each other. This includes, but is not limited to, platforms used for social networking, messaging, media sharing, blogging, or collaboration.

Examples include: Facebook, Instagram, Threads, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, X, BlueSky, LinkedIn, Discord, Slack, and blogs such as The Hoot.

2. Application

This policy is intended to support our [Values and Behaviours Policy](#) and to create a positive social media experience, with clear policies and guidelines to support all members, including current or extended student members, elected, selected, appointed volunteers and honorary members.

For clarification, this would include, but not be limited to, students taking part in online elections, attending online events such as the Conference, online Welcome Weeks (Freshers), or other activities, and engaging with The Hoot.

3. Conduct on social media

All students engaging using official Open SU spaces are expected to act in a manner which reflects our organisational values. Expectations of professional conduct from Open SU representatives and volunteers are the same on social media as in any other context and should not be viewed differently.

4. Working in any Open SU capacity

Open SU encourages and supports social media activity to share news and spread information across all relevant platforms to effectively develop our strategic aims. When using social media, volunteers and members should be mindful of any role they hold within Open SU.

The reputation of volunteers as representatives of the organisation means that individuals must be mindful that the views they share and the conduct they exhibit could be regarded as the views of Open SU. An awareness of this responsibility is important, even when simply engaging student to student.

Therefore, it is important to be aware that there is an expectation for volunteers to adhere to the [Volunteer Policy](#) and to:

- not advertise personal businesses or agendas in official Open SU spaces or take advantage of any official Student Open SU position to seek any personal benefit. For advice about advertising charitable events and fundraising, please contact our Marketing and Communications team.
- share our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and to challenge and report discriminatory behaviour, harassment or online abuse.
- respect matters of privacy and confidentiality around Open SU and Open University information as appropriate.
- refer all media and press enquiries to the President and the Chief Executive.

5. Rules of engagement in social media spaces

- Act within our [Values and Behaviour Policy](#), displaying our values: Welcoming, accountable, bold, adaptable, sustainable.
- Do not share personal data and discourage others from doing so.
- Do not share personal details of tutors or other staff.
- If you see anything suspicious or inappropriate, please report the post/comment using the 'Report to admins' function (where available).

For further advice or to report any other issues, contact: **su@open.ac.uk**.

6. Unacceptable behaviour on social media

Examples of behaviour that will not be tolerated include:

- Cyberbullying, trolling, harassment, hate speech, posting or re-posting abuse, offensive or defamatory images/language, extremist views, or discriminatory material.
 - Posting anything that may bring Open SU into disrepute or threaten the safety and wellbeing of members or staff.
 - Posing as or allowing others to believe that you're running an official Open SU channel or misrepresenting your volunteer role.
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7. Use of Open SU branding and logo

You may only use Open SU branding on specifically Open SU-related social media profiles or official Open SU social media spaces intended for that purpose.

Contact the [Marketing and Communications team](#) for branded assets and guidance on using them effectively.

Graphics/images

Do not create your own graphics using the logo or other brand elements.

Online spaces

Students must not create online spaces (blogs, Facebook pages/groups, etc.) using Open SU's name unless authorised by the Marketing and Communications team.

Social accounts

Communities may need social accounts (e.g. for Clubs). These need prior approval. Until granted, label them 'unofficial' or avoid using Open SU's name. Open SU must be informed to offer support and ensure updates reflect changes in roles.

Responsibility for content

Open SU is responsible for authorised posts made by those acting in an official capacity. Admins of official spaces must monitor compliance.

Individuals are responsible for any content they share in unofficial or personal online spaces. Any third-party use of that content is outside the scope of this policy.

Senior figures must not post anything on personal accounts that gives the impression they are speaking on behalf of the organisation, unless authorised to do so.

Support

Contact: **oustudents-media@open.ac.uk** for support in promoting events, or branding/logo guidance. You will be asked to remove non-compliant images.

8. Nations, Regional England and Open SU Community Facebook groups

All groups should have standardised rules, membership questions, and closed membership – agreed by the relevant Student Leadership Team members.

Admin rights expire with elected terms and are passed on to the next student in the role.

Nations and Regional Groups

Admins: Area Representatives, VP Community & Engagement. VP roles mainly act as silent admins unless otherwise needed.

Local admins may be selected by Area Representatives. Admins must complete required training and provide contact details.

If a representative resigns, VP Community & Engagement appoints temporary admins.

Open SU Community Facebook group

Led by VP Community & Engagement.

VP Community & Engagement appoints admins, ensures they are active, trained, and registered.

Other official spaces (Clubs, Societies, Groups)

Notify the Open SU Office of all groups and admin contacts. Clarify the group's affiliation.

9. Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

Open SU will investigate breaches of this policy.

Initial guidance may be given, but repeated misconduct triggers the Complaints and Misconduct Procedure (see section 12 of the [Bye-laws](#)).

Volunteers must follow this policy and the [Volunteer Agreement](#). Serious breaches may lead to suspension or expulsion.

If necessary, incidents will be reported to The Open University for additional action.

10. Related Open SU policies and documents

- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
 - [Values and Behaviour Policy](#)
 - [Resolving and Settling Differences Procedure](#)
 - Volunteer Policy and Agreement (available at oustudents.com/volunteer-zone – login required)
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11. Review

Approved by Board of Trustees: **25 April 2023**

Due for Renewal: **April 2027**

Reviewed by the Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications and approved by the Board of Trustees.