



A quick guide to the *Public Comment and Social Media Policy*



*This is a **general guide** only. You can find the full policy in the [Policy Register](#).*

Summary

- This policy states the University's support for members of our community engaging in public discussion. It **sets out the University's expectations for public comment**, and explains the differences between official, professional and personal public comment.
- The policy provides guidance about social media use and sets out requirements for official University social media accounts.
- The policy specifies the requirements for public announcements in lectures, seminars or tutorials, and when groups of University community members make collective statements.
- The policy applies to all staff, affiliates, and students. It does not apply to the Viva Engage platform.



Types of public comment

The policy classifies public communication as:



Official:

Made on the University's behalf by its authorised representatives



Professional:

Made by staff members commenting within their area of expertise



Personal:

Made by any member of the University community in their individual capacity

Official public comment

Who can make an official public comment?



Authorised University representatives only

What does the University expect?

- You comply with all relevant laws, University policies and the terms of use of the platforms you use
- You give your name and University role
- You only comment on matters within your responsibility and authority.
- You don't misrepresent your level of authority
- You don't commit the University to actions without clear authorisation.



Professional Public Comment

Who can make a professional public comment?



Academic staff



Professional staff who have academic or professional qualifications that establish an area of expertise

What does the University expect?

- The subject matter is within your area of expertise
- The content is accurate
- The content is consistent with the law
- The content is consistent with the University's commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom
- You identify yourself and your role
- You don't misrepresent your expertise
- You don't imply that you speak for the University

When you make a professional public comment you are responsible for its content.

Personal Public Comment

Who can make a personal public comment?



Any member of the University community

What does the University expect?

- You don't use the University's name, branding or title
- You use a personal address or personal account
- You don't use your University title
- You don't imply that you speak for the University
- If you mention the University, you include a disclaimer that the views are personal



Public announcements

Only course related announcements are permitted before or during a lecture, seminar or tutorial.

Other announcements can only be made at the end, and attendance must be voluntary. This restriction applies to announcements made in, or just outside, the room.

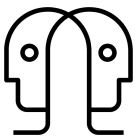
There is no provision for staff to grant exceptions.



Collective statements of opinion

Sometimes a group of University community members wish to make a joint public statement about an event, activity or issue. For example, a faculty may wish to take a collective position on a current issue.

Before doing this:



Consultation

- They must give others in that part of the University a chance to comment
- They must use a process which ensures that people can comment confidentially, and are free to express support, opposition or neutrality



Content of the statement

The statement should state:

- The part of the University community on whose behalf it is made
- That it is not made on behalf of the University as a whole
- The basis on which it is endorsed (e.g. unanimous, by majority)



Social media guidance

The policy provides more detail about using social media for public comment consistently with the comment requirements noted above.

It states requirements for establishing and using official University social media accounts. This includes accounts for learning and teaching purposes and for broader engagement

Approving University social media accounts

- Heads of School approve learning and teaching accounts
- The Head of Social Media and Content approves all other accounts



What is a breach of this policy and what happens?

You breach the policy if you:



Act inconsistently with it



Help or encourage someone else to act inconsistently with it



Promote conduct that breaches the policy on social media or in some other way

If you breach the policy:

- We may limit or cut off your access to University ICT resources
- You may be subject to misconduct proceedings
- You may breach other University policies, such as codes of conduct or policies against bullying, harassment or discrimination
- You may breach laws, and be subject to civil or criminal proceedings