Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Social Media Policy

1.   Context

Social media is a powerful tool for communication, collaboration, and engagement within the third level education sector and is integral to university communications. It is used widely across Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereafter referred to as Trinity. Social media is used to inform, engage, and support key and relevant university stakeholders, nationally and internationally and achieve the university's strategic objectives. There is clear business reliance on social media by the university particularly in times of crises.
Social media presents both opportunities and risks to the university and its community. This policy supports the establishment of a positive, inclusive, and respectful online environment for Trinity staff, students, and external university stakeholders. It aims to support and protect the university and our staff and students working with social media and external stakeholders who engage with university social media by providing clear guidance to work within when using social media.

2.   Purpose

The policy provides a framework in which Trinity staff and students can use social media as communication tools for university business. It provides a framework for those affiliated with Trinity, who are using social media on behalf of the university, to do so responsibly, ethically, lawfully and in a manner that upholds the university's values and reputation. In this way, this policy also aims to protect the university, staff and students when using social media on behalf of the university and for university business.

3.   Benefits

This policy provides clear guidance to work within when using social media in a professional and/or personal capacity related to Trinity College Dublin.

It ensures that social media activity complies with the [university's policies](#) including the Dignity and Respect Policy, EU GDPR regulations, and Irish data protection laws, such as Data Protection Act (2018) while promoting responsible and professional online engagement.

This policy helps reduce risk to the university and university staff working with social media on behalf of the university.

4.   Scope

4 (i) Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all Trinity staff and students using social media on behalf of the university on official and affiliated university social media accounts, or social media channels which display Trinity branding.

This policy applies to those external to the university when posting comments and private replies on official and affiliated university social media platforms.

This policy does not apply to all staff of the university when identifying themselves as staff of the university on personal[1] social media accounts, which include a personal disclaimer. (Appendix 1a)

4 (ii) Where this policy applies

This policy applies to all social media accounts on any social media platform officially associated with the university or social media channels which display Trinity branding, including accounts that represent:

- Academic faculties, schools, departments, and disciplines
- Service areas of the university
- Professional offices of the university
- Senior College Officer positions
- Clubs and societies as defined in the College Calendar sections S and T
- Trinity Alumni and Development
- Trinity Branding Commercial Services Limited
- External organisations and individuals working with Trinity, in line with relevant legislation

5.   Principles

The College recognises the range of benefits and opportunities that social media provides for its continuing and developing relationship with current and prospective stakeholders.

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[1] The scope of this policy does not prevent issues relating to staff and student's personal use of social media being the subject of complaint under other Trinity policies including but not limited to Dignity & Respect Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy, Fitness to Practise, Grievance Procedures and Ethics Policy.

This policy aims to enable safe, respectful, dignified, and supportive social media environments for all staff, students, followers and members of the public, and others, who engage in social media activity related to official university business. This policy also aims to support staff and students to engage in best practice social media activity when working on behalf of the university.

Trinity is committed to academic freedom, free speech, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression and encourages staff and students to exchange ideas and participate in healthy and open discourse and debate.

The university recognises the right of all its staff and students to be able to exercise free speech, freedom of speech and freedom of expression online in a personal capacity but requires university community members to adhere to this policy in all matters related to official university social media activity to ensure a safe and respectful social media environment.

6.   Definitions

- **TCD Employees** - all full-time, part-time employees, including occasional staff, temporary and seasonal staff.
- **Individuals who are not employed by TCD** but are covered by this policy includes non-salaried adjuncts, emeritus, staff of subsidiary companies, staff of School of Dental Science employed by DDUH, appointees to Clinical Titles (Clinical Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Senior Lecturer and Clinical Lecturer), Honorary Professors and Visitors.
- **Students** - all UG and PG students, PhD students and those taking Micro-credentials.
- **External Parties** - external parties affiliated with Trinity including contractors and/or any other parties who are granted access to university social media accounts (e.g. agencies) **Others** – members of the public.
- **Social media platforms** - third-party websites and computer programmes that allow people to interact and share information, opinions, pictures, videos, etc. on the internet and that are used by members of the college community to communicate on behalf of the university. These include but are not limited to: Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X/Twitter, TikTok, Bluesky, and YouTube.
- **Hate Speech** - any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, descent, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other identity factors.
- **Official University Social Media Accounts** – social media accounts on third party social media platforms, established and administered by university staff and students under the

authorisation of the head of academic, professional, administration or service areas, also including social media accounts authorised to use Trinity branding. (Official university social media accounts, existing and proposed to be established, should be logged/registered with the central Trinity Communications Office for record purposes to be included in the centralised record of university social media accounts).

- **Central Trinity Social Media accounts** LinkedIn - [Trinity College Dublin](#), Instagram - [@trinitycollegedublin](#), Facebook - [@trinitycollegedublin](#), X/Twitter [@tcddublin](#), TikTok [@trinitycollegedublin](#)

- **Social media content** - material posted on social media platforms, in this instance by members of the College community (staff, students, externals, others) for the purpose of carrying out university business. Content can include videos, photographs, graphics images or illustration, memes, written captions, and alt text for visual media. It also includes comments, replies and private messages posted on and via university social media accounts.

7. Policy

The following section outlines the responsibilities and best practices that Trinity staff and students must comply with when using social media on behalf of the university.

7(i) Code of Practice

a) Staff and students and external parties affiliated with Trinity using social media on behalf of the University must keep in mind they are always representing Trinity. This includes any representation including publicly posted content, private messages and content engaged with content (likes, comments, and assets).

b) Those using social media on behalf of the university must act in such a way that always upholds the university's reputation.

c) Trinity-affiliated social media accounts must clearly identify themselves as representing or associated the university.

d) Prior to setting up a new social media account representing or associated with the university, the **New Social Media Account Request Form** must be completed and sent to the Head of Digital Communications for review. Those setting up social media accounts on behalf of the university and/or associated with the university are required to do so intentionally and give full consideration to the need of a new account and the resources required to appropriately maintain a university social media account.

e) All existing social media accounts must be registered with the Trinity Communications Office by completing an **Existing Trinity Social Media Accounts Form** for each account.

f)   All university associated social media accounts must have at least two administrators /managers to ensure the integrity and consistent management of accounts.

g)   University account login details must be kept secure and administration access should be limited to authorised staff or students.

h)   To safeguard accounts IT security measures for university associated accounts should follow the university Password Policy and Malware/Virus and Spam and Phishing Policy.

i)   Administrators of university social media accounts are recommended to follow the Trinity Social Media Guidelines including the Accessible Information Policy when creating social media content.

j)   In an emergency or crisis related to the university, staff posting to social media on behalf of the university should refer to university central social media accounts for official information and updates.

k)   University social media accounts must not be used to impersonate others or misrepresent Trinity's official position on social media.

l)   Do not share confidential university, student, or staff information on university social media accounts.

m)   Those using social media on behalf of the university will ensure appropriate consent has been given before posting images or videos featuring clearly identifiable individuals or personal details.

n)   The social media disclaimers in Appendix 1 must be included on university social media account profiles/description/about sections. For platforms where capacity does not allow this, a named link must be included to an official 'tcd.ie' landing page associated to the area owning the account, housing required disclaimers.

o)   Commercial entities, charity organisations, or external companies will not be promoted or referred to on official university social media accounts unless there is an official association with the university through an approved research funding benefaction agreement or a commercial agreement in place.

p)   Staff, students and members of the public are welcome to take photographs and videos on campus and use images on communication channels (digital and hard copy) for personal purposes only. The College's reputation, branding and goodwill are inherently linked to the distinct imagery of the campus at all its locations. Therefore, any use of images of the campus for personal or commercial gain, the promotion of political agendas, the promotion of unauthorised events/campaigns, and/or the sale of any goods or services is strictly prohibited.

q)   Reference to political parties or political or government representatives will not be included on university social media accounts unless in a neutral or news reporting context.

r)   Suspected or confirmed data breaches involving university social media accounts must immediately (including outside of working hours) be reported to the Data Protection

Officer, Director of IT Services, Cyber Security Manager and Head of Digital Communications. Refer to IT and Cyber Security Policy.

s) In accordance with public sector guidelines on the use of the social media platform TikTok and related privacy concerns, university areas and/or staff using TikTok for university communications purposes (or personal use) are required to use a separate device solely for the purpose of accessing and posting to TikTok. **The device used for a TikTok account must not have access to or hold information/data related to university business (e.g. work emails, calendar or files).** This is to mitigate the risk of threat to the privacy of university information, material or contacts stored on work and personal phones, which may be transferred and used by the platform owning company (ByteDance) or other parties, due to TikTok's privacy settings where permissions and device information collection are overly intrusive and not necessary for the application to function. This requirement will incur an added cost at a local level to provide a separate phone for the use of TikTok. With this in mind, as outlined above in point d - those creating social media accounts on behalf of the university and/or associated with the university are required to do so intentionally, and give full consideration to the need of a new account and resources required to maintain that account.

t) Content featuring quotes or comments by Trinity academic staff on university social media accounts represent the knowledge, expertise, or beliefs of that specific academic and not the views or opinion of Trinity.

u) All relevant Irish and EU legislation and university policies relevant to social media activity (Section 10 Related Documents) should be adhered to when working with social media on behalf of the university and also when engaging with university channels on social media.

7 (ii) Social Media Moderation

By interacting with Trinity's social media accounts, such as commenting on posts or sending direct messages, external users accept the moderation terms of this policy.

The following moderation section of the social media policy relates to official university social media platform accounts, including but not limited to X/Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, TikTok, Bluesky and YouTube and any content posted on those accounts.

This moderation policy is not aimed to censoring views and will not be used to suppress legitimate, reasoned discussion, criticism, or complaints. It is to safeguard the university's reputation and ensure a duty of care to those engaging with any Trinity social media presence.

Comments/responses expressed on Trinity's social media channels by members of the public or staff or students represent the individual's thoughts and beliefs and not those of the university.

Trinity reserves the right to hide or delete comments or content which violates the moderation terms of this social media policy. In some cases, dependent on frequency, scale or content posted, the university reserves the right to remove and or block followers or members of the public and their content from university channels which are in breach of this policy.

7(iii) Examples of social media activity that breaches this policy, along with the actions that may be taken in response, include but are not limited to:

a) Content involving hate speech based on race, religion, gender, nationality or sexuality or any other personally offensive characteristics, as outlined in the Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024.

b) Comments and responses, including direct and private messages, which uses discriminatory language or encourages violence towards a person or a group based on who they are, on the basis on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, descent, gender, or other identity factors.

c) Malicious or offensive content that could constitute a personal attack or harassment of an individual or their characters, including staff, students, others related to the university and members of the public who engage with university social media channels.

d) Swearing, obscenity, abusive or hurtful content will not be accepted on university social media platforms.

e) Repetitive negative content which aims to provoke a response, or which does not constructively add to the conversation.

f) High volumes of messages or overly long content which could constitute spamming.

g) Content, comments, or imagery that violates intellectual property rights or GDPR regulation, or that may be confidential or otherwise legally protected.

h) Content that impersonates or falsely claims to represent a person or organisation.

All content which falls under the above outlined policy breaches will be deleted and/or blocked from university social media accounts and reported on the related social media platforms.

7(iii) Notice and Take Down Procedure

The College operates on a "notice and takedown" procedure for content posted on official social media accounts.

Complaints or objections related to social media content material or content including user messages posted on the university social media account which infringes any college policies and national legislation should be emailed to Trinity.Communications@tcd.ie with the following information:

- Complainant's name, contact details and staff or student number
- Link to the social media post and/or comment related to complaint
- Screenshot of the social media post and or comment related to complaint
- Link to the account which posted the content
- Clear outline of complainant's issue with the content and why the complainant considers it breaches this policy

Trinity Communications will make an initial assessment of the complaint. Where the College considers it appropriate it may remove or hide the content, which is the subject of the complaint, pending investigation. Any removal will be on a "without prejudice" basis and shall not constitute any admission of responsibility on the part of Trinity or any other party. When making a final decision on the complaint the university may take the following actions:

- If it is determined that the content does not breach this policy, it will be left in place
- If it is determined that content breaches this policy, it will be brought to the attention of the College Secretary
- Notwithstanding the above actions, the College retains the right to remove or hide the content, which is the subject matter of the complaint, whether or not it determines the content breaches this policy if the College considers it is in the best interests of the College to do so. A decision to remove or hide content on this basis shall not constitute any admission of responsibility on the part of Trinity or any other party.

7 (iv) Policy Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with existing disciplinary procedures in place for staff, students, and external parties.

8.   Policy Owner

The Director of Trinity Communications is the owner of the Social Media Policy and will implement the policy with the support of the Trinity Communications team.

9.   Responsibility and Implementation

The Director of Trinity Communications with support from the Trinity Communications team is responsible for the implementation of the Social Media Policy.

Where breaches of this policy require disciplinary action in relation to staff, the College Secretary is responsible for reviewing reports on policy breaches, drafted by the Head of Digital Communications, and progressing the matter to be dealt with in accordance with existing disciplinary procedures.

Where breaches of this policy require disciplinary action in relation to students, student societies, clubs and the Students' Union, the Junior Dean is responsible for reviewing reports on policy breaches drafted by the Head of Digital Communications, and progessing the matter to be dealt with in accordance with existing disciplinary procedures.

10.   Related Documents

Information and content posted to social media platform associated with the university must adhere to the College policies in force at the time. Attention must be paid to the following policies where they are related to social media activity and content:

- Data Protection
- College Academic Freedom Policy
- Accessible Information
- IT and Cyber Security
- College Trademarks
- Dignity and Respect
- Equality
- Ethics
- Intellectual Property
- Web Policies

National Legislation relevant to social media platforms and content posted on university social media platforms, must also be adhered to, including but not limited to the following Irish and European legislation: (to include any amendments):

- Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024

- [Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 (OSMR Act)](#)
- [EU Digital Services Act 2024 (DSA)](#)
- [Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020](#)
- [Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989](#)
- [EU Accessibility Act 2025](#)
- [Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022](#)
- [Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000 - 2007](#)
- [Trademark Act 1996](#)
- [Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulation, 2016](#)
- [The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004](#) revised 2020
- [Children First Act 2015](#)
- [Defamation Act 2009](#)
- [The Universities Act, 1997](#)
- [EU Artificial Intelligence Act 2024](#)

11. Document/version Control for New Policies

Approved by: Board
Date policy approved: 25 March 2026
Date of next review: 2030/31
Officer responsible for review: Director of Trinity Communications

Document Control for Revised Policies

11.1 Date of initial approval: 2010

11.2 Date revised policy approved: 25 March 2026

11.3 Date policy effective from: 25 March 2026

11.4 Date of next review: Academic Year 2030/2031

Appendix 1 – Social media disclaimers to be included on social media accounts as outlined in section 7(i) above.

1a Personal account disclaimer (to be used on personal social media accounts where individuals have identified themselves as Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin staff members)
Views expressed in the posts and comments on this account are my own and not that of Trinity College Dublin.

1b Comment statement
All followers of or visitors to this account are encouraged to leave comments. While all points of view are welcome, only comments that are on-topic and respectful will be permitted. Any comments disregarding the moderation section of the university's social media policy will be deleted.

1c Linking statement
This account may contain external links to other sites. The author or organisation does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of information on other web sites. Links are not intended as endorsements of any views expressed, products or services offered on outside sites, or the organisations sponsoring those sites.

1d Privacy statement
Trinity College Dublin actively seeks to preserve the privacy rights of those individuals who share information with the University. The personal data which you provide to Trinity College will be processed in accordance with Irish and European Data Protection legislation, specifically the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("**GDPR**") and Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018. [(Trinity College Dublin Privacy Notice)](#)