

POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR STAFF

INTRODUCTION

1. LSE's Strategic Plan sets engagement as one of the School's three priorities. Social media - for the purposes of this document, defined as media that enable social interaction via the internet and personal mobile devices¹ - allow a wide range of audiences to engage with LSE via the internet, and are arguably the most powerful form of engagement available in terms of reach. But along with the benefits of social media come significant risks, especially to LSE's reputation.
2. LSE is already a leader in many social media fields. Its blogs have a national profile, and its Events Twitter feed is one of the most popular university Twitter accounts. The Press & Information Office also manages the LSE Facebook site, which currently has nearly 45,000 followers ("likes"). LSE seeks to expand on this, and thereby improve engagement, by encouraging and facilitating the use of social media.
3. Despite the immense opportunities represented by social media, there are significant risks, not least business, legal, and reputational. Social media allow individuals to communicate with a potentially huge audience, and given the interpersonal nature of their form, can blur the lines between a personal voice and an institutional voice. Those using social media in a personal capacity, or in a professional capacity for an external platform, need to bear in mind that their comments could be taken to reflect on LSE.
4. This document clarifies LSE's policy on the use of social media, and provides guidance on how staff can get the best from social media while minimising the risks. It is not the intention of this policy to inhibit members of LSE from engaging in vigorous political debate or from expressing unpopular opinions as citizens.

POLICY ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

5. LSE seeks to authorise material for public release under a Creative Commons licence. This has been introduced for all LSE podcasts and online videos. It is now being introduced for blogs and other social media. It is also recommended for the release of pictures. A Creative Commons licence permits material to be shared provided there is attribution, non-commercial

¹ A more detailed definition of terms is contained in Annex A.

use and no derivatives (e.g. a podcast cannot be broken down into sections and released out of context).

6. Those using social media must be aware of data protection issues and ensure that confidential, personal and proprietary information is protected. No-one should post personal information about anyone other than themselves.

7. All content is subject to defamation law. Inappropriate or inaccurate comments which are damaging to a person's reputation should be avoided, as they could result in a claim of libel. To prove such a claim, a permanent statement is needed, usually in written text, video or pictures. Social media postings should be considered as permanent statements in this way.

8. The misuse of social media, or the posting of inappropriate content, may result in staff raising formal grievances. The School may need to take disciplinary action against staff in line with the Harassment Policy, where it is deemed that discrimination, harassment or bullying has taken place. The School takes its responsibilities in this regard seriously. The School defines such offences as "unwelcome comments (written or spoken) or conduct which violates an individual's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment." Disciplinary action may also apply in other instances, such as if the School is brought into disrepute.

9. Copyright and intellectual property and trademark rights of others and of LSE must be respected, including use of the LSE logo.

10. The Terms of Service of any social media platform must be respected.

GUIDANCE

11. **Seek advice.** Those thinking of using social media systematically, in particular for setting up an LSE blog, a new Facebook site or similar, are advised to check with Communications first. Communications can offer support on design, accessibility, dissemination and monitoring and can provide an overview of other LSE social media offerings that may enhance or clash with your proposal. The Centre for Learning Technology (CLT) also supports the use of LSE blogs and runs an extensive digital literacy and social media workshop programme.

12. **Link back to LSE.** Whenever possible, link back to the LSE website. When linking to a news article about LSE, check first to see whether it is

possible to link to a release on the LSE website rather than to a publication or other media outlet.

13. Content is key. The project will fail without sufficient content. Ensure a regular supply of material for the site, and that it meets the need of a clearly defined audience. It is advisable to have a named individual responsible for updating the site.

14. Decide whether to moderate. Social media invite engagement and comment. Those running blogs, for example, need to decide whether or not to moderate responses before they go live. A decision either way carries legal responsibilities and consequences for LSE and yourself. Communications can advise.

15. Use social media carefully in teaching. Students may develop course- or group-specific pages in Facebook or similar but that is a matter for them. It is not recommended that teachers use any social media that requires or expects students to join in order to participate. Course-related communications should go through established School channels e.g. email or Moodle. However teachers may also want to share some of this information where appropriate through social media channels. CLT can advise.

16. Get the tone right. Social media tend to be more informal means of communication than official press releases or statements. However, an overly familiar tone can backfire in a university setting.

17. Consider the target audience(s). Check that they use the medium proposed - and understand how they see it. This is particularly the case when considering a Facebook site. Research from LSE Careers has found that students see Facebook as their personal space – so staff should be mindful of this.

18. Think twice before posting. There is no such thing as privacy on the internet. Word spreads quickly. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created - even after you think you have deleted them - and comments can be forwarded or copied. Do not say anything online that you would not say to the press or at a conference.

19. Make it accurate. Make sure you get all your facts right, as you would when talking to a conference or the media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. If your content is associated with LSE it reflects on LSE's reputation for quality.

20. **Write clearly.** Refer to the Guidance on [LSE House Style and Best Communications Practice](#).

21. **Be respectful.** Content on a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas – the audience is far wider than academic peers. Consider all comments and responses carefully in light of how they would reflect on you or LSE.

22. **LSE logo.** The LSE logo, which is produced in various forms, is a registered trademark and a key part of the School's identity. As such, its use is tightly constrained and it is most unlikely that any use on social media will be authorised. For any requests about the logo, contact designunit@lse.ac.uk.

CONTACTS, RESOURCES AND ADVICE

23. For information on how a Creative Commons licence works, contact Kevin Haynes (k.j.haynes@lse.ac.uk) in the Legal and Compliance team or Stephen Emmott (stephen.emmott@lse.ac.uk) in Web Services.

24. If you encounter misuse of social media, such as posting of inappropriate content, please report your concerns to your head of department / head of service, the Head of Communications in External Relations Division or your HR partner.

25. Communications runs an LSE Blogging Service; please contact Jo Bale (j.m.bale@lse.ac.uk) for details. Advice on creating a blog can also be found at <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/help>.

26. Advice on the branding of online videos can be found at <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/staff/webSupport/guides/audioVideo/lseVideoBrandingGuide.pdf>

Web Services, within Communications, is responsible for placing podcasts and videos online and for disseminating them to our official YouTube and iTunesU site. Staff considering using YouTube should consult Web Services first as the official site has wide reach. Apple only permit iTunesU sites at the institution level, so staff wishing to add content to LSE's iTunesU should contact Web Services. Details can be found here: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/staff/webSupport/guides/audioVideo/home.aspx>

27. LSE's Public Policy Group has produced a Twitter guide for academics. It can be downloaded here: [Using Twitter in university research, teaching and impact activities](#) [PDF]

28. For more advice on digital copyright, contact Jane Secker in CLT (j.secker@lse.ac.uk).

29. LSE's Harassment Policy can be downloaded here:
<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/harPol.pdf>

30. Guidance on LSE house style and best communications practice
<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/guiHouSty.pdf>
[PDF]

31. Conditions of use IT facilities
<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/conOfUseOfITFacAtLSE.pdf> [PDF]

32. Any further queries concerning this policy can be sent to Hayley Reed in Communications (h.reed@lse.ac.uk).

ANNEX A: About this document

Version

Version 1.0; policy elements approved by DMT on 7 June 2012

Disclaimer

Policy elements of this document cannot be changed without DMT approval.

Target audience(s)

LSE staff, although it is also hoped that this policy and guidance will be of interest to students.

Process

This policy is being developed in accordance with PAS 124:2011 'Defining, implementing and managing website policies and standards: code of practice' which is produced by the British Standards Institute (BSI).

Goals

1. Better position the role of social media to support LSE's strategic goals.
2. Enable the School, its staff and students to use and benefit from social media.
3. Protect the School, its staff and students from the risks of social media.
4. Set and manage expectations for the use of social media by LSE staff and students.

Scope

- Included:
 - Social media channels of communication.
 - School content, or information about the School, shared/communicated through School, personal or third party channels.
 - School channels used to share/communicate School, personal or third party content, or information about the School, individuals or third parties.
- Excluded:
 - Channels of communication other than social media channels.

Definition of terms

- Social media – Digital services provided via digital networks (internet or private) which allow individuals to share content and information between one or more other individuals. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, etc.

- *LSE website* – LSE’s official website published at the following locations: www.lse.ac.uk; www2.lse.ac.uk; search.lse.ac.uk and blogs.lse.ac.uk.
- *Creative Commons* – Copyright licences and tools provided by the Creative Commons organisation support digital creativity, sharing, and innovation.