

# OULS - Social Media Policy

## 1. Policy statement

- 1.1. This policy is intended to help OULS committee members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the standards we require OULS committee members to observe when using social media, and the action we will take in respect of breaches of this policy.
- 1.3. This policy may be amended at any time by the OULS committee with a minimum of 4 committee members agreeing to the amendments.

## 2. Who is covered by the policy

- 2.1. This policy covers all OULS committee members, including those not designated with social media responsibilities and/or within the Social Media Team, acting under their own name.

## 3. The scope of the policy

- 3.1. All OULS committee members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our society and our services, members and non-members alike.

## 4. Responsibility for implementation of the policy

- 4.1. The Chair has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 4.2. The Chair and designated social media team is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change. Changes to this policy must be agreed by a minimum of 4 committee members.
- 4.3. All OULS committee members are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All OULS committee members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the designated social media team and the Chair.
- 4.4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the social media team, whom will be made up of volunteers from the OULS committee, each approved by a minimum of 4 other OULS committee members.
- 4.5. Social Media Team Members can volunteer and be approved by 4 other OULS committee members at any point, and can vacate their position at any point by submitting a verbal or written resignation of duties to the Social Media Team Leader, Chair or Vice Chair.
- 4.6. Only one Social Media Team Leader can hold the position at any one time, and must be approved by 4 other OULS committee members and the Chair or Vice Chair. The Social Media Team Leader must provide a minimum of 14 days' notice if they wish to vacate the position to allow ample time for a replacement to be found.

## 5. Using social media sites in our name

- 5.1. Only approved members of the Social Media Team are permitted to post material on a social media website in our name and on our behalf.
- 5.2. OULS committee members who are not on the designated social media team, may post on OULS social media pages, using under their own profiles/handles/aliases but must abide by all of the stipulations of this policy, and post in good character. All committee members will be held accountable to this policy by the rest of the OULS committee.

## 6. Promoting events and sponsors

- 6.1. All communications we make using social media which promote our sponsors, can only be made by the designated social media team and must have been approved by the Chair/Vice Chair, or in their absence; 4 committee members.
- 6.2. Otherwise, you must not make any communication using social media which promotes any charity or commercial entity. This means that broadly:
  - (a) you must not recommend, or promote charities, universities, other societies, law firms or similar institutions
  - (b) you must not invite or encourage any member or potential member to contact you in order to do the above.
  - (c) you may discuss the above in a neutral manner with no bias

Any breach of these terms will result in an assessment of your duties as a member of the committee and/or designated social media team.

- 6.4. If you are in any doubt as to what you can or cannot say using social media, then please contact the Chair/Vice Chair/Social Media Team Leader

## 7. Using OULS related social media

- 7.1. We recognise the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about our society. We also recognise the importance of our OULS committee members in and helping shape the societies' direction through interaction in social media.
- 7.2. You are therefore permitted to interact on social media websites in regard to, and about the OULS via social media, as long as your views are not deemed contradictory to the OULS constitution and/or could be seen as harmful to the OULS. Approved social media websites/formats are:
  - (a) Facebook
  - (b) Instagram
  - (c) Twitter

- (d) LinkedIn
- (e) Snapchat
- (f) Periscope
- (g) Youtube
- (h) Pinterest
- (i) Mailchimp
- (j) OUSA Forums
- (k) OULS Website

This list may be updated by the Chair/Vice Chair or in the absence of either; 4 members of the committee. Please refer to the Social Media Brief for information about each of the approved formats.

7.3. Before using OULS-related social media under the OULS name, you must:

- (a) have read and understood this policy; and
- (b) have read and understood the Social Media Brief; and
- (c) have been approved as a member of the Social Media Team as per 4.4 in either a Social Media Team Member or Social Media Team Leader role.

## **9. Rules for use of social media by members of the designated social media team**

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- 9.1. Always write in the first person, as if you are the OULS' personal entity
- 9.2. Do not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- 9.3. Any person who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by an OULS member or committee member on a social media website should inform the Chair/Vice Chair, at which point the Chair/Vice Chair has the authority to block/reprimand/withdraw access of the social media group/page to the offender.
- 9.4. Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Chair/Vice Chair.
- 9.5. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.

- 9.6. It is acceptable to quote a small excerpt from an article, particularly for the purposes of commenting on it. However, if you think an excerpt is too big, it probably is. Quote accurately, include references and when in doubt, link, don't copy.
- 9.7. Before you include a link to a third party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it. All links must be done so that it is clear to the user that they have moved to the third party's website.
- 9.8. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 9.9. Do not post, upload, forward or post a link to chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip.
- 9.10. Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of us as a society. If you make a mistake in a contribution, be prompt in admitting and correcting it.
- 9.11. You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – be aware that what you publish will be public for many years.
- 9.12. Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, neutral, and respectful of other people's views. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset, return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.
- 9.13. If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you shouldn't do it. If in doubt, always discuss it with another member of the designated social media team first.
- 9.14. Don't discuss committee members, OULS members or any authoritative figure without their prior approval.
- 9.15. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. sexuality, race and religion.
- 9.16. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.
- 9.17. Wherever possible, Twitter posts should include the hashtag '#OULS' and the handle of anyone that the post refers to/mentions.
- 9.18. Wherever possible, Twitter aliases that frequently retweet OULS posts, should also be retweeted in order to help promote the OULS.
- 9.19. Wherever possible, Facebook posts (excluding replies and small posts) should be reviewed by one other member of the designated social media team before publishing, ensuring all links are live and the posts have been checked for spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 9.20. Wherever possible, Facebook posts, comments and shares should include 'hyperlinked names' to people that the post mentions or refers to.

## 10. Monitoring use of social media websites

- 10.1. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and us. It may also cause embarrassment to us and to our members.
- 10.2. In particular uploading, posting forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in relation to an article or discussion topic, will amount to revocation of social media team rights and removal from the OULS committee, at the discretion of the remaining committee members (this list is not exhaustive):
- (a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
  - (b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
  - (c) material which is offensive, obscene, criminal discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to us, our members or any other person that is related to the OULS;
  - (d) confidential information about us or any of our members or associated bodies (which you do not have express authority to disseminate);
  - (e) any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or us); or
  - (f) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

Any such action will be addressed under by the committee and is likely to result in revocation of social media team rights, and in extreme circumstances; removal from the committee.

- 10.5. If you notice any use of social media by any member of the OULS committee whom is not an approved member of the Social Media Team, please report it to the Chair/Vice Chair.

## 11. Activity by OULS (non-committee) members

- 11.1. By posting on OULS social media websites such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, OULS members agree to post responsibly and in good character and will be subject to removal/blocking and/or cancellation of their OULS membership with no refund for any fee paid (at the discretion of the OULS committee), if they act in an inflammatory, derogatory or harmful manor by posting any in any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- (a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);

- (b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
- (c) material which is offensive, obscene, criminal discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to us, our members or any other person that is related to the OULS;
- (d) confidential information about us or any of our members or associated bodies (which you do not have express authority to disseminate);
- (e) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

## **12. Monitoring and review of this policy**

- 12.1. The Chair shall be responsible for reviewing this policy at any time, to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.