

# Guidelines for GCU Staff on the use of Social Media for Learning and Teaching

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## 1. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to underpin the implementation of the Strategy for Learning (2013-2020) and complement the more general social media guidance developed by Marketing & Communications<sup>1</sup>. Their purpose is to:

- Encourage the appropriate use of social media for learning, teaching and assessment to enhance the student learning experience
- Increase staff awareness of the potential of social media for learning, teaching and assessment
- Highlight aspects for consideration when implementing social media for learning, teaching and assessment

## 2. What is Social Media?

Social media includes a wide variety of online applications which support collaboration and sharing in different forms. Examples include blogs, wikis, 3D virtual worlds, micro-blogging, social networking, video and podcasting sites. Many of these have become part of everyday life for students and staff, and it is becoming increasingly recognised that the appropriate use of social media can also enhance learning and teaching.

## 3. Why use Social Media?

Social media can support:

- student engagement and active learning
- creativity and collaboration
- sharing and co-creation of educational resources
- a range of graduate attributes, including communication, IT and information skills
- links between academia and the outside world
- peer support and review
- special interest groups and communities
- local, national and international research activities
- instant feedback and peer review
- flexible access to learning activities

## 4. Social Media at GCU

GCU already provides support for a number of social media applications. These include Campus Pack blogs, wikis and podcasting tools which are accessible via GCULearn. It is also possible to embed YouTube videos, Twitter feeds, Slideshare presentations and BBC TV vid- and podcasts<sup>2</sup> within GCULearn modules. In addition, virtual worlds are being used

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<sup>1</sup> Available from GCU Marketing and Communications

<sup>2</sup> To embed BBC resources in GCULearn, please contact the Digital Development and Information Literacy team in the Library <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/library/staffservices/thedigitaldevelopmentteam/>

to engage students in creative learning activities and a dedicated GCU iTunesU web presence is currently under development.

While the University encourages the use of social media as an enhancement to GCULearn, it is not possible to provide support for the extensive and ever-expanding range of tools available. Where externally provided applications are used, it is important to consider the implications for students and staff. GCU's IT Systems Policy and the Janet Acceptable Use Policy for staff and students should always be adhered to when using both internally and externally provided social media for learning and teaching.

Janet Acceptable Use Policy: <https://community.ja.net/library/acceptable-use-policy>

GCU IT Systems Policy: [http://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/staff/it/information\\_systems\\_policy.pdf](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/staff/it/information_systems_policy.pdf)

## **5. Issues and Good Practice Guidelines**

### ***5.1 Accessibility and Reliability***

In most cases, users will need to create an account in order to sign up for external social media services. Although the majority of these widely used services are well established and stable, it should be remembered that potentially they could be subject to change and disruption without prior notice. Similarly, content uploaded to and shared on these sites should not be considered 100% secure. For these reasons it is recommended that:

1. When directing students to external social media sites staff should make them aware of the need, where it exists, for registration and the creation of additional passwords which cannot be controlled or managed through the normal GCU password reset procedures
2. When linking to social media sites from within GCULearn it should be made clear that the link will take students to an external site which may require a separate logon
3. Students should be made aware of the potential security risks involved in contributing content to a social media site, even where these are likely to be minimal
4. Contingency plans should be made for service disruption and appropriate back-up plans for content should be put in place, particularly when the sites are being used for assessment purposes
5. As with the use of all learning technologies, consideration should be given to the potential impact on students with disabilities and alternative resources provided where appropriate.

GCU Assistive Technology Advice

<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/disability/currentstudents/visualimpairmentunitandassistivetechology/>

## 5.2 Privacy and Data Protection

In order to comply with UK Data Protection legislation, the University's Data Protection Guidelines should be adhered to in any online interaction conducted as part of University learning and teaching activities. The following aspects should also be considered as part of good practice when using social media for learning and teaching:

6. Staff should make themselves aware of the terms and conditions of social media sites, including privacy settings, before deciding to use them for learning and teaching purposes.
7. Students should be made aware that in registering to use external social media sites, they are entering into an agreement with the service provider(s) and not with the University
8. The use of personal information should be treated with caution and shared only if it is relevant to the purpose of the learning activity and within GCU Data Protection guidelines
9. Where the social media site involves potential interaction with a wider audience, issues relating to online identity, personal safety and the impact over time of an individual's 'digital footprint' should be highlighted
10. Guidelines for appropriate online behaviour should be discussed and agreed with participants in advance of using a social media site, including the importance of establishing an online identity which is suitable for an academic or professional context. Where applicable, professional body guidance should be shared and discussed with students

GCU Data Protection guidelines:	<a href="http://www.gcu.ac.uk/dataprotection/">http://www.gcu.ac.uk/dataprotection/</a>
JISC Legal Guidance on Data Protection	<a href="http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/LegalAreas/DataProtection.aspx">http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/LegalAreas/DataProtection.aspx</a>
Nursing and Midwifery Council Guidance	<a href="http://www.nmc-uk.org/Nurses-and-midwives/Advice-by-topic/A/Advice/Social-networking-sites/">http://www.nmc-uk.org/Nurses-and-midwives/Advice-by-topic/A/Advice/Social-networking-sites/</a>
British Psychological Society Ethics Committee guidance on social media	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/2012_ethics_committee_social_media.pdf">http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/2012_ethics_committee_social_media.pdf</a>

## 5.3 Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights

Copyright Regulations and Employment Contract obligations relating to the creation and use of learning and teaching resources apply in a social media context as they do elsewhere. Given the extended opportunities for sharing and co-creating content online however, it is even more important to be familiar with the relevant regulations. Copyright of materials created by staff in the course of their employment belong to the University unless there is an agreement otherwise.

11. Copyright and IPR issues should be considered before sharing content online or using resources from an external social media site
12. It is useful to look out for Creative Commons (CC) licences which allow the sharing and re-use of a range of resources mainly for non-profit, educational purposes as long as the original author is acknowledged

GCU Introduction to Copyright:	<a href="http://www.gcu.ac.uk/library/research/copyright/introductiontocopyri&lt;br/&gt;ght/">http://www.gcu.ac.uk/library/research/copyright/introductiontocopyri ght/</a>
GCU Copyright Advice:	<a href="http://www.gcu.ac.uk/library/research/copyrightadvice/">http://www.gcu.ac.uk/library/research/copyrightadvice/</a>
Creative Commons	<a href="http://www.creativecommons.org.uk">http://www.creativecommons.org.uk</a>
JISC Legal Guide to Copyright and IPR:	<a href="http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/LegalAreas/CopyrightIPR.aspx">http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/LegalAreas/CopyrightIPR.aspx</a>

## 6. Further information

JISC Legal has compiled a useful Legal Issues Checklist for Tutors on using Web 2.0.

The Library's Information Literacy online tutorial, PILOT, includes sections on social media and managing your digital footprint. This interactive tutorial can be accessed through the Library tab in GCULearn.

Additional sources of information from elsewhere are listed below.

JISC Legal Web 2.0 Tutor's Legal Issues Checklist	<a href="http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/Portals/12/Documents/PDFs/Web2Tuto&lt;br/&gt;rChecklist.pdf">http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/Portals/12/Documents/PDFs/Web2Tuto rChecklist.pdf</a>
LSE guide to using Twitter in university research & teaching	<a href="http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/29/twitter-&lt;br/&gt;guide/">http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/29/twitter- guide/</a>
Social Media guidelines from Imperial College London	<a href="http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/webguide/socialmedia">http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/webguide/socialmedia</a>
Social Media: a guide for researchers	<a href="http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/communicating-and-disseminating-&lt;br/&gt;research/social-media-guide-researchers">http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/communicating-and-disseminating- research/social-media-guide-researchers</a>

For further guidance on the use of social media for learning, teaching and assessment, please contact the Blended Learning team in GCU LEAD or your School Learning Technologists.

### **Acknowledgements**

*These guidelines have been informed by Social Media policies developed by the Universities of Glamorgan, Edinburgh, Heriot Watt and University of the Arts, London, and are based on recommendations from JISC Legal.*

*Approved by LTSC, October 2012. Minor amendments, January 2015.*