



**Policy on the Use of Social Media
and other third party websites by Members of Staff
(including blogging and personal web-space)**

Rev	Date	Purpose of Issue/Description of Change	Equality Impact Assessment Completed
1.	8 th June 2015	Initial Issue - Version 1	28 th July 2015
2.	16 th October 2020	Review and re-approval	

Policy Officer	Senior Responsible Officer	Approved By	Date
Head of Governance and Compliance	Chief Operating Officer / University Secretary	Compliance Task Group	16 th October 2020

This Policy will be reviewed in 3 years

Policy on the use of social media and other third party websites (including blogging and personal web-space) for Members of Staff

This policy should be read, in particular, in conjunction with the following University Policies, and also the guidance in Appendix 1:

- *Privacy Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Acceptable Use Regulations*
- *Information Security Policy*
- *Declaration of Interest Policy*
- *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedures*
- *Dignity at Work and Study Policy*

1. Scope

This Policy applies to all members of staff, either paid, unpaid, volunteers or parties acting on behalf of the University. The term “staff” includes individuals when they are undertaking official duties on behalf of the University either in an employed or volunteer capacity (e.g. student wardens, peer guides, interns, open day volunteers, consultants etc.).

2. Introduction

The University acknowledges that the internet and social media provides a number of benefits which staff may wish to participate in for example when using applications such as *Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp* or *Twitter*. However, when someone clearly identifies their association with Bangor University and / or discusses their work, and / or work colleagues they are expected to behave appropriately online, and in ways that are consistent with the University’s values and policies. The University applies the same standards of conduct in relation to online matters as it would to offline issues

This Policy sets out the principles which staff are expected to follow online and gives interpretations for current forms of interactivity. The use of online media is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances. However, the principles set out in this document should always be followed.

The intention of this document is not to stop individuals from conducting legitimate activities using social media, but serves to flag-up those areas where conflicts may arise.

Any infringement of the Policy will be treated seriously by the University and may be considered under the relevant disciplinary procedures.

3. Principles

Any online activities which associates staff with their work at the University should be discussed in advance with, and where necessary approved by, their line manager.

Individuals:

- Should not engage in activities on social media or other online platforms which might bring the University into unwarranted disrepute;
- Should not use social media in a manner which can be considered derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, which creates a legal liability for the University, which brings the University into disrepute, or which breaches any University policy or procedure;
- Should be mindful of data protection and privacy considerations, when posting photographs of individuals online, without the consent of the person identified.

Staff should consult the University's *Acceptable Use Regulations* for other prohibitive actions.

4. University-owned Social Media Accounts

University-owned and / or operated Social Media accounts must only have content added or amended by persons authorised to do so. The authorisation to add or amend content must be provided in writing ahead of doing so by the Head of School / Director of Professional Service.

The login names and password for a University social media account must be known to at least two people within a School or department and staff must contact the Communications Department to advise them of the identity of those two people by emailing socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk.

University-owned Social Media Accounts must be operated following the same principles as set out in 3. above.

If a member of staff no longer has responsibility for a Social Media Account, including if they are no longer employed by Bangor University, the member of staff must immediately arrange to have their access to any University Social Media Accounts removed.

5. Hybrid sites

It should always be made clear to users whether the site they are interacting with is an official Bangor University site run by the University for University purposes or whether it is a personal page run by an individual for their own private purposes.

Individuals should avoid creating or endorsing hybrid sites which contain elements of both as this is likely to cause confusion.

6. Internet / Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites provide a way for people to maintain contact with colleagues, students and friends. However, through the open nature of such sites it is also possible for third parties to collate vast amounts of information.

Individuals should be mindful of the information they post / disclose online. Where they associate themselves with the University (through providing work details or joining a Bangor University network for example) they should act in a manner which does not bring the University into disrepute or could give rise to a legal claim against the University.

Members of staff should be aware, in relation to their own personal social media accounts, who can view their profile and act appropriately. This would be especially in relation to friends who are also work colleagues, students, prospective students or individuals who have interaction with the University in some capacity.

Staff should consider the possible impact of posting comments relating to their work environment on social networking sites, and the use of a disclaimer in this regard is not enough. Staff should make it clear on their personal accounts that their comments are their own, and not those of Bangor University. Comments and / or postings on the internet, including on personal social networking accounts should not disclose any information that is sensitive, confidential or proprietary either to the University itself and / or to any third party that has disclosed information to the University. Staff should also exercise caution in their use of hashtags. In such cases the University may, if appropriate, consider disciplinary action, and may request that comments relating to the work environment are taken down, and, in extreme cases, may also consider taking legal action.

7. Open access online encyclopaedias

In the course of their work staff may find errors in online encyclopaedias. If staff members edit online encyclopaedias at work the source of the correction may be recorded as a University IP address. The correction may therefore look as if it comes from the University itself. Staff should therefore act in a manner that does not bring the University into disrepute and should not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, or inaccurate comments or do anything that may cause a legal claim to be brought against the University on any online encyclopaedia.

8. Blogging

Staff should always adhere to the requirements of the University's Data Protection and Information Security policies when considering disclosure of information.

Many bloggers use their personal blogs to discuss their University work and academic study in ways which benefit the University. This Policy is not intended to restrict this, as long as confidential information or information on other individuals is not revealed. However staff should inform their Head of School / Director of Professional Service if they intend discussing their University work and / or academic study. Staff should act in a manner which does not bring the University into unwarranted disrepute, or is defamatory, or could give rise to a legal claim against the University.

Blogs or websites which do not identify the blogger as a University employee, do not discuss the University and are purely about personal matters would normally fall outside this Policy.

Personal blogs and websites should not be used to attack or defame colleagues. Staff members should respect the privacy and the feelings of others, and be aware that if they break the law on a blog (for example by posting something defamatory) they will be personally responsible.

a. Staff Members' Blogs

Staff members who already have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at the University should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their Head of School or Director of Professional Service, in accordance with the University's Policy on Declaration of Interest. Similarly staff members who wish to start blogging, and wish to say that they work at the University should discuss any potential conflicts in advance.

If a blog makes it clear that the author works for the University it should include a simple and visible disclaimer such as "these are my personal views and not those of Bangor University".

Personal blogs and websites should not reveal confidential information about Bangor University. This might include aspects of University policy or details of internal University discussions. If in doubt about what might be confidential, staff members should consult their line manager.

If a staff member thinks something on their blog or website gives rise to concerns about a conflict of interest and in particular concerns about impartiality or confidentiality, this must be discussed with their line manager.

Staff members are allowed to update their personal blog and social media accounts from a University computer subject to Section 4.1 of the University's *Acceptable Use Regulations*.

b) Policy for Managers on Blogging and Social Media

Under this Policy managers will decide what is appropriate. Managers should not adopt an unnecessarily restrictive approach and should ensure that any special instructions on blogging or social media use are reasonable and explained clearly to staff.

Managers should bear in mind concerns about impartiality, confidentiality, data protection, conflicts of interest or commercial sensitivity. In some cases individuals may be dealing with matters which are so sensitive that rules may have to be set on what they can and cannot talk about on their personal blog. Further guidance can be sought initially from the Head of Governance and Compliance, who may seek advice, including from appropriate internal and / or external sources.

9. Compliance and Monitoring

All members of the University (both staff and students) are directly responsible and liable for the information they handle. Staff and students are bound to abide by the University's *Acceptable Use Regulations*.

All University accounts should include all information in both Welsh and English.

All social media activity should be published in accordance with Bangor University's Welsh Language Policy and adhere to the principle below:

The Welsh Language should be treated no less favourably than English in Wales
Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language should they wish to do so.

On social media platforms this can be achieved by either having a fully bilingual account or alternative accounts or platforms for each language. Whichever option is chosen, messages must be posted in both languages simultaneously. It is not acceptable to post a message in only in one language. When replying to messages and enquiries, either public or private, from other users, the language chosen by the user should be used.

Any misuse or any use that may bring the University into disrepute must be reported to the Head of Governance and Compliance, Governance and Compliance Office in the first instance, and, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources disciplinary action may be considered.

10. Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or at earlier intervals in light of any changes to legislation, technology or the operation of the existing policy.

Appendix 1

Social Media Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines were developed following consultation with a number of colleagues at College, School and departmental level. Expert opinion was also obtained from a company specializing in social media.

The purpose of these guidelines are threefold:

- To ensure that the University maximizes the potential benefits of social media for all involved
- To encourage good practice
- To minimize any adverse impact and to protect the University, its staff and students.

The growth in social media, particularly social networking sites, has created increased opportunity for communications with a range of different audiences.

This document covers:

- What is social media?
- How is Bangor University using social media?
- Getting started
- Goals and Objectives
- Content Principles
- Setting up an account – personal or official
- Good Practice
- Security
- Branding
- Training

1. What is Social Media?

Social media has changed the way we communicate – both as an institution and as individuals. With tools such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, anyone with an Internet connection now has the ability to create a dynamic Web presence, update it from wherever they are whenever they want, and share their content instantly with people around the world.

Social media is constantly changing. As a result, these guidelines will continue to evolve. If you have suggestions, please email socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk

2. How is Bangor University using Social media?

As an institution, Bangor has been an early and eager adopter of social media. These tools enable the university to share what is happening within the University with the world, but

more importantly let us hear directly and immediately from students, staff, parents, fans and friends about what is important to them. This “conversation” is what makes social media so different from traditional forms of communications.

The main platforms used by the University at the moment are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, and a number of Departments and Schools across the University are already successfully using these tools to communicate with key audiences.

There is also a tremendous opportunity to use social media for teaching and learning, and further policy will become available on that in due course.

Bangor University’s primary official social media presences are:

- YouTube: www.youtube.co.uk/bangortv
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/BangorUniversity and www.facebook.com/prifysgolbangor
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/BangorUni
- www.twitter.com/PrifysgolBangor
- <http://www.linkedin.com/edu/bangor-university-20409>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/prifysgolbangor/?hl=en> and https://www.instagram.com/bangor_university/?hl=en

Getting Started

a) Personal Accounts

You are clearly free to use social media for your own personal activity, however if you are doing this, things to bear in mind are:

- Remember that even though you are acting in your own personal capacity, you are on show to your friends and anyone else who sees what you write, as a representative of Bangor University.
- You should make clear that the views expressed are personal, and not those of Bangor University.
- If you act illegally e.g. by publishing any libellous material or infringing copyright then you will be held personally responsible and not the University.
- Material posted by individuals on social media sites is often seen by people outside your usual circle of friends. When considering what to post on social media sites, it is best to act on the premise that your comments will be seen by everyone.

b) Official University accounts

Secure the approval of your department head or manager.

If you wish to create a social media page or profile for your department, secure the approval of your senior manager. It is also asked that you seek advice from the Corporate Communications & Marketing Department (socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk)

Think about practicalities

Who is going to do it? How much time it will take? More than one member of staff should be involved (so that there's 'cover' when the lead person is away) – who will be the second responsible member of staff? Can this be fitted into your schedule? Are you sure it can be sustained?

Login Details

The login names and password for a University social media account must be known to at least two people within the department and we advise you to contact the Communications Department to let them know who those two people are by emailing socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk. This is to make sure that if you move to a different job or are off sick, that someone else can take over.

Define your goals.

Before jumping into social media for your department, project or office, spend time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tool or tools, create relevant content and understand what is the best way to reach your target audience.

Identify a co-ordinator.

Determine who will be the primary person/persons responsible for updating and monitoring your site. Ensure they have the time to check in on the site at least twice a day. Successful social media sites are frequently updated, enable easy engagement with viewers and adjust in response to timely events and problems. Assign and train a backup for this person. We would advise against using temporary staff or interns to fulfil these functions.

Create a strategy.

Define what you hope to accomplish, with whom you wish to engage, and what content you wish to share first, and then begin exploring social media tools.

Listen.

All social media platforms have their own standards, styles and expectations. By becoming a consumer of social media well before you become a producer, you will learn how these communities work, what content is of most interest, what other similar organisations are talking about etc.

Choose your tool.

After listening, you may find the short, 140-character bursts of Twitter are a good fit for your goals. Or you may have photos, videos and a well-developed community that would be best shared via a Facebook fan page. Do not try to do it all at once – choose a tool that best meets your goals and focus on building a strong presence.

Tone

Provide an informal, human voice of Bangor University to promote and engage with communities and individuals.

Adjust

All social media tools come with easy-to-use tracking tools, so you can see which posts are viewed/shared most frequently and which generate comments. You should then adjust your messages accordingly.

Tell us about it

Let the Communications Team know what you are doing so that we can work together to help expand your reach by sharing developments and information. Email socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk or call 8293.

3. Goals and Objectives

By having a successful social media presence we can:

- Communicate and engage with people
- Monitor and listen to what is being said
- Generate traffic to Bangor University's website (where suitable you can include a link to the University's official website).

4. Content principles

Content on all our official social networking pages should be:

- **Varied** – content can include news, events, video, links to campaigns and website updates.
- **Frequent** – content should be updated/uploaded at least every other day on Facebook and Twitter and at least weekly on other sites. All pages should be monitored at least twice daily.
- **Credible** – although content can be fun it also has to relate to our objectives in terms of raising Bangor's profile and reputation.
- **Clickable** – where possible there should be a link to related content on our official web pages.

5. Good Practice

- Staff should consider intellectual property rights, copyright and ownership of data when using social media.
- Where staff use social media for personal purposes at work this should be done in line with current IT guidelines.
- Exercise caution when interacting with, and responding to, potentially contentious posts on social media sites.
- All current University policies concerning staff and also apply to the use of social media (HR policies, Acceptable Use Policy etc).
- Obtaining a second opinion before posting material is advisable. A second check might well avoid saying or linking to something unwise which could damage your, or the University's reputation.
- Monitor online communications about your college/ department on a regular basis.

- Be transparent. Make it clear that you are Tweeting / Facebooking, etc. in your role as a staff member of Bangor University.
- Be active. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day, and to post fresh content several times a week, reconsider whether you have the time to invest in social media at this time.
- Remember, everything you do online can and will live forever. Don't post anything online you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing on the front page of the newspaper.
- Accept and monitor comments. A social media site without comments isn't very social. Be prepared to accept and respond to comments.
- Understand that not all comments will be positive, and respond to negative comments professionally and by providing any additional information that may help resolve the issue.
- Separate personal from professional. Balancing your professional and personal social media presences can be tricky, particularly if you are an avid user in both arenas.

6. Security and legal considerations

The technical security of social media sites and potential for hacking and vandalism of content is a risk. To avoid this, try to adhere to the following:

- Passwords should be changed every six months
- Never ask the computer to remember passwords for next time or other people using your computer may gain access to the accounts.
- Do not pass the login information on to anyone outside your department or college unless they have been nominated by a Head of College/Department.
- Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with potentially thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share work or study-related information in this way. Staff should also bear in mind that there may be both data protection and copyright issues in uploading photographs, videos and / or comments to social networking sites. For further policy individuals should consult the University's *Data Protection Policy*¹.
- There may be an expectation that photographs taken at a private University event will not appear publicly on the Internet, both from those present and perhaps those not at the event. Staff should be considerate to their friends and / or colleagues in such circumstances and should not post information when they have been asked not to. They should also remove information about another individual if that individual asks them to do so.
- Safeguarding issues must be taken into consideration prior to using images which include under 18's. These should not be used on social media without specific written permission from the parent, guardian or school.
- Offensive or derogatory comments made about other colleagues on the Internet may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offence.

¹ Available from the Governance & Compliance Office web pages: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/governance-and-compliance/dataprotection/documents/Data-Protection-Policy-approved-v7-June-2020.pdf>

7. Language Policy

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When replying to messages and enquiries, either public or private, from other users, it is best to do so in the language chosen by the user.

8. Branding

Overview

In order to maintain a suite of social presences without any confusion as to what's 'official' and what's not, the following guidelines have been developed for University-wide usage.

Consider your avatars, profile, and background images to be extensions of your web presence. If you do not have a visual aesthetic to your web presence, consider social media your opportunity to give yourself a consistent, recognizable look and feel. The most up to date brand guidelines can be found [here](#). These are your social media accounts, so please consider the social "personality" you want your aesthetic to convey.

Here is the recommended approach:

Graphical Representation

When adding graphics in the form of [avatars](#) or background images to these sites you should aim for a striking and identifiable photograph or image as your graphical representation. Consider using a portrait or a photo of your location.

Twitter Guidelines

Avatar

Use an image cropped to 70 pixels x 70 pixels.

Background

Use a textural image cropped to 1600 pixels x 1200 pixels. Avoid busy, repeating backgrounds.

Name

Be as specific and descriptive as possible within the 20-character limit. Use the name of your department, school, or organization. Do not use "Bangor University" alone.

Location

Bangor, Gwynedd, Wales or Wrexham?

Bio

Be as specific and descriptive as possible within the 160-character limit.

Website

Link to your page on bangor.ac.uk

Twitter URL

Matches your account name.

General

- Use hashtags (#) wisely and ideally no more than two per message
- Avoid acronyms unless they are widely recognized (e.g. NHS)
- Use a link shortening service (e.g. bit.ly or goo.gl)
- Try not to use all 140 characters as it will allow others to retweet your message with comments of their own
- Avoid capital letters unless you want to appear as if you're SHOUTING

Facebook Guidelines

Profile Picture

Use an image cropped to 200 pixels wide (no height constraint). Avoid using words or solid colours as they degrade when rendered by Facebook.

Vanity URL

This can never be changed, so choose carefully. Consider establishing a consistent naming convention, for example: facebook.com/BangorUniversity or facebook.com/Bangor-University-Alumni-Prifysgol-Bangor

Page name

No character limit.

Page Type

Under "Official Page," select "Local Business" and then "Education."

Timeline Cover Photo

The first thing visitors to your [timeline](#) see, the cover photo should be engaging, easy to read, and sized 851 x 315 pixels. Choose a pre-formatted image from our Bangor University-themed timeline photos.

Examples

Here are a few examples of well-branded social media accounts at Bangor University:

Bangor University [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Prifysgol Bangor [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Bangor University Press Office [Twitter](#)

Swyddfa'r Wasg Prifysgol Bangor [Twitter](#)

Please feel free to email socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk or call 8293 for further advice.

9. **Training**

The University's Communications Team is able to provide brief advice and policy sessions for groups wishing to establish or contribute in social media activities. Please contact socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk for more information.

Contact Details

Email: socialmedia@bangor.ac.uk