

16.9. Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Middlesex University Dubai (referred to as MDX Dubai) is a diverse and forward-thinking university with ambitious plans; this involves embracing new technology and improving the way that we communicate to our students, staff and the communities that we work with.

'Social Media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. Social Media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement. The widespread availability of social media means it is important to understand how to use it effectively and sensibly, both in the workplace and during personal use.

One aim of the strategic plan is to 'build and protect our reputation'; social media plays a key role in the achievement of this aim. It is recognized that staff and students not only use social media as part of their role at MDX Dubai but that it is also used to connect with people/organisations outside of the workplace, for personal and for professional reasons.

However, the practical application of social media is continually developing, and this brings with it a number of potential issues to consider, both as individuals and employees of the University. There are also a number of risks associated with the use of social media which could ultimately impact the University's reputation if misused by staff, students or third parties. The internet is a global medium and posts can be difficult or impossible to retract once made. MDX Dubai expects a respectful and professional use of social media.

2. Purpose

This policy is aimed at giving staff and students who use social media the appropriate guidance on the acceptable use of social media in relation to the workplace.

This policy explains:

- The acceptable use of social media in the workplace, at home and in your personal time
- How you can best protect the university and its community through your use of social media
- The potential outcomes of unacceptable use of social media

The aims of this policy are to inform staff and students on how they can best protect the University and its community through their use of social media and help staff and students 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, SMS text messaging etc.

With MDX Dubai's own social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram, MDX Dubai is embracing its commitment to reaching a wide community. While this technology creates the opportunity to share comments and opinions with a much larger audience, care needs to be exercised when expressing views.

We encourage participation in social media and expect the personal and professional use of social media by staff and students to reflect the trust held in them as representatives of MDX Dubai. Although staff and students are not authorised to blog, tweet, or post information on behalf of Middlesex University Dubai (unless that is their official role in MDX Dubai), their voices on social media can still help tell the MDX Dubai story in a positive manner.

3. Acceptable Use of Social Media

Use of social media at work and in your own time:

- Staff are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites from MDX Dubai's computers or devices.
- The University understands that employees may also wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops and palm-top and hand-held devices, to access social media websites while they are at work.
- Employees should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites and should ensure that social media use does not interfere with their duties except where it is a recognised part of their role. As a guide, social media should only be used for personal purposes whilst at work during the lunch break.
- The lines between public and private can become blurred when using social media, therefore, you must assume that everything you write is permanent and can be viewed by anyone at any time and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues, the university and its customers, partners and suppliers.
- Staff and students must be mindful of how posts on personal accounts and pages reflect on MDX Dubai, whether directly or indirectly, particularly when identified as an MDX Dubai staff member or student. E.g. by joining a staff-only Facebook group, or student-only Facebook group, appearing in photographs or videos at the workplace, mentioning MDX Dubai in your profile, etc., and/or if the position at MDX Dubai is publicly known (i.e. a member of senior management or a director).

Use of social media for work purposes

- Proposals to use any social media applications as part of a role at MDX Dubai must be approved by the relevant Head of Service or Director. Staff should always be aware that, while contributing to the organisation's social media activities, they are representing MDX Dubai.
- The following terms should be adhered to at all times, including during periods of leave.

- Staff should ensure that any published content is:
 - respectful
 - purposeful and a benefit to MDX Dubai
 - in-line with departmental and/or brand guidelines and/or management instructions
 - not considered unacceptable in line with guidelines under ‘unacceptable use of social media’ (see below)
 - in line with copyright guidelines

All MDX Dubai maintained social media accounts remain the property of MDX Dubai, and on no account should the contents thereof be copied or downloaded without the permission of the Head of Service or Director responsible for the department’s social media activities.

4. Unacceptable Use of Social Media for Work and Personal Purposes

Staff and students of MDX Dubai are prohibited from using social media to share sensitive information about MDX Dubai, relating to:

- Crisis situations
- Financial information
- Intellectual property
- Trade secrets
- Management changes
- Lawsuits
- Shareholder issues
- Layoffs
- Company and third party confidential/proprietary information
- Contractual arrangements with partners or suppliers

In cases where confidential, prohibited, or otherwise harmful information or photographs have been posted to a social media site, re-sharing or publishing such information by staff and students will also constitute a violation of this policy.

Staff and students must not create a social media page with MDX Dubai’s logo or name placed in a way that suggests to readers that MDX Dubai is sponsoring or endorsing the page or any of the information contained on it. This also applies to pages created for the purpose of sharing MDX Dubai-related content in an unofficial/unendorsed manner.

Any communications that employees make in a professional or personal capacity, within or outside of work time, through social media **MUST NOT**:

- breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by the University or;
 - discussing the university’s internal workings (such as financial information,

- management changes, crisis situations, agreements with partner institutions/customers, future business plans, shareholder issues etc.) or;
 - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or partner contact) or organisation (such as a partner institution) or sharing pictures or videos without their consent; or
- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - post or promote offensive or derogatory comments or images relating to gender, age, race, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, marital status, disability etc. or;
 - using social media to bully, harass or intimidate another individual (e.g. such as university staff or student); or
 - post or promote images and content that are discriminatory or offensive or share links to such content, or;
 - post or promote content intended to incite violence or hatred
 - post or promote content on divisive issues such as religion, politics or other sensitive topics
- bring the university into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising or arguing with students, staff, faculty, customers, colleagues, partners or competitors or;
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content or;
 - compromise the university’s brand and reputation or;
 - use the university to endorse or promote any product, opinion or political cause
- breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else’s images or written content without permission; or
 - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something
 - breach others’ privacy through sharing or promoting private information, images or other content
 - fraudulently assume the identity of another
- breach the terms of service of the social network and the applicable laws of the UAE

Middlesex University Dubai believes that, when taking part in social media, you should follow the University’s Code of Conduct.

Staff should ensure that when expressing a belief or opinion through the use of social media, where their identity is connected to the University, it is made clear that it is their belief or opinion and does not reflect the belief or opinions of MDX Dubai.

5. Guidelines for Using Online Sessions – Classroom Etiquettes

Virtual meetings and online teaching have become an integral part of higher education around the world. Certain virtual meeting etiquette needs to be followed. Netiquette is essentially rules and norms for interacting with others on the internet in a considerate, respectful way. All staff and students are expected to adhere to the same standards of behaviour online that they follow in real life.

The basic rules:

- Use your own official/University email address to log into any online discussion or classroom. Use of personal email addresses will not be allowed.
- Dedicate appropriate time to learning, comparable to a normal day on campus. When you are not physically in class, all students are expected to connect to the class at the scheduled time and when not connected it is considered as a regular class absence. Once connected, students are expected to be present for the full class session, as they would in a regular on-campus class.
- Maintain discipline and decorum while in an online session, as you would in a regular, physical classroom. Be respectful to others. Always use the tutor's proper title: Prof, Dr, Mr or Ms.
- Lecture recordings are provided to supplement and enhance the student experience, and should not be seen as an alternative to attending lectures where face to face or virtual attendance is a requirement of the programme or module.
- It is advisable that during online class sessions conducted via MS Team, GoToMeetings or Zoom, both faculty and students have their cameras functional for the duration of the class period. Faculty may request students to have their cameras on for the purpose of attendance. Students are urged to have their cameras on particularly during seminars, workshops and presentations.
- Students must refrain from behaviour that may be perceived as inappropriate, offensive, and unfair and must treat all other learners, faculty, staff, and administrators with respect at all times.
- Refrain from personal abuse - do not use inappropriate (violent, aggressive, abusive, threatening, defamatory or offensive) language.
- Avoid abusive comments relating to an individual's gender, age, race, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, marital status, disability etc.
- Only post on the **classroom discussion board** if permitted by the tutor and if the conversation is relevant to others in the class. Students found posting unwanted / offensive comments on the chat will be blocked from the online class.
- All online submissions must be written clearly and concisely. Correct spelling, grammatical construction and sentence structure are expected in every other writing activity associated with academic engagement.
- Refrain from using shortcuts, acronyms, slangs and emoticons in your chats.
- Students should refrain from using bold upper-case letters, this can be interpreted as yelling at somebody.

- Do not use copyrighted material without giving reference to it.
- Do not intentionally provide false information, forge, alter, or falsify documents.
- Use of the any trademark or logo is prohibited without written consent.

The Student Conduct and Discipline rules extend to alleged misconduct by a student occurring on or off university premises (including via social media). All institutional policies apply online just as they would offline (including Academic Integrity and Misconduct policy).

6. Recording of Lectures and Other Learning Activities

There is an increasing demand for the recording of lectures and other teaching and learning activities. This demand is being driven by both students and staff, introducing different modes of delivery to support their curriculum. Hence, it is possible that some of the sessions may be recorded at the discretion of your tutor. You will be informed about this by the staff member leading the session, prior to the start of the session.

The University operates an opt-in model for lecture recording where the decision to make a recording lies with the individual member of staff. It is accepted by the University that not all activities are suitable for recording. Lecture recordings are provided to supplement and enhance the student experience, and should not be seen as an alternative to attending online or face-to-face lectures. Use of such recordings should only be for the students' personal use concerning their studies. Any unauthorised distribution of such recordings, including sharing and posting on social media, will be considered a breach of the university computer usage policy and will be subject to disciplinary action.

As per section C16 of Middlesex University Regulations unauthorised audio recording, video recording or photography of lectures, or other forms of learning activities by **students**, is prohibited.

Limited recording by students may be permitted under exceptional circumstances only (for example, for an individual student as a "reasonable adjustment", within the meaning of the UK's Equalities Act), upon explicit permission provided by the tutor and, where appropriate, by everyone else involved. Permission for recording does not imply permission for publication (e.g. on Facebook, YouTube, or other Social Media), or distribution to others. Unauthorised recording of such activities violates the privacy of persons involved, may infringe on copyrights and intellectual property rights of others and can be intrusive and disruptive in a learning environment. In all cases, violation of this regulation will be managed under the student disciplinary procedures.

In addition to a violation of University Regulations, unauthorised recordings may expose students to other unintended consequences, as per UAE law. The United Arab Emirates has several laws (for example, Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combatting Cybercrimes and its

amendment by the Federal Law No. 12 of 2016) for the protection of privacy and reputation and defamation. Some of the acts that could amount to a criminal offence are:

- possessing on an electronic device a photo taken without the subject's consent
- posting other people's pictures or videos online or on social media (including WhatsApp) without their consent
- tagging a person without their consent
- threatening or insulting people online
- spreading information via social media, that is not verified by the official sources
- gossiping about people or maligning them.

Further guidance is available within the University Regulations and via the Quality Office (qualityoffice@mdx.ac.ae).

7. Disciplinary Action Over Social Media Use

Any content that is published which has the potential to cause damage to the University's reputation or its employees and/or expose you and the university to civil or criminal liability) may lead to disciplinary action. Click [here](#) for more details.

By working for or representing MDX Dubai, staff and students agree to uphold a commitment to do what is right and to follow the Middlesex University Regulations:
<https://www.mdx.ac.ae/about-us/university-regulations>

Staff and students will be asked to remove this content where it has reasonable belief that it is in breach of these terms. This will be investigated and could lead to a finding of misconduct or dismissal for gross misconduct in accordance with the university's Disciplinary Procedure.

For non-employees or workers e.g. contractor, volunteer or other, a breach of this policy may be deemed a breach of contractual terms, a similar process to the disciplinary procedure may be followed, which may result in their contract being terminated.

For detailed guidance and any questions about what information is appropriate to post or share, talk to Middlesex University Dubai Corporate Marketing.