

# ATU Galway Clubs & Societies

## Social Media Guidelines

### Guidelines for Social Media Content:

Social Media is changing the way we work, offering an on-demand model to interact with the student population. We believe this kind of interaction can help you to engage meaningfully with your membership. However, as a general rule, all users of social media should assume that anything posted online should be considered as both public and permanent irrespective of what privacy settings that they feel they have imposed on their various social media accounts.

In that light, all users should be conscious of that the fact that the public, the University (its staff and media) as well as other interested parties may become aware all sorts of social media content with relative ease. With that in mind, it is important that inappropriate use of social media could result in disciplinary action being taken by the University and / or damage to their reputation which could potentially have a negative impact on future career prospects. The University reserves the right to act on any information received or discovered online in the event that it believes that a student is in breach of University rules and regulations.

These are the official guidelines for anyone using social media on behalf of MU Clubs & Societies. If you are a student creating or contributing to blogs, social networks, website content, or any other kind of social media on behalf of a Club or Society, these guidelines are for you. They will evolve as new social networking tools emerge, so check back regularly to keep up to date.

Broadly speaking, care should be taken to ensure that any images or content will not cause undue offence to the University population, or to a specific grouping within the University. Attention is hereby drawn to the national legislation in the area, including inter alia the Equal Status Act (2000), the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989). Equally, it is also the policy of the University to protect freedom of expression and intellectual enquiry and to ensure that they are exercised in such a way as they do not interfere with the rights of others, or breach the laws of the state.

Users should at **all times** use social media sites and communications in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of Maynooth University and of others. In particular, users are encouraged not to respond to, repost or comment upon material that could reasonably be deemed bullying, threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory or slanderous towards any individual or entity. Remove this material where possible and report where necessary.

By applying the following '3 Rules of Engagement' you will help ensure that your social media

engagements are considered and of value to you, your Club or Society and the ATU Galway student population as a whole. If you are ever hesitant or unsure about something you are posting on your online social channels, please contact the Clubs & Societies office.

## The '3 Rules of Engagement' – Represent, Respect and Reflect

### **Rule One: Represent.**

*Remember, if you are online, you are on the record—everything on the Internet is public and searchable. And what you write is ultimately your responsibility. Never forget that your Club or Society represents the interests of your members. Represent yourself and them faithfully.*

#### **Be Transparent:**

What you say on social media directly reflects on you as an individual and ATU Galway as an organisation.

#### **Add Value:**

Make sure your posts really add to the conversation. In general; you do not post because you want to say something, you post because you have something to say.

#### **Do not forget the day job:**

You were elected to represent all your members, not just those on social media. Activity on Clubs or Societies social media channels should complement and/or support your role.

### **Rule Two: Respect.**

*Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. Please represent your Club or Society, and your student members, ethically and with integrity. Respect is earned.*

#### **Play Nice:**

Be responsible no trolling, troll baiting or flaming anybody. Be careful when discussing issues where emotions run high (eg. Politics or Religion). Show respect for differing views and others opinions.

#### **Think Before you Post:**

There's really no such thing as 'delete' on the Internet, so please- think before you post. If in doubt, get a second pair of eyes to look over what you plan to post. 'Step Away' from a particular post/response for a little while if you are not sure of how it will be received.

#### **Respect your Audience:**

MU Clubs and Societies membership encompasses people from many backgrounds and ethnicities. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in, or promote, any

conduct that would not be acceptable in MU's community. If in doubt, check with Clubs and Societies Office.

### **Rule Three: Reflect.**

*Social media works best when there are real people, with genuine intentions and quality content, behind every profile, tweet and tag. Just by identifying yourself as a Club or Society member, you are creating perceptions about your experience and about Maynooth. Do us all proud.*

### **Be Accurate:**

Any messages that act as the 'voice' of your Club or Society must be accurate. Posting misleading or inaccurate information reflects badly on everyone. Check in with other members of your committee before committing to any position or statement.

### **Do Not Feed The Trolls:**

Fight the urge to immediately respond to an offensive or negative post. There's no winner in that game. Instead, invite the poster to email you directly or contact MU Clubs & Societies to set-up a meeting.

### **If you Mess up:**

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If it's a real doozy please contact the Clubs & Societies Office as soon as possible so we can work to minimise the damage.

### **Infringement:**

Infringement of these guidelines may be considered under the University disciplinary code.

### **Complaints Procedure:**

Complaints and breaches of good standards in this area may be considered under the Code of Discipline for Students within the General Rules of the University. It is open to any staff or student member of the University to report in writing any alleged breach of the Code of Discipline to the Chairman of the Committee of Discipline. The latest version of any policy can be found in the Policies section of the University website.

### **Contact:**

If you have any questions about this policy please contact the Clubs and Societies Office.