



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Social Media Policy Version 1.0

Revision History:

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Date of next review:	06 October 2028
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Summary of Changes	New Policy
Changes Marked	N/A

Consultation History:

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Consultation Date	November 2024 – June 2025
Names of Parties in Consultation	Social Media Working Group Social Media Team Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee of Academic Council ATU Legal Advisor UPT Staff Unions
Summary of Changes	New ATU Policy

Approval:

This document requires the following approvals:

Version:	1.0
Approved By:	Approving Authority
Date:	06 October 2025

Quality Assurance:

Date Approved	06 October 2025
Date Policy to take effect:	06 October 2025
Date Policy to be reviewed:	06 October 2028
Written by:	Marketing Officer, Campaigns and Creative, and Social Media Working Group
Approved by:	Governing Body University Planning Team
Approving Authority	Governing Body
Head of Function responsible	VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Reference Documents:	N/a

Document Location:

Website – Policies and Procedures	Yes
Website – Staff Hub	Yes
Website – Student Hub	No
Other: - Internal Use Only	No

This Policy was approved by the Approving Authority on **06 October 2025**. It shall be reviewed at least every three years and, as necessary, amended by the University or at or at such time as is deemed necessary or if there has been a material change to any legislation or national guidelines informing this policy area.

Note: Prior to publication and dissemination of policies and procedures, documents must be reviewed for accessibility as part the University's commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Further advice on accessibility can be obtained from the EDI Team.

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1. Overview/ Introduction

ATU welcomes the benefits and opportunities that social media offers staff, students and stakeholders, and the positive platform it provides for learning, promotion, discovery and engagement.

2. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on what ATU deems to be acceptable use of social media, while preserving the values of academic freedom and the individual's right to freedom of speech.

3. Definitions

In the context of this policy, "Social Media" refers to online platforms designed for sharing information publicly or semi-publicly. It includes but is not limited to Facebook, X, Bluesky, LinkedIn, Tiktok, Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram.

It also extends to the management and moderation of online communications on internal and external forums, wikis, blogs, and technologies yet to become available.

4. Scope

This policy applies to ATU staff, students and representatives, including university contractors, researchers, visitors and/or any other parties who are granted access to the university's IT resources and/or social media sites (hereafter referred to as "users").

It covers users engaging with social media in both a professional and personal capacity, in or out of normal working hours, if that engagement is connected to the university.

ATU acknowledges the right to freedom of expression and Academic Freedom under the Technological Universities Act 2018. Nothing in the policy is intended to interfere with freedom of expression nor academic freedom.

This policy should be considered alongside the contents of ATU's Social Media Guidelines.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in the formulation and implementation of this policy are as follows:

Governing Body:

- to review and approve the policy on a periodic basis.

University Planning Team:

- to review and approve the policy on a periodic basis.

Marketing Function:

- to develop resources to support colleagues in the use of social media.
- to maintain records of ATU-related accounts.
- to manage key ATU social media accounts with the Communications function.

Communications Function:

- to manage key ATU social media accounts with the Marketing function.

Managers:

- to ensure that staff members are aware of the policy and to liaise with staff in the event of any breach of policy.

Staff/Students/Representatives:

- to report suspected breaches of policy to the administrator of the social media account and/or their Line Manager.

6. Policy Statement

Use of Social Media

- Users must at all times use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard for the rights and reputation of individuals and the university.
- Users should not use social media so as to contravene or breach the laws of Ireland.
- Users should not use social media in a way that contravenes or breaches ATU policies e.g. ATU Acceptable Usage Policy. A list of ATU policies which are of particular relevance to this area is set out in Appendix A.
- Users should be respectful of the opinions and views of others.
- In the event of an ATU-related Critical Incident which may result in miscommunication, serious illness, injury or fatalities, users must not post personal or sensitive data, including images and videos, on social media.

Personal Vs Professional Profiles

- On personal accounts, if users state that they are associated with ATU, they should clearly identify their views as their own by including a statement such as “Views are my own” in their profile.
- If users are using social media for professional purposes, they should be mindful that

they are representing the university.

- Users must not use the ATU name or brand identity to promote their own commercial objectives or activities, or endorse their activity, without prior consent.

Individual Responsibility

- Users should become familiar with the terms of service, privacy settings, best practice guidelines and data storage locations of networks and sites they participate in and should regularly review and update their privacy settings.
- Users should remember that they are personally accountable for all comments that they make and content that they post online.
- Users should be familiar with the terms of ATU's Acceptable Usage Policy which covers the use of ATU IT Resources, Internet Facilities, Email, and social media.

Unacceptable Use

- Users must not post content that could be deemed to be discriminatory, threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile towards any individual or entity, or content that is sexually explicit.
- Users must not post content that is likely to create panic, anxiety or incitement to hatred.
- Users must not share confidential, personal or commercially sensitive information.
- Users must not create content which would identify a third party (e.g. commentary, photographs, video content) without the express consent of the third party concerned. For content featuring under-18s, Parental Consent is required. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Laws

- Users should ensure that copyright and fair use laws are respected. This includes using images from the Internet. It is important to credit content from a third party. Users should not post any proprietary content on social media channels without the express consent of the recorders/owner.

Management of ATU Social Media Accounts

- All new ATU social media accounts must be registered by the user with the ATU Marketing Office by submission of an ATU Social Media New Account Registration Form (available at www.atu.ie/about/brand/atu-social-media). Upon opening the account, the user should inform the Marketing Office of the type of account, the name of the account, the target audience, and the address of the account. The user should also nominate a main point of contact and a backup point of contact for the account.
- Users must follow best practice when naming the account, using brand assets and imagery, and setting passwords for the account. See ATU Social Media Guidelines (available at www.atu.ie/about/brand/atu-social-media) for details.
- Users must ensure that responses on behalf of the university reflect the official policies and ethos of the university, whether the response is issued through a public post/comment or by Direct Message.
- Users must monitor their social media account(s) regularly.
- The user of the social media account is responsible for the deactivation of the account and must inform the Marketing Office prior to the deletion of the account.

Moderation Policy

- ATU reserves the right to moderate the university's central Social Media channels and remove content it believes to be inappropriate (such as commercial solicitations), or content which contravenes ATU's Social Media Policy.

Privacy

- Any email addresses, names, or contact information received through ATU social media platforms will not be shared or sold to anyone, unless required by law enforcement investigation.

Policy Violations

- Users are encouraged to be vigilant and to report suspected policy violations in the first instance to the administrator of the social media account and/or the platform itself.
- Users may also report suspected policy violations to ATU Line Management who will initiate the appropriate action. This could be informal or formal, using existing grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Any breach of this policy could result in disciplinary action in accordance with the processes and procedures set out in the relevant disciplinary policy.
- In the case of a Critical Incident, as defined in the ATU Critical Incident Plan, ATU reserves the right to ban users or temporarily disable the social media platform if appropriate.
- Serious or persistent cases of policy violation will be reported by ATU directly to An Garda Síochána.

7. Policy Compliance/ Monitoring and Review

This policy shall be reviewed and, as necessary, amended, every three years or at intervals as may be deemed necessary, including in particular where there has been a material change to any legislation or national guidelines informing this policy area.

8. Appendix A, B – Supporting Documents

Appendix A - List of University policies particularly relevant to Social Media use

- ATU Acceptable Usage Policy
- ATU Disciplinary Policy
- ATU Student Code of Conduct
- ATU Staff Code of Conduct
- ATU Critical Incident Plan

Appendix B - Working Group Consultation and Membership

Consultation Dates:

- 22nd November 2024 (Teams)
- 6th December 2024 (Teams)
- 20th January 2025 (Email)

Membership:

ATU Function	Representative	Campus
Marketing	Karen Smyth, Marketing Officer, Campaigns and Creative	Galway
Communications	Shannon Duggan, Digital Communications Officer	Donegal
Academic	Cait Noone, Head of School, Galway International Hotel School	Galway
IT/Computing Services	Liam McIntyre, IT Manager (ATU Donegal) / Cyber Security Project Manager (ATU)	Donegal
Health and Safety	Mark Dunne, Health & Safety Manager	Galway
Students Unions	Julia Bocianowska, Students Union President	Sligo
HR	Rod Toner, Human Resources Manager	Sligo