



RGU SPORTS CLUBS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Overview

As an RGU Sports Club and RGU Sports Club member, we encourage you to engage, collaborate and innovate, using the wealth of social media opportunities that are available to you. However, and wherever you do this, we want you to be aware of your actions and engagements - their potential impact on both yourself and the university you represent.

2. Personal Participation in Social Media

2.1 Personal Responsibility

Clubs are constituted to RGU Union and are under The Robert Gordon University banner and as such you have a responsibility not to bring either organisation into disrepute. Maintaining the reputation of the University, its projects, services and clubs plays a crucial part in ensuring the continuing success of the organisation.

Comments, particularly those with a strongly negative or unprofessional tone, can have serious unintended consequences. It is therefore important to remember that what you say about your Club, even in personal social media profiles, can reflect upon the University. It is also important to remember that when responding in the comment sections of posts, whether that be on your own posts or other's posts, that you maintain a kind tone; how you act may be taken as a reflection on your club, and the University.

Please exercise discretion over whether or not the space you are posting to (whether your own or as a guest post on another person or organisation's blog or social media) is an appropriate space for discussion of Club-related matters. If in doubt, you can always ask the President of Sport and Physical Activity for advice. Please do not comment about University matters in any social media space which could be construed as offensive or illegal.

2.2 Disclaimer

If you are commenting on a University related matter, please remember that you are voicing your own personal opinion and ensure that (where possible) you include a statement which indicates that:

"The views expressed here are the author's own and do not represent the views of The Robert Gordon University or RGU Union"

If you post on a fairly regular basis about the University, University projects and services, or particular areas of interest that reflect on your Club at the University, consider adding the disclaimer to a fixed element on your platform, for instance in the bio.

2.3 What Material Can be Posted



It is usually appropriate to mention and refer your readers to published or public material. Adding your own comments and discussion of this type of public information is acceptable but you should always be respectful in tone, and it should be clear that your views are your own.

You must not post any commercially confidential information, this may include:

- Indications of forthcoming developments or funding bids
- Data or software code
- Information about colleagues or personnel matters
- Unresolved grievances
- Non-public or not-yet-approved documents or minutes, news or information.

If you are in any doubt about whether it is appropriate to post a comment on/about a specific topic, please seek clarification from the President of Sport and Physical Activity.

Your personal social media profile should not be the first point of publication for any official reports or announcements. Official materials should always appear first on an official RGU Union space - usually the Union website, the Club website or the appropriate official social media channel.

If you are sharing links to already-public works like publications, websites, annual reports, project blogs etc, please ensure that you credit them appropriately.

If you are in any way unsure about whether an item is public or publishable, please seek advice from the President of Sport and Physical Activity before you post or comment.

2.4 Comments about The University on Club Social Media

It is up to you if/how you moderate comments on your own website or social media channels. However, we suggest that you agree a mechanism for handling any questions or notable comments about the University or the University's projects or services, with the President of Sport and Physical Activity.

Notable comments might include those that are:

- Excessively critical in tone
- Queries or comments that may require a support response or indicate an issue (e.g. unexpected downtime, broken links, bugs) with a service or project.
- Very positive or supportive in tone and would benefit a wider audience such as your colleagues or project/service funders. These comments may also help inform the planning of outreach or promotional activities.

Where these comments occur (particularly queries and reports of bugs or downtime) it may be appropriate to reply privately or publicly with the Club email account. It may also be appropriate to indicate that the relevant contact point should be the first point of call for questions or urgent support issues.

2.5 Personal Comments Made on Other Social Media Channels



If you are commenting on other projects, services, or personal/professional channels or profiles in a personal capacity please be aware of how your comments may reflect upon the University, RGU:Union, RGU Sports Clubs, or the Sports Club with which you are associated.

Whilst an open discussion of ideas is encouraged, you should also remember that your personal identity might well be associated with your professional role in many social media contexts.

As with posting to your own social media pages:

- You must not post any commercially confidential information
- You should refer any notable posts or queries to the Club or President of Sport and Physical activity.

2.6 Legal Considerations

Check the Terms & Conditions and/or Usage Policy of any service to which you subscribe for your own use and for that of your Club.

Be mindful of your responsibilities under Data Protection legislation - do not disclose other people's personal information without prior permission. Be aware that any posts you make in a professional capacity (even private posts) are subject to data protection and freedom of information and may need to be disclosed.

3 Building an Official Page/Profile

3.1 Introduction

Club social media should showcase club activity including, but not limited to, performance, recreational activity, fundraising events and club news and opportunities.

3.2 Set-up

Approval

- Consult with the President of Sport and Physical Activity and obtain their approval for any new social media profile.

Contact

- Appoint a member of the Club to be the main contact point for your profile. This will normally be the Club President, alongside a social media officer. These individuals will also be responsible for the confidential storing of log-in details.
- This person/s will be responsible for maintaining a common editorial line and regularly moderating comments.

Branding and Identity

- Use RGU Sports Club logos and colours.

- Ensure that users are aware that your profile is hosted by a third party and not directly by the University. It is important to ensure the social media identity relates back to the appropriate club or team.
- Be transparent about who is contributing to your social media profile, including real names and committee roles whenever possible. If several people are, it may be appropriate to list all of those involved.
- Ensure that any associated user profiles feature:
 - o The name and role of the contributor
 - o Suitable images
 - o Links to the Club's pages

3.3 Posting

Tone and Authenticity

- Be appropriate and professional in presentation and tone.
- Use any necessary disclaimers (for example, if your page does not necessarily represent the views of all Club Members).
 - Remember to show the best side of the club, some behaviour may not be deemed appropriate to publicly share as a representation of club activity. For example, a club "night out" post explaining the plan for the night and if there may be a theme would be acceptable, however following that post with another containing images of questionable behaviour, or things that may be considered rude or offensive would not be acceptable as it could damage the club's reputation. That, in turn, could reflect poorly on the University.

Frequency

- By setting up a social media profile you are committing to maintain it by publishing and updating regularly
- If a social media profile is not being updated regularly, the best course of action may be to:
 - o Formally cease updating it and publish a final post that indicates it will no longer be active and updated.
 - o Take a copy of your posts for archiving and, in some cases, subsequently remove the profile.

3.4 Accessibility

When communicating via social media networks, we need to be prepared to offer a similar level of service to members of our audiences who find these technologies inaccessible, when they request it.

This might include:

- Summarising online dialogue via email and facilitating contributions.
- Providing subtitles or transcripts to video or audio footage.
- Providing alternative text for images.

3.5 Comments

When you have a new comment on your blog you should work through the Comment Moderation Flow Chart (Appendix A) which will help you decide the best action to take. If any comment falls outside this guidance please raise this with the President of Sport and Physical Activity.

- Have a mechanism for users to report inappropriate or spam comments.
- Publish your takedown policy.
- If available, comment moderation should be used regularly to limit the potential for spam or abuse.
- If moderation is not available (e.g. Twitter, now X) then you should monitor and 'garden' (remove spam, respond as needed) regularly.
- Ensure there is a secondary contact, so comments can be moderated or gardened when the primary contact is unavailable.
- Any comments received should be published (or removed/reported as spam) as soon as possible. You may also want to respond to what has been said, in which case you should always respond in a professional and measured tone that reflects the University's communications practice. Remember that you are representing the University in your response.

3.6 Freedom of Information Requests

Any recorded request for information is a freedom of information (FOI) request. Some enquirers may use social media to submit a request, for example, they might use X, the comments section of a social media post, or by private message (DM's) like on Instagram..

If your social media page receives a request for information, remember:

- Contact the President of Sport and Physical Activity immediately, let them know if you want to refuse any part of the request, are unsure about any aspect of the request, or if it does not relate to your area of work.
- You have a maximum of 20 working days to answer the request.
- If the request concerns your area of work and the information can be released, avoid complications by following the procedures.

3.7 Exit Strategy

If the service (club/team) that the social media page represents ceases to operate, it is important that this is clear. Change headlining information to clearly reflect that the club no longer operates, and direct people to an alternative contact.

Disable comments if possible. If you cannot disable comments, make sure you continue to keep an eye on the page or notify the Sports Union so they may keep an eye out - disused social media pages can become breeding grounds for spam and 'troll' comments.

Appendix – Dealing with Complaints Flowchart

