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Summary of policy

The Open University Student Computing Policy sets out the expected ways in which you, as a student, will use Open University computing services in your studies. This policy ensures you have clear information about how you should and should not use Open University computing services as part of your studies and in your interaction with The Open University, its staff and your fellow students. It includes policy on security, working safely online, using social media appropriately, communicating, and standards of behaviour. You should read and familiarise yourself with the policy and its appendices before beginning your studies.

You should use this document to find out how you will need to use a computer during your studies at the Open University, where you can get help with computing, and to understand your responsibilities when using a computer and communicating online. This document also explains what The Open University will do if you breach this policy.

Support is available from the University to deal with any technical problems with tools and systems we provide for study. Appendices are included on using computers and the internet safely and appropriately.

Students can use their Open University computing account to participate in online activities and to communicate with the University and other people. Many students also choose to use social media in connection with their studies. They must therefore follow the Student Computing Policy regarding protection of Open University computer systems and standards of behaviour.

Failure to comply with the Open University Student Computing Policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Introduction

Students need to use computers for many aspects of their Open University study. With the exception of students in some secure environments, for whom alternative provision is made, all students need to have access to a computer and the internet, and should know how to use them. This policy explains how you will need to use a computer during your studies, where you can get help with computing, and what your responsibilities are when using a computer and communicating online

Summary of significant changes since last version

The main changes from the previous version of this policy (dated October 2018) are:

- a) Policy put into new template
- b) Update of Social Media Policy (Appendix 3)
- c) Expansion of policy wording to improve clarity of meaning
- d) Addition of standard paragraphs around contact points for queries

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces the previous version of the Student Computing Policy [dated October 2018].

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Scope

What this document covers

This policy applies to anyone who has permission to sign in to Open University websites and systems, who is not considered to be staff.

The Student Social Media Policy applies to a range of users as defined in the policy document provided in Appendix 3.

What this document does not cover

This policy does not apply to people who do not have Open University sign-in credentials, or Open University staff.

Related Documentation

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this document:

- [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#)
- [Code of Practice for Student Assessment](#)
- [Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Student Privacy Notice](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- [Prevent \(Counter-Terrorism\) Duty](#)

Additional support

- [Open University Computing Guide](#)
- [Computing help](#)
- [Being digital: skills for life online](#) (Open University Library)
- [Digital literacy: succeeding in a digital world](#) (OpenLearn free course)
- [Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [How to report bullying and harassment on social media](#) (via [Dignity and Respect Policy](#))
- [A template for community guidelines](#) (for student group administrators)

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The Open University Student Charter Principles

This policy aligns with the following [Open University Student Charter](#) Principles:

- Principle 1: We treat each other with dignity and respect
- Principle 2: We aim to inspire and enable learning
- Principle 3: We share the responsibility of learning

Policy

1. Using a computer for your studies

1.1 What you will need a computer for

You will need a computer and reliable internet access throughout your Open University studies to:

- log in and access your personal information
- receive and send messages
- access help and guidance
- access module materials
- produce module work and make notes
- store and organise documents
- enrol or register for study
- book events e.g. tutorials or a residential school
- submit and collect assignment and module results
- search for information and access the Open University library
- complete and submit assessment tasks
- stay in touch with your tutor and other Open University staff
- experience additional multimedia and communications elements of your modules
- share ideas with fellow students.

1.2 Computing requirements for modules

You should check the 'Computing Requirements' section of the module description on the online prospectus for any requirements of the modules that you intend to study. Computing requirements may vary from module to module and, to reflect developments in technology and to keep our modules and teaching up to date and relevant, they may change during your studies with The Open University.

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2. Support for computing

- 2.1 Once you have registered with us, you will have access to help and advice from a dedicated computing helpdesk, the [Open University Computing Guide](#), the [HelpCentre](#) and the Library.
 - 2.2 If you have a disability and need help or information about using a computer, go to the [HelpCentre](#).
 - 2.3 There is also an accessibility guide to using a computer for study in the [Open University Computing Guide](#)
-

3. Your Open University computing account

3.1 Your Open University Computer Username (OUCU) and password

- 3.1.1 Our computing resources are provided for educational, training and research purposes. You must not use them for any business or significant personal purposes. This includes any systems that are personalised, for example Office 365 (including email and storage).
- 3.1.2 The University will provide you with a secure Open University computing account when you register as a student. This means you will be given an Open University Computer Username (OUCU) and password, which will enable you to access university systems, personalised resources and facilities such as the HelpCentre. You can set a different username if you wish but it must remain a true representation of your real name so your tutor can identify you, and to avoid accidentally causing any offence.
- 3.1.3 Your password must be in line with accepted good practice. Visit Safe and secure computing in the [HelpCentre](#) for advice on suitable passwords. We have an [advocate scheme](#) if you require others to assist with your study.

3.2 Keeping your account secure

- 3.2.1 It is your responsibility to keep your account secure and confidential. You are responsible for all activities carried out under your username. You must not give your password to anyone else or store it on another computer system. While you are logged into our system, you should not leave that computer unattended unless you can be sure that nobody else can use it while you are away, for example, you have a password-protected screen saver or you can lock the door behind you.
- 3.2.2 If you think the safety of your Open University computing account has been compromised, for example if somebody else knows your password, you must notify the University Computing Helpdesk by [completing this form](#) or calling +44 (0)1908 653972. If you do not keep your account secure, you will be liable for any transactions relating to your registration and study, even if your password is used by someone else fraudulently or without your permission.

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4. Sharing information in online activities

4.1 What is displayed

Your Open University computing account enables you to participate in online activities. These may include assessed tasks for your module. When you participate in these activities, your name (or preferred online name), preferred email address, Open University Computer Username (OUCU) and the content you contribute may be displayed online to students and staff. You can set your preferences for what is displayed. Guidance on how to do this is provided in the [Profile section](#) of the [Open University Computing Guide](#). Messages sent or received on University systems form part of the administrative records of the Open University. The [Student Privacy Notice](#) sets out how we use your personal data.

4.2 Sharing personal information

When working in shared online spaces you must carefully consider the information that you are sharing with others, for example personal information such as your home address or bank details. More information is available in the '[Conduct and content online](#)' section of the [Open University Computing Guide](#).

5. How we will communicate with you

5.1 Your email address

You must provide us with a valid email address, which we will use to correspond with you. You must inform the Open University of any changes to your preferred email address by updating your personal profile on StudentHome.

5.2 Communicating with you by email

It is your responsibility to check your email regularly. You will be sent important service information about your registration as a student and about your studies by email. It is also your responsibility to manage any filters on your account to ensure that email from The Open University is sent into your inbox and not to a spam or junk email folder. You should ensure that your inbox has an adequate amount of space to receive messages from The Open University. You can opt out of receiving marketing messages by updating your preferences in your StudentHome profile.

5.3 Communicating with you through StudentHome

Your Open University computing account will include access to your personal StudentHome website. This includes details of personal information we hold about you and it will provide you with access to some study materials and a range of other resources that will support your Open University studies. The Open University will also use StudentHome to display messages that will be relevant to you, and may not be provided by any other media. It is your responsibility to check StudentHome regularly.

5.4 Communicating with you through Open University websites

You will be provided with access to module and study websites (where available) as part of your studies at The Open University. These websites will provide access to learning materials and other resources and may be used to post messages about

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your modules and/or qualification that may not be provided by any other media. It is your responsibility to check your module and, if applicable, study website regularly.

6. Protection of Open University computer systems

6.1 Precautions you must take

The integrity of our computer systems is jeopardised if you do not take enough precautions against malicious software (for example, computer virus programs). You must not jeopardise the integrity, performance or reliability of computers, networks, software and other stored information that belong to us. 'Software' includes programs, routines, procedures and their associated documentation that can be used on a computer system, including personal computers and workstations.

6.2 What you are expected to do

- 6.2.1 You are expected to have and keep up to date virus protection software and take all reasonable steps to avoid distributing virus or malware to other Open University computer users.
- 6.2.2 The Open University understands that individuals cannot control or prevent some unsolicited email; however, users must not send junk or phishing email or encourage others to do so.
- 6.2.3 You should be aware that email attachments may carry viruses, so if you are in any doubt, you must not open the email. For further information please see our guide to [Safe and Secure Computing](#).
- 6.2.4 You should not download any software or files without up-to-date virus protection measures. Our [Safe and Secure Computing guide](#) includes advice on virus and malware protection software.
- 6.2.5 You should not visit hacking sites or download hacking or evidence eliminating software.
- 6.2.6 You should not intentionally visit, download or share in Open University systems, material from internet sites that are likely to contain obscene, racist, hateful or other objectionable materials.
- 6.2.7 You should not attempt to hack into other Open University computer users' accounts or Open University systems by using password recovery, cracking, security analysis or any other security software.
- 6.2.8 You should not intentionally interfere with the normal operation of Open University and other student systems, including the propagation of computer viruses.
- 6.2.9 You should not cause sustained high volume network traffic to The Open University that substantially hinders others in their use of the network, for example by sending emails to large numbers of addresses.

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- 6.3 The University may automatically block or quarantine any email or post to an Open University website or forum identified as a potential threat to the organisation. Further information on safe computing can be found in the 'Using a computer' section of the [Open University Computing Guide](#).
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7. Standards of behaviour

7.1 Acceptable standards

Acceptable standards of behaviour apply to computer-based information technology just as they would apply to other forms of communication:

- a) Software or information we have provided may only be used for educational purposes unless agreed otherwise. By beginning to study at The Open University, you agree to follow all the licensing agreements for software that we have entered into. Please see Appendix 4 for more detailed guidance.
- b) You must not send offensive, obscene or abusive information.
- c) You must not present your own opinions or any facts or other information from your own sources as if they are those of the Open University or made on its behalf.
- d) Any software, printed data or other information provided by the University must not be copied or used without prior permission from the University, software or information provider.
- e) You must not break any copyright in documentation or software (or both). [The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1998](#) gives copyright owners the right to bring civil proceedings if anyone breaks a copyright, and makes it a criminal offence to break certain copyrights. Specific legislation relating to computer programs can be found on the [legislation.gov.uk](#) website.
- f) You must not use any University computing or network resources to use or publish material that is obscene, libellous or defamatory, or breaks our code of practice concerning harassment. You are personally responsible for your own activity on any Open University communications channel.
- g) You agree to follow the conditions of the [Computer Misuse Act \(1990\)](#), the [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994](#), data protection legislation and other relevant Acts.
- h) You must not do anything that damages our reputation, for example make threats against another student or a member of staff, share confidential information about the university, its students or staff, or make libellous statements about the university on social media sites.
- i) You may only use approved University links to other computing facilities which you are authorised to use. When using other facilities, for example in libraries or internet cafes, or other online and social media spaces, you must also follow their rules or code of conduct.

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7.2 **Blocking content**

The Open University may use software tools to block sites that are obscene, hateful or have other objectionable materials or may affect the University's operations. Further information can be found in the '[Conduct and content online](#)' section of the [Open University Computing Guide](#).

8. **The principles of online communication**

The Student Charter sets out the responsibilities we have to each other as members of the Open University community. The principles of online communication set out in Appendix 2 describe the way in which staff and students should work together online to support learning, research, administration and participation in all aspects of the University community. The principles of communicating with other students in Open University collaborative spaces are outlined in the '[Conduct and content online](#)' section of the [Open University Computing Guide](#).

9. **Social networking guidance**

If you are using a social networking site to connect with other students or to help your study please see Appendix 3.

10. **Using your computer safely**

You should take care of your own health and safety when you are working on a computer. Further information is available in Appendix 1 and in the '[Using a computer](#)' section of the [Open University Computing Guide](#).

11. **Monitoring**

- 11.1 In exceptional circumstances, we may have to use records of your contact with us and about your study to carry out our work or meet our legal obligations. The [Student Privacy Notice](#) describes how we will manage these records.
- 11.2 For security and maintenance purposes, authorised individuals within the Open University central IT teams may monitor all data, systems and network traffic at any time to ensure compliance with this policy and other security policies, and the effective operation of the University's systems.
- 11.3 The Open University has a statutory duty to have regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. If the use of Open University computer equipment, information and systems gives rise to a concern that a person may be at risk, this may result in action being taken in accordance with the [Open University Prevent Principles](#).

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12. Failure to comply

- 12.1 Any breach of this policy may undermine the effective running of The Open University and its ability to meet its duties and legal obligations.
- 12.2 Failure to comply with some aspects, for example paragraph 3 on 'Your Open University computing account' may mean your learning experience is negatively impacted. For more serious breaches of the policy, for example around security and standards of behaviour, action may be taken under the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#). It may also be the case that your conduct and/or action(s) may be unlawful. The Open University reserves the right to inform the appropriate authorities in such cases.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Using your computer safely.

Appendix 2

The Open University online communications principles.

Appendix 3

Using social media: policy for students.

Appendix 4

Terms and conditions governing the use of software, tools and content.

Further information

For your personal contact list including assistance with using Open University systems go to the [HelpCentre](#) and click on 'Contacts'. If you are a research degree student, contact the Research Degrees Office at research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk. For questions about social media use at The Open University, contact the Social Media Engagement Team at social-media@open.ac.uk

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please email APG-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk.

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format, go to the [Help Centre](#) (phone +44 (0)300 303 5303). If you are a research degree student, contact the Research Degrees Office at research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk.

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Appendix 1: Using your computer safely

1. Health and safety advice for using your computer

Set up and connect your equipment in accordance with the instructions provided by the supplier or manufacturer. Always be sure that the computer is switched off and disconnected from the mains electrical supply when you connect or disconnect any of the electrical leads.

2. Working safely

The use of visual display units (VDU) and other display screen equipment (DSE) has been related to various symptoms to do with sight and working posture. These symptoms are often perceived as fatigue of some kind. Applying simple ergonomic principles to the layout of your work area and how you study can readily prevent them.

Try to position the monitor to minimise glare and reflections on the screen. Suitable lighting is important: remember that glare can occur either directly or by reflection from the screen. Glare from windows can usually be eliminated by curtains or blinds, or by facing the screen in a different direction. It might be a good idea to make adjustments from time to time during the day, as light changes. You should have general lighting, by artificial or natural light or both, that illuminates the whole room adequately.

3. Eyes and eyesight

There's no evidence that working with DSE is harmful to the eyes, nor that it makes visual problems worse, although a few people who have difficulties with their sight may become more aware of them. But working at a screen for a long time without a break can have effects similar to reading or writing uninterruptedly, and may make your eyes feel 'tired' or sore. You might find that it helps to look away from the screen from time to time and focus your eyes on a distant object.

4. Making yourself comfortable

As for any task that means working in one position for some time, it's important to make yourself as comfortable as possible when you use your computer. Place the monitor in front of you and at a comfortable viewing distance. If you're working from a document you might find it better to have that directly in front of you and the screen to one side. Try to position the top of the monitor display slightly below eye level when you're sitting at the keyboard.

5. Before starting work you should:

- Adjust the positions of the screen, the keyboard, the mouse and the documents you're working from, so as to achieve the most comfortable arrangement. Make sure that you have space to use your mouse easily, and rest your wrists in front of the keyboard when not typing.
- Adjust the position of your chair to give you a comfortable viewing distance and posture. The screen should probably be somewhere between eighteen and thirty inches away from you, whatever suits you best. Good keyboard and mouse technique is important. Keep your upper body as relaxed as possible and don't over stretch your wrists and fingers. As a general guide, your forearms should be roughly horizontal and your elbows level with the keyboard or the mouse.

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- If your feet don't reach the floor when you're sitting in a good position, try a footrest.
- Use a document holder when copying from a manuscript. Take a break whenever you can, try to arrange your study to consist of a combination of work on and away from the screen, to prevent fatigue and to vary visual and mental demands. Long spells of intensive screen work should be broken up by periods of non-intensive work of a different kind. The nature of your study and the combination of media you're using will determine the length of break you need to prevent fatigue, but as a general rule:
- You should take breaks before the onset of fatigue, not in order to recuperate. The timing of the break is more important than its length. Short, frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks. A break of thirty seconds to two minutes after twenty or thirty minutes of continuous work with the screen and keyboard is likely to be more effective than a fifteen-minute break every two hours.
- If possible, you should take your breaks away from the screen, and avoid activities that require actions similar to your work (writing, crosswords or needlework, for example).

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Appendix 2: The Open University Online Communications Principles

These principles describe the way in which OU staff and students should work together online to support learning, research, administration and participation in all aspects of the University community.

Principle 1 The benefits of 'Digital Professionalism'

Good online communication skills cannot be assumed, but they can be learned and are essential for effective engagement in learning and work. The development of 'digital professionalism' and skills in online communication has positive benefits for staff, for students and for employability.

Principle 2 Developing our skills

We will support each other to learn, develop and enhance our online communications skills, through advice, guidance, learning resources and working together.

Principle 3 Communicating effectively

We will support and encourage clear and effective communication in online situations and the use of language, style and tone which is relevant and appropriate to the circumstances and the purpose of the communication.

Principle 4 Managing our online image

We will ensure that we are all aware of the importance of managing our digital footprint and support each other to raise awareness of the benefits of creating a positive online image and how to achieve it. We will be mindful of maintaining our own confidentiality and personal security.

Principle 5 Freedom of speech and ideas

We will promote the open exchange of ideas and uphold the fundamental principle of freedom of speech and thought. We acknowledge that people have the right, within the law, to hold and to express ideas that others may find challenging. We will not allow views to be presented in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.

Principle 6 Dignity and respect

We will treat each other with dignity and respect, even where we disagree with each other, and be sensitive to the impact our conduct may have on other students and staff. We recognise that good manners aid effective communication. We aim to be welcoming and inclusive and do not provide a platform for threats, personal abuse, derogatory comments, unreasonable behaviour that causes offence, discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment.

Principle 7 Criticising others and accepting criticism

We should be prepared to accept legitimate criticism, provided it is within the law, based on accurate facts, measured and in an appropriate forum. It is rarely appropriate for named

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individuals to be criticised in public or anywhere that they have no right or opportunity to reply.

Principle 8 Confidentiality, privacy and copyright

We will respect each other's confidentiality and privacy and we will not share personal details or distribute ideas, words and images that belong to others without their express or implied permission and without acknowledgement. We will not tolerate plagiarism or activities which encourage or enable it.

Principle 9 Responsibility and consequences

We will accept responsibility for our own actions and encourage others to do so. We should be aware that poor communication skills and unacceptable behaviour may have a negative impact on others.

Principle 10 Moderation and control

Moderators and other controllers of online communication spaces, whether they are staff or students, have a responsibility to uphold these principles. The aim of moderation or control is to provide an environment within which meaningful, relevant and effective communication can take place. Moderators' decisions should be open, transparent and consistent with any relevant guidelines, which should be available to all participants. Moderators have the right to expect reasonable decisions to be respected but must be prepared for some decisions to be challenged, through appropriate channels.

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Appendix 3: Using Social Media: Policy for OU Students

1. Introduction

This policy applies to you if you use social media in relation to your Open University studies, including the Open University's official and unofficial channels, and public or closed / private social media networks (defined in section 3 below). The social media policy and other associated guidelines (see section 7 below) are designed to help you communicate safely and responsibly online. Your use of social media is governed by the same policies and procedures that apply to all aspects of being a member of the Open University community. It is your responsibility to read and act in accordance with the principles of this policy and other associated policies and guidelines (see Section 7 below). You must adhere to the policies and codes of conduct for each of the social media tools that you use.

Throughout this policy, when we say 'student', we mean that the policy applies to you from the point you register on your first course, module or qualification, throughout your time as an Open University student, including any time spent on approved study breaks or between modules (see Glossary).

2. Definition of 'social media'

For the purposes of this policy, 'social media' is defined as websites and online applications that enable users to create and share content, and/or participate in social networking. These social media tools enable users to share ideas, opinions, knowledge and interests and use of them includes posting, commenting, instant messaging and sharing links, images and files.

Examples of such social media include, but are not limited to:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Vimeo
- Blogs
- Online chat forums
- WhatsApp
- Snapchat

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3. Guiding principles

In line with the [Student Charter](#), the Open University's mission and values, and the guidance set out in the Student Computing Policy, we have adopted a number of guiding principles for the use of social media:

- **Official Open University accounts are actively managed and monitored:** The Open University has a number of official social media accounts that are actively managed and represent the work and views of the institution. These include, for example, the main corporate 'The Open University' accounts on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). These accounts are monitored by staff, and any student posts, comments, questions or complaints are identified, assessed and responded to in a timely fashion.
- **Additional Open University accounts exist and will be managed in a similar way:** Faculties, schools, departments, groups, staff and teams may also operate social media accounts, both open and closed.
- **Public-facing references to The Open University will be monitored:** We monitor public-facing references to The Open University across social media including references or associations that could harm the University, its staff, individual students or groups of students. This could result in comments being hidden, accounts being reported or blocked, or disciplinary action.
- **Appropriate criticism is acceptable:** This policy does not prevent you from using social media to talk about your experiences or to express critical reviews appropriately. If you have a complaint, you should follow the [Complaints Procedure](#)
- **Privacy and copyright laws apply to social media:** Content shared on social media is subject to the same privacy and copyright laws as other public channels. You should familiarise yourself with Open University policies and guidelines (see Section 7) and will be held personally responsible if found to be breaking the law.
- **Restricted use of The Open University logo and crest:** The Open University's logo and crest may only be used on official, Open University-owned and -managed social media accounts. They should not be used in any other groups or accounts. Any requests to use the logo on social media should be sent to the Communications Unit (social-media@open.ac.uk). This is separate to any Open University 'Twibbons' or frames which can be used to demonstrate your association with The Open University.
- **Students and staff are not obliged to participate in social media:** Use of social media can come with both benefits and challenges and, as such, it is up to you to choose if and how you engage on social media channels. You should feel no obligation to accept an invitation to join a social media platform, group, or page, or to accept a 'friend request' related to The Open University or your studies, regardless of whether that invitation comes from another student, tutor or member of staff. Equally, staff are under no obligation to participate in social media activities so you should not assume a member of staff will communicate with you in that way.

4. Your responsibilities

When using social media in any capacity you should not:

- Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassing of any individual (this may also be enforced through the social media platforms' own policies and guidelines).

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- Post or share defamatory comments, content and images (i.e. anything that causes, or is likely to cause harm to a person's reputation)
- Breach copyright laws by using images or content, e.g. module materials, TMA questions or answers, forum posts or anything provided by a tutor, without permission or failing to give due credit where permission has been granted. Social media networks will also have their own policies around this, which you must adhere to.
- Share confidential information relating to The Open University or any individual or organisation.

If your social media profile references the fact that you are student of The Open University, it is understood that the views you express are your own and do not reflect those of The Open University. This does not need to be explicitly stated in your social media profile.

You should familiarise yourself with, and adhere to, policies and codes of conduct for the social media platforms you use.

Please be aware that posting offensive comments on a public site can damage your reputation. These may be seen by potential contacts and employers and could call your judgement and character into question.

5. Your responsibilities in unofficial Open University-related social media groups

We recognise that students often set up social media groups specifically to discuss their current module or other matters connected to their studies. These are classed as 'unofficial' groups and, as such, are not the responsibility of, nor monitored by, The Open University, even if staff members opt to join those groups.

Please note that in addition to the guiding principles set out in section 3:

- The group administrators are responsible for monitoring and managing the behaviour in 'unofficial' groups. It is the administrators' responsibility to highlight the purpose of the group, any criteria for membership and general rules of conduct
- Any issues experienced in unofficial groups should be reported to the group administrator(s). [A template for community guidelines](#) for student group administrators is available.
- Any content posted in an open or closed unofficial group could be shared publicly or reported to The Open University.
- You must adhere to The Open University's Plagiarism Policy (see Section 7 below). You are welcome to discuss module content on social media and help each other with understanding concepts. However, marked assignments of any kind must always be your unaided work, and explicit discussion of answers to assignments is forbidden. If there is any doubt, group administrators should exercise caution by closing down any such discussion.
- Information on social media channels may not be reliable or accurate. If you are unsure about something relating to your studies or The Open University in general, contact your tutor or [Student Support Team](#).
- Open University staff may be members of unofficial student groups, either in their capacity as tutors, or as students themselves.

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6. Reporting behaviour on social media

This policy is designed to ensure all students enjoy the use of social media and to help us to resolve problems and difficulties which may arise as quickly and easily as possible. If you have a complaint about the behaviour of another student, you should follow the procedure described in the [Dignity and Respect Policy](#), specifically Section 1.5 and Appendix 2.

7. Misuse of social media

If you are found to have breached any aspect of this policy, for example if you discriminate or demonstrate bullying behaviour towards another student, or if you post copyrighted material, you may be subject to disciplinary action as set out in the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#). If you wish to report unacceptable behaviour by another student you should follow the [Dignity and Respect policy](#) or the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures](#) in the first instance.

The Open University has the right to request removal of content from an official, managed social media account or from a personal social media account if it is deemed to be counter to this or other Open University policies and guidelines.

8. Glossary

‘Student’

for the purpose of this policy means people studying on a short course, a module or qualification, a research degree student or in other situations, for example if you have completed your studies but are still active in the Open University community as an alumnus or ‘buddy’.

Public social media

pages and areas on social media that can be accessed by anyone.

Closed / private social media

pages and areas on social media where access is restricted to members or those given permission to view and participate.

Official social media accounts

The Open University’s corporate social media accounts that are managed by Open University staff and represent the institution’s work and views.

Other Open University social media accounts

these are social media accounts that are operated by individuals or teams of staff and/or students of The Open University, which may be open access or may be private.

Twibbons

a twibbon overlays an image onto your social media profile to indicate your support for a cause or an organisation.

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Appendix 4: Terms and conditions governing the use of software, tools and content

1. Introduction

- 1.1 By accepting a place on an Open University module or otherwise using Open University facilities, content or other systems that include computing or involves the use of tools being provided via a computer, such as online learning, you have given a legal undertaking to comply in full with the requirements set out below. These requirements regulate the use of computer software packages, tools and content supplied or otherwise made available to you by The Open University as part of your module material or otherwise.
- 1.2 A 'computer software package' includes all disks and manuals, the material contained in or on them, and any other related material that is protected by intellectual property rights. The software may be supplied to you on any suitable medium, such as optical disk or electronic networked service.
- 1.3 'Tools' refers to those on- or off-line mechanisms by which The Open University supplies or otherwise makes available 'Content' to you.
- 1.4 'Content' refers to all proprietary module material, and other content which is owned by The Open University, together with, for example, all information contained within forums, wikis, blogs and podcasts.
- 1.5 You are granted a non-transferable, non-exclusive licence to use the computer software packages, 'Tools' and 'Content' on the conditions set out in the list below.
- 1.6 You must not transfer any computer package or the use of it to any other person in any way. Any use, copying or adaptation of the computer packages, 'Tools' or 'Content' that is not authorised by these conditions may constitute an infringement of intellectual property rights and may be illegal.
- 1.7 Your licence to use the computer software packages, 'Tools' and 'Content' may be restricted or terminated if you fail to meet any of the conditions listed here, and your continued use may be illegal. Legal action may be taken against you or any other person or body who infringes the intellectual property rights of The Open University or other owner of the rights in the computer software packages, 'Tools' or 'Content'.

2. Software packages

The conditions on which you may use the software packages are:

- 2.1 You may use the computer software packages only for educational purposes to do with an Open University module for which you have registered.
- 2.2 Each computer software package may be used only by you, yourself, and only on a single computer at any one time.

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- 2.3 You are allowed to reproduce the software, both in order to use it and for security purposes, as follows:
- a) You may install all or part of the software from an original copy on to the local hard disk (or other permanent storage medium) of a stand-alone computer, keeping the software on its original medium as a back-up.
 - b) You may install the software from an original copy on to a computer system attached to a networked service, as long as you can guarantee that you alone have access to the software.
 - c) You may install the software from an original copy on to a computer system that has two or more separable components (such as a portable computer with a desktop home station), as long as you remain the sole user of the software on all the system's components.
 - d) You may download the software from an electronic networked service provided by The Open University into the permanent storage of a stand-alone computer, on to a computer system attached to a networked service or on to a computer system with two or more separable components, as long as you remain the sole user of the software.
 - e) You may make a single back-up copy of the software, whatever its original form, on to a suitable medium. You may not use the back-up copy unless you need to reinstall the software because your system has failed (and there are no copy-protection or other mechanisms in the software that prevent repeated installation).
 - f) If the software, or any part of it, cannot or must not be used in any other form than its original, you may make a single copy of the original to use as either a working copy or a back-up copy.
 - g) Whether you make a single back-up copy or not you may, if you make routine backup copies of your computer system's hard disk (or other permanent storage medium) as a whole, include the software in the composite back-up copy.
- 2.4 Copying manuals or other documentation, or parts of them, is expressly forbidden. Documentation will not necessarily be printed. It may be in electronic format, and you may then print out all or part of it for your own use.
- 2.5 You must not remove any product identification, logo, copyright notice or trademark from a computer software package.
- 2.6 You must not alter, modify or adapt any computer software package in order to translate, decompile or disassemble it, to create derivative works or for any other purpose.
- 2.7 All rights not expressly granted to you are retained by the owner of the intellectual property rights in the computer software packages.

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3. 'Tools' and 'Content'

The conditions on which you may use the 'Tools' and 'Content' are:

- 3.1 You may use the 'Tools' and 'Content' only for educational purposes to do with an Open University module or other facility for which you have registered.
- 3.2 You are responsible for material you create, post or upload using the 'Tools' (your 'Submitted Materials'). By submitting or storing any material you confirm that it is not defamatory, obscene or illegal and does not infringe any third party rights. In addition, you confirm that your 'Submitted Material' is your own work or you have permission to use and upload it. You agree that your 'Submitted Materials' can be lawfully published off- or on-line and, as far as you are aware, are not the subject of any dispute.
- 3.3 The Open University may monitor 'Submitted Material' posted using the 'Tools'. Please note that despite these checks, The Open University does not promise that information displayed by others will be accurate, up to date or free from inaccuracies.
- 3.4 You acknowledge that The Open University may decide at its sole discretion, not to publish your 'Submitted Materials'. The Open University may delete or modify your 'Submitted Materials' at any time without notice should the material fail to comply with this Student Computing Policy or any other contractual terms to which it is subject.
- 3.5 You agree that The Open University and other users are permitted to copy, reproduce and use your 'Submitted Materials' for the purposes of their study, provided always that the work or views are not falsely claimed to be their own. The 'Submitted Materials' may be used by The Open University on an irrevocable and perpetual basis and may be incorporated into module material and other content.
- 3.6 In posting material you must adhere to this Student Computing Policy and not do anything which may cause the risk of a virus or involves the posting of inappropriate messages (including information which is outside the scope of the discussion topic or module content, or which constitutes a chain letter – a message which includes instructions to forward to other people).
- 3.7 The Content contains material which is proprietary to The Open University, and includes logos, trade marks, trade names, photographic and video images, sound recordings, audio tools and website layout. You are not permitted to download or copy these materials except to the extent that they are incorporated into module or programme materials. You must not remove any product identification, logo, copyright notice or trade mark from the 'Content'.
- 3.8 In the event that any links to other websites appear on its online sites The Open University accepts no responsibility or liability for the content of those websites. You should check the terms and conditions and privacy policy of any other website you visit.
- 3.9 The Open University does not guarantee that use of its systems will be compatible with all hardware and software or that it will be uninterrupted or error or virus free.

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3.10 The Open University will take steps to review your 'Submitted Materials' for publication on any publicly accessible areas of its websites to assess their compliance with the laws of England where The Open University is based and from which its 'Tools' are provided. Inclusion of materials submitted does not constitute or imply any endorsement, authorisation or recommendation by The Open University in relation to that material or any of the opinions or other statement made within it. The Open University cannot monitor nor can it enforce compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

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