

Blogs.kent conditions of use

As well as [University IT Regulations](#), anyone posting or commenting on blogs needs to abide by the blogs.kent conditions of use.

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The 'blog owner' is the person who requested the blog:

- Images and files: you can upload up to 1.5mb per file, and have a total file storage allocation of 10mb (exceeding this may incur a hosting charge).
- Blogs must not damage the reputation of the University or its members.
- It is the responsibility of the blog owner (and their department if it is an Official blog) to regularly moderate posts/comments. The blog owner can decide whether to allow comments with or without their approval.
- Kent Official blogs should be written in the same manner as an official departmental web page as the voice of the department and University.
- Standard blogs are generally written in an informal and colloquial voice.
- Blogs are provided with a 'report this post feature' which mails blog owners and helpdesk about an inappropriate post or comment. If necessary the blog owner should remove material immediately.
- Content that breaches these conditions or [University IT Regulations](#) will be investigated and dealt with by Information Services.
- Reported posts or comments that contain contentious material concerning the reputation of the University will be passed to, investigated and dealt with by the University Corporate Communications department.

Additionally all bloggers have responsibilities regarding:

- Section 2 (UK legislation)
- Section 4 [JANET Acceptable Use Policy](#) and Chest Code of conduct
- Section 6 intellectual property rights; Section 14.3 use of facilities for commercial gain, Section 17 behavior, and Section 29 withdrawal of access rights ([University IT regulations](#)).

What should I be aware of when I write?

Be aware of the **public nature of blogs** and the **association of Kent blogs with the University**, and the implications for should be posted:

- Internal University issues should not be aired on a public blog. It is not a substitute for using the University's structures of governance or its grievance and complaints procedures.
- Attacks. Blogs should not be used to mount a public attack on a person (rather than a position), whether or not that person is a member of the University as this will either infringe the Regulations either in terms of abuse or bringing the university into disrepute.
- Privacy. Blogs should not be used in a way which makes public what should be the private activities of another person. For example, it would be wrong for staff to comment in a blog about something said by a student who was identifiable; even if only identifiable by the student themselves.
- 'To publicise and to enhance the activities of the University and the academic life of its members'. This is the purpose under which the Kent blog service is provided. 'University activity' and 'academic life' are open-ended and flexible concepts. There is no need to agonise about where their boundaries should be drawn but some individual judgment is needed about what it is appropriate to post to a university blog and what should go elsewhere. To give a couple of indicative examples, it seems entirely sensible for a member of staff to blog about a particular interest in film even if not attached to Film; but less sensible for someone to use a Kent blog to upload home videos only of interest to their family abroad. It would be good to have a Kent blog about coaching a University sports team; less good to have a blog about a sports interest unconnected to the University.
- Tiredness and emotion. As with email, it is obviously foolish to go public with your thoughts on any blog when tired and emotional; you need to be fresh.

Comments and moderating your blog

Dialogue with readers is a central part of blogging and Kent blogs have a built in comments facility. Each blogger can decide whether they wish every comment to be approved by themselves before being posted or for the first comment only to be approved - all users have to register to comment.

Unwelcome comments can be a real problem in blogging. Mostly the problem is spam, especially pornographic links and adverts; there is no reason why people should not post comments which disagree strongly with the blogger or express controversial views.

Each blogger is responsible for keeping a regular eye on all comments which have been made on her or his blog, and for removing any which infringe the University's regulations or blog conditions of use.

There is a button alongside each post and comment giving the opportunity to 'Report this post' if a reader thinks it should not have been posted. 'Report this post' emails the owner of the blog and the Information Services Quality and Standards team.

In most instances, which usually need investigation or clarification, the IS Quality and Standards team will discuss the post/comment with the Blog owner and suspected breach will be handled according to the University's usual procedures. The Procedures necessarily include wide investigatory powers and provision for disciplinary action in serious cases – but their normal emphasis is on advice and guidance and (if necessary) warning.

Bloggers are expected to regularly check the comments on their blog themselves and respond to 'report this post' emails and to immediately remove any post or comment that obviously contravenes IS regulations or the Blog conditions of use. If such posts have not been removed when an investigation begins, the IS Quality and Standards team may have to remove them in cases of emergency or urgency and will notify the blogger.

Advice on potential infringements on the law, IT regulations or the Blog conditions of use

These notes are not authoritative or exclusive so please read the full regulations and conditions of use. The IS Quality and Marketing team are happy to help in advance with any queries about whether blogging might infringe the Regulations or the law and [Corporate Communications](#) can advise on whether a blog, post, or comment may have a detrimental impact on the reputation of the University.

- Personal data: Electronic data on students or staff must not be used in blogging. Individual students should not be identified.
- IPR: The same rules of copyright and other intellectual property rights apply to blogging as to other publishing.
- Other breaches of the Regulations or illegality: It would be a breach of the regulations to post material on a blog:
 - 'That is liable to cause offence, including pornographic material or abusive language;
 - 'That could be described as harassment or bullying as defined by the University's Respect at Kent Policy;
 - 'That could be considered defamatory;

- 'That discriminates on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political or religious belief or contravenes the University's Equality and Diversity Policy;
- 'That discriminates on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, political or religious belief'.

It will be apparent from the specific instances of material 'liable to cause offence' – the pornographic and the abusive – that this concept is not intended to stifle the debate; the opportunity to express controversial and unpopular views is central to the life of a university. But clearly action will be taken against material which is defamatory or illegal for some other reason, which is discriminatory or which contravenes the Dignity at Work and Respect at Kent Policy. Under the final clause of the above regulation it would also be a breach to post material 'That damages the reputation of the University.'

An earlier guideline notes that the public nature of a Kent blog makes them an unsuitable place to air internal issues. The University certainly does not see its reputation as best enhanced by seeking to treat each and every negative comment about it as a breach of this regulation; its normal response, if any, will be to post a comment or to talk to the blogger informally offline. It is conceivable that some forms of criticism of the University could constitute a breach of this part of the regulation but it is more likely that it would be invoked where the reputation of the University was damaged (as in the preceding and more specific clauses) by the objectionable nature of the post itself rather than by criticism of the University which it contained.

Blogging responsibilities

- The Head of Department/Section signs off on official blogs that use University templates and have the same level of responsibility for these as their departmental/organisational website.
- The Head of Department/Section will be notified when a member of staff in her or his department registers for an individual or shared Standard blog and has no official responsibility for these apart from their usual involvement in any infringements of the [IT Regulations](#).

	Individual Standard blog	Joint Standard blog	Official blog
Breaches of regulations or law within a blog post	Blog owner	Post author	Post author
Breaches of regulations or law within a comment	Comment author	Comment author	Comment author
Checking comments and removing if necessary	Blog owner	Author of the post, and the blog owner	Author of the post, and the blog owner
Responding to a 'report' about content on the blog	Blog owner	Author of the post, and the blog owner	Author of the post, and the blog owner
Additional editorial control		Blog owner is expected to supervise posting by postgraduate students	Blog owner