

Mr John Gilchrist
Freedom of Information Officer

24 April 2019

Ref: FOI/March 2019/ Sarah Marsh

By email to sarah.marsh@theguardian.com

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Dear Ms Marsh

Your request for information received on 29 March 2019 has been dealt with under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

I am writing to you under the freedom of information Act 2000 to request the following information.

1. Does the university monitor student social media for adverse comments? If so, whose responsibility is this and approximately how much time do they spend monitoring accounts?
2. How much money does the university spend approximately each year monitoring students' social media output? Please can you, if possible, categorise the spending by staff salary or hiring of outside consultants/ computer programs used.
3. Does the university deploy any software to help them monitor students' social media output?
4. Does the university maintain lists of students who have made what the university considers inappropriate or inflammatory social media points?
5. Does the university have a social media policy for students to follow? If so, please provide it.
6. Have any students in the last three academic years been sanctions for social media posts (2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19)? If possible can you categorise what types of inappropriate posts they were eg racists/ inciting violence/ sexually explicit etc.

University Response

1. We monitor content that either sits in University run social media groups (e.g. student Facebook groups) or content that relates to Middlesex University (e.g. mentioning Middlesex in public posts). We do not monitor students' activity on social media generally, although sometimes students' activity on social media is reported to us.
2. We are not in a position to quantify an annual spend on monitoring students' social media output so we do not hold the data that you have requested.

3. We utilise the social monitoring software – Facelift.

4. We do not maintain *lists of students who have made what the university considers inappropriate or inflammatory social media points*. Any inappropriate behaviour by our students on social media would be dealt with through our Student Conduct and Discipline rules.

5. We have a Student Charter which shows what students can expect from the University and the behaviours that we expect from our students - <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/student-life/student-charter>. This applies whether students are on campus or online. We also make references to how students should behave online in our Computer Use Policy - https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/480409/Computer-Use-Policy-STUDENTS.pdf

6. Offences around inappropriate social media posts would fall under the broader categories of *abusive behaviour against people or potentially reputational damage as misconduct against the University*. We do not have a specific category for social media misuse alone so we do not hold the data that you have requested.

I trust this satisfies your request sufficiently. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you have the right to complain about the University's response to your request for information. If you have such a complaint, you may contact Mr David Maplas, Director of Student Affairs, Middlesex University, Hendon campus, London NW4 4BT, tel: 020 8411 5830, d.malpas@mdx.ac.uk within 40 days of the date of this letter for a review of the University's decision. If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of that complaint, you may seek further recourse by lodging an appeal with the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

John Gilchrist
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