

Social Media Customer Service/Enquiry Management Guide

This guidance has been created to set standards across the University around customer service and enquiry management, to ensure practitioners feel confident responding in a timely and professional manner. A report by Hootsuite concluded that 69% of social media users say that directly messaging a company helps them feel more confident about a brand or organisation¹.

This guidance is intended for use on the following channels: Twitter, Facebook (Pages and Groups), Instagram and LinkedIn. It includes responding to public and private (inbox) messages.

Responding to enquiries during office hours (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm)

The social media team (Division of Communications and Marketing) work towards a **four hour response time** for all enquiries received via social media. It is suggested that other University accounts work towards a response time **within eight hours**.

Responding to an enquiry could mean answering the question/enquiry entirely, or responding with a holding message to let the user know that we have received their enquiry and will keep them updated on progress.

Responding to enquiries during out-of-office hours (evenings and weekends)

Replying to enquiries out of office hours is at the account holder's discretion. There is no expectation for enquiries to be answered during these times, and account holders are encouraged to implement auto-responses (Facebook) or pinned notices (Twitter) to inform users when enquiries on the account are managed.

For example; the social media team monitor the University's central channels out of hours, but only respond if they deem an enquiry is time sensitive, of an emergency/crisis nature or has the potential to damage the University's brand and reputation. The team work alongside the News and Media Relations team to form appropriate responses as required.

We would not normally expect that there will be significant requirements to address social media queries outside of hours apart from very specific situations such as in a crisis. In the event that an individual does need to work additional / out of hours to deal with such issues, their manager, at their discretion, may allow the individual to take time off in lieu in respect of the additional time worked.

¹ Hootsuite, 2018: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-trends/>

Best practice

For public enquiries (for example, tweets/comments on Facebook posts) we suggest taking any sensitive, damaging or personal discussions 'offline' by asking the user to send a direct message with more details of their question or enquiry. Comments on Facebook can also be hidden (visible only then to the poster and their friends).

On Twitter, we suggest asking the user to send you a DM followed by this link:

https://twitter.com/messages/compose?recipient_id={your account's numeric user ID} as this will add a button sending the user directly to your DMs.

[Here](#) is a how-to guide on finding your account's numeric user ID. [Here](#) is an example of when the [@OfficialUoM](#) Twitter page has implemented this best practice.

Saved inbox replies

Both Facebook Business and Instagram Business profiles allow account holders to create saved replies, meaning you can easily send pre-written replies to users directly from the desktop or mobile app. See suggested replies in the appendix.

Guidance: [how to set up an Instagram Business profile](#).

Tone of voice

On social media, University accounts should aim to appear influential, straight-talking, approachable and dynamic in line with the University's tone of voice [guidelines](#). University accounts should be authoritative but also approachable so users feel comfortable when enquiring.

Try and follow the University's tone of voice guidelines, but allow some room depending on your target audience. If your primary target audience is students, mix up the language and post times to suit audience needs. If engaging with specific territories, post at according times. Set an [auto-reply on Facebook](#) to ensure users know when you're online.

Practitioner contacts (office hour contact details, unless stated)

Division of Communications and Marketing

socialmedia@manchester.ac.uk ; Alistair Beech or Harry Newton; 0161 275 8157

Out of hours contact: 079200 87466

IT Services

it.marketing@manchester.ac.uk ; Reeya Patel

Admissions

admissions@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 275 2077

Library

carl.jeffreys@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 306 4929

Students' Union

communications.su@manchester.ac.uk or sam.bacon@manchester.ac.uk (Student Development Director)

Alliance Manchester Business School

andrei.rydzkowski@manchester.ac.uk or kathryn.howard@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 275 0220 or 0161 275 6436

Humanities

gerald.heneghan@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 306 1928

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

justin.wilson@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 306 5810

Faculty of Science and Engineering

fsemarketing@manchester.ac.uk ; Natalie Bauer; 0161 306 5754

Student Communications

studentnews@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 275 52073

Alumni Relations

tom.fern@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 306 3527

Out of hours contact: 07754606094

International Office

christopher.gibson-3@manchester.ac.uk ; 0161 306 2789

Appendix

Suggested saved replies

Admissions

- First we would suggest asking the prospective student what course they wish to study, and then searching for this course [here](#). Then send them the link for their course, and the email address associated with admissions there, found on the webpage.
- If the prospective student has a more specific question, or aren't sure what subject they'd like to study, send the below.

Please email admissions@manchester.ac.uk with your questions and they will be able to advise you more directly. Alternatively, you can phone 0161 275 2077. Thank you for getting in touch.

Distance learning

You can find more information about our online and distance learning here. Thank you.

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/online-distance-learning/>

How to apply

Applications must be made through UCAS. There are more details on their website:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

There is also a specific page for international students here:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/ucas-undergraduate-international-and-eu-students>

Scholarships

You can find information about our scholarships and international finance here:

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/international/finance/>

Accommodation

We would recommend contacting the accommodation team on 0161 275 2888 or by emailing accommodation@manchester.ac.uk for further assistance.

International queries

English Speaking requirements

Each course outline page (found here:

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/>) defines what IELTS level you must have achieved, or equivalent. Grade C in GCSE or iGCSE English Language is acceptable instead of a formal IELTS examination.

Alternative to IELTS

You may want to consider our English for Academic Purposes course, which starts in October and runs throughout the academic year until June. It teaches general English as well as study skills, so is a good route to take if you're keen to study at the University afterward. There is an IELTS requirement of 4.5 for the course, but the aim is that the course will bump your grade up so that by the end you can meet the language requirements for a degree here. Further information can be found here: <https://www.languagecentre.manchester.ac.uk/study-english/our-courses/english-for-academic-purposes/>

- If the user has a more specific question, or aren't sure what subject they'd like to study, send the below.

Please email international@manchester.ac.uk with your questions and they will be able to advise you more directly. Thanks.

IT Services

You can see the Service Availability of our IT systems here <http://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/help/>. Alternatively, you can follow IT Services on Twitter for regular updates at @UoM_ITS or call them on our 24-hour phone-line 0161 306 5544.