

# CHARTER OF ONLINE RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

*Conditions for a safer online environment  
in higher education*

## **What are rights and responsibilities?**

Rights are conditions that you should expect and responsibilities are what you are expected to do. Both rights and responsibilities indicate how people behave. When people agree on their rights and responsibilities, they are much more likely to abide by these expected behaviours.



## **This charter outlines the online rights and responsibilities of people in higher education.**

Reading and agreeing to the expectations in this charter will help the higher education community behave in a more respectful, safe and healthy manner. The first right focuses on how you can use this charter:

### ***I have a right***

I have a right to expect that all these rights will be mine in all circumstances as long as I am exercising my full responsibility.

### ***I am responsible***

I am responsible for protecting my rights and the rights of others by exercising my full responsibilities in all situations.

The remaining rights in this charter have been categorised into five values, as demonstrated in FIGURE 1 below:



FIGURE 1: Online rights in higher education



# HAPPINESS

*I have a right to be happy*

I have the right to be related to with kindness and consideration. I have the right to be called by no name that devalues me, and to be free from angry outbursts.

*I am responsible*

- for relating to others with kindness
- for speaking with others courteously
- for learning to manage my emotions

**THIS**  
*means*

**I will not insult, name-call, or speak to others in a derogatory manner. I will not harass, humiliate or bully others. I will learn safe ways of expressing my emotions online.**



# EQUALITY

*I have a right to be equal*

I have a right to be free from discrimination based on: gender, race, creed, colour, religion, culture, or sexual orientation.

*I am responsible*

- for treating others like they are equals in a non-discriminatory manner

**THIS**  
*means*

**I will respect diversity online and offline. I will not shame or humiliate others.**



# RESPECT

## *I have a right to be respected*

I have the right to be myself and to be respected. I have the right to have my own viewpoint, even if others have different viewpoints. I have the right to be free from humiliation online.

## *I am responsible*

- for respecting others, even if they are different from me
- for free speech and to listening to others who have alternative viewpoints
- for refraining from using humiliating put downs for the purpose of inflicting harm on another

**THIS**  
*means*

***I will be polite and considerate of others and their opinions. I will listen to others respectfully and speak to please, not to tease.***



# WELLBEING

## *I have a right to be healthy*

I have the right to balance my time online and offline for the benefit of my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

## *I am responsible*

- for meaningful screen time that is balanced with my offline activities and relationships
- for monitoring and maintaining my time spent online

**THIS**  
*means*

***I will balance my online and offline time, ensuring the time I spend online does not take over my life. I will set screen time limits and create digital-free zones in my schedule.***



# SAFETY

## *I have a right to be safe*

I have a right to be safe in an environment that is free from bullying. I have the right to protect and secure my personal information and privacy. I have the right to protect my digital reputation and to educate myself about staying safe online.

## *I am responsible*

- for protecting my privacy and personal information online
- for keeping myself and others safe in the online environment
- for protecting my digital reputation
- for engaging politely in the online environment
- for remaining informed about staying safe online

**THIS**  
*means*

**I will log in and log out of sites as well as ensure my password is strong and changed regularly. I can change my profile settings to ensure my personal information remains private.**

**I will think before posting something about myself or others and never post, message, upload or download anything derogatory or defamatory.**

**I will block others who are bullying me and walk away from the computer before responding. I will follow net etiquette and report abuse when necessary.**

**I will seek counselling support from counsellors, friends and family when my safety online is threatened.**