

Division:	CEO and Governance	Ref. No.	POL-5518
Department:	Marketing and Communications		
Title:	Social Media		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the principles underpinning the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' (RACS) approach to social media. This policy also provides guidance to RACS employees, Fellows, Trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) in their personal use of social media and explains RACS' expectations of them when making public comment in both professional and personal capacities.

Social media comprises platforms that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. For the purpose of this policy, social media may include any facility for online publication and commentary, including, but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, weblogs, Flickr, forums, instant messaging, discussion boards and wikis.

This policy applies to:

- employees
- Fellows
- Trainees
- Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs)
- surgeons performing RACS business whether in a paid or unpaid capacity
- contractors/consultants
- program volunteers
- skills faculty (e.g. directors, instructors and coordinators)
- sub-contractors involved in program delivery and
- Council and committee members.

This policy, together with the RACS Code of Conduct, Workforce Conduct Policy and Equal Opportunity and Acceptable Workplace Behaviour policies outline the expected behavioural and professional standards with regard to social media use for Fellows, employees and surgeons performing work for RACS.

2. KEYWORDS

Social media, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, public domain, monitoring, web content.

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Official use of social media by RACS

3.1.1. RACS uses and maintains the following social media platforms:

- a) Facebook
- b) LinkedIn
- c) YouTube
- d) Twitter
- e) Instagram

3.1.2 Social media is an essential platform for RACS in promoting Fellowship engagement activities, sharing RACS news and celebrating the achievements of the organisation and its members. While social media plays an important role in promoting and upholding the RACS brand and reputation, it also plays a crucial role in the overarching RACS crisis communication plan.

3.1.2. The RACS Marketing & Communications department is responsible for the creation and management of the official RACS social media accounts. This includes posting, reviewing, responding to or editing social media content.

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Fellows, Trainees, SIMGs, RACS employees and other stakeholders this policy applies to must not create a social media account on behalf of RACS nor should they speak on behalf of RACS unless specifically authorised to do so.

- 3.1.3. RACS is responsible for content posted by RACS on its official social media accounts only.

3.2. Use of social media by RACS employees and Fellows, Trainees, SIMGs, volunteers or sub-contractors performing RACS business

The high standards of professional behaviour that are expected when conducting RACS business in person also apply when participating online through social media. Online participation should reflect and uphold RACS values of service, integrity, respect, compassion and collaboration. The RACS Workforce Conduct and Equal Employment Opportunity and Acceptable Workplace Behaviour policies apply to online and social media activity.

- 3.2.1. When engaging in social media, RACS Fellows, Trainees, SIMGs and volunteers who work for RACS in a pro bono capacity are expected to exercise care and discretion in all online communications.

- 3.2.2. RACS Councillors and other office bearers should consider that comments made on personal social media accounts may be deemed to be on behalf of RACS

- 3.2.3. When participating in social media and online in a personal capacity,

RACS employees and pro bono Fellows, Trainees, SIMGs, volunteers or sub-contractors must not:

- a) disclose RACS confidential information
 - b) use the RACS logo or branding
 - c) post, communicate or create content which references RACS and may adversely or negatively affect RACS' reputation, image or commercial interests
 - d) represent themselves as, or communicate in such a way that the public would believe that they are acting for or communicating on behalf of RACS
 - e) post any material that defames, harasses, vilifies, discriminates against, sexually harasses, bullies, stalks, victimises, brings into disrepute, or threatens another RACS employee, Fellow, Trainee, SIMG or any RACS affiliated person, body or association.
- 3.2.4. RACS Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs will not hold themselves out as representing the views of RACS in any media or social media. As such, Fellows should:
- a) only use the FRACS logo and branding in line with the relevant RACS policies
 - b) declare that all communications and content are their own and do not represent the views of RACS or their employer. For example, 'This account reflects my personal views and not the views of my employer, or any businesses, committees or boards with which I am involved.' This disclaimer however will not necessarily protect someone from breaching this policy. If an employee or Fellow can be identified as working for RACS it is reasonable for people to interpret the comments as being made on behalf of RACS
 - c) language and tone should be professional and respectful. Comments that are overly familiar, derogatory, lewd or aggressive may breach RACS policies.

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3.3. Use of social media by RACS Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs

- 3.3.1. The behaviour of Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs is guided by the RACS Code of Conduct and relevant professional policies such as the Medical Board of Australia's social media policy; the Medical Council of New Zealand's 'Statement on use of the internet and electronic communication', and relevant national laws and regulations.
- 3.3.2. RACS Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs will not hold themselves out as representing the views of RACS in any media or social media. As such, Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs should:
- a) only use the FRACS logo and branding in line with the relevant RACS policies
 - b) not represent the views of RACS.
- 3.3.3. Examples of social media behaviours that Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs should not engage in, include:
- a) discrimination or harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, stalking, victimisation, abusive or threatening interactions
 - b) defaming or criticising colleagues in an untruthful, misleading or deceptive manner
 - c) seeking to enhance their practice by actively denigrating or inhibiting a colleague's practice
 - d) disclosing confidential information about RACS or RACS employees
 - e) disclosing confidential or personal information about their patients or their colleagues.

3.4. Other resources

- The Medical Board of Australia's [social media policy](#)
- The Medical Council of New Zealand's '[Statement on use of the internet and electronic communication](#)'
- [Social media and the medical profession](#): A guide to online professionalism for medical practitioners and medical students.
- [RACS Code of Conduct](#)
- [AHPRA advertising resources](#)

Approver: Council Executive
Authoriser: Council