1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the principles of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons’ (RACS) involvement and management of social media. This policy aims to help RACS staff, Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates (IMGs) understand the purpose and impact of the use of social media on the RACS brand and reputation.

Temporary/seconded employees, private contractors and consultants will also be expected to comply with this policy as required by RACS.

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 and discussion boards and wikis.

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

3.1.2. Only the RACS Communications & Advocacy department may create or manage official RACS social media accounts. This includes posting, reviewing, responding to or editing social media content. Fellows, Trainees, IMGs and RACS staff may not create a social media account on behalf of RACS.

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

3.1.4. Social media is an essential platform in the overarching RACS crisis communication plan.

3.2. Use of social media by RACS Staff

3.2.1. When participating in social media in a personal capacity, RACS staff 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, discriminates against or bullies another RACS staff member, Fellow, Trainee IMG or any RACS affiliated body or association.
3.2.2. When engaging in social media use, RACS staff are expected to exercise care and discretion in their online communications.

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

3.3.1. The behaviour of Fellows, Trainees and IMGs 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 IMGs will not hold themselves out as representing the views of RACS in any media or social media. As such, Fellows, Trainees and IMGs 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.’ Online activity should be in accordance with this disclaimer.
   c) RACS Councillors and other office bearers should consider that any comment they make on their social media account/s may be deemed to be on behalf of RACS.

3.3.3. Examples of social media behaviours that Fellows, Trainees and IMGs should not engage in, include:
   a) discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment of any other individual or group;
   b) 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;
   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