



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

April 2020

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Guide is to ensure that all those associated with UCD School of Medicine ('the School') are aware of the appropriate standards to uphold in relation to use of social media for

- work and study related purposes
- personal and social purposes

This Guide is based on the best available evidence, legislation, regulatory requirements and quality standards with regard to social media usage and is designed to assist staff and students in using social media in carrying out the function of their posts and studies.

The Guide also extends to future developments in internet capability and social media usage.

2. SCOPE

This Guide is applicable to;

Employees

- All full-time, part-time and fixed term employees, employed by the School are covered by this Guide

Students

- All students undertaking programmes and studies at the School at undergraduate and graduate level and across the School's network of academic and clinical locations are covered by this Guide
- Student Societies representing student associated with the School

Community

- Wider School community including all alumni / School graduates

3. DEFINITIONS

Social media is the collective term referring to social and professional networking sites such as

- Twitter
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- YouTube

Social media also includes instant messaging including WhatsApp and Snapchat, Blogs, Wikis, Boards and other similar online forums

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is the responsibility of all School employees and students to familiarise themselves with the contents of this Guide and aim to comply with the provisions in the Guide
- All School employees and students should consider whether or not personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing the School's views, opinions or positions even where disclaimers are used
- All School employees and students should err on the side of caution and should assume what is written will be read
- A public online forum is not the place to communicate the School's policies, strategies or opinions to employees

- Line Managers should especially ensure that employees in their areas are aware of and compliant with the Guide
- It is not recommended that any Line Manager make generic 'friend' requests or other similar requests of their team members, as this may place undue pressure on an employee

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS

6.1 On-line content

Employees and students are reminded that

- Online content is rarely, if ever private
- Online content is permanent, and usually cannot be retracted easily
- With the volume of information posted on the internet and the nature of social media connections, employees and students can often easily be associated to their employer or School even if such a connection is not made explicitly or deliberately

5.2 Social Media Etiquette

School employees and students are asked to

- Respect others' views and opinions. It is understandable that you may not always agree with opinions online, however, do not engage in a public disagreement
- Aim to add value to what others are doing and saying with your knowledge and insights
- Act professionally at all times
- Be quick to correct your own mistakes and admit when you are wrong
- Refrain from using ethnic or religious slurs, insults or obscenities at all times
- Never engage in conduct that would be viewed as unacceptable online
- Be considerate of others' privacy and topics that could be considered personal, such as religion or politics
- Never engage with trolls whose aim is to engage you in negative conversation
- Share information that you know to be true and to be careful of fake news and sharing misinformation
- Refrain from sharing information about friends or colleagues without their prior consent
- Speak in the first person, remembering that you are publishing content in your own name and not that of your employer, School of Medicine or the School in which you are studying (i.e. *I* not *we*)

Employees and students should also note that remarks made in the name of the School about individuals, organisations or groups which are of an offensive, derogatory or threatening nature on social media may result in disciplinary action being taken

5.3 Linking UCD School of Medicine to your personal social networks

- If you refer to the School as your employer or the institution in which you are studying, in your social media biography, you should be mindful that you are publicly connecting yourself to the School
- Confidential and proprietary information relating to your work or study should not be published online, either on public or in private messaging apps
- Having an opinion on topics in the public domain relating to the School is acceptable, but be mindful that any opinions or comments should be based on fact
- Be mindful that your opinions will be monitored by the media who use social media as a research tool. If you are not an official spokesperson for the School, then you should refrain from expressing professional views in the public domain

Employees and students should also note that any publicly accessible offensive, discriminatory, insensitive comments, business sensitive information or material that might cause reputational damage posted by an employee or student on social media against the School even if made during an individual's personal time will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

REMEMBER: *You are legally liable for anything you publish on your own social networks*

5.4 Monitoring of social networking sites

- All employees and students should be aware that the School regularly monitors the internet and social media with reference to the School and to keep abreast of general internet commentary, brand presence and client perceptions
- The School does not specifically monitor social networking sites for employee or student content on an on-

- going basis, however employees and students should not expect privacy in this regard
- The School reserves the right to utilise for disciplinary purposes any information that could have a negative effect on the School or its staff, which management comes across in the course of regular internet monitoring, or which is brought to the School's attention by staff members, students, members of the public etc.
- If a staff member is concerned about discussion regarding the School on a social media platform, they should contact the School's M&C (Marketing and Communications) Team via email (comms.medicine@ucd.ie)

REMEMBER: *GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) 2018 protect an employer where the employees' use of social networking sites causes damage to that organisation's reputation or leads to the release of confidential information*

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Following social media guidance

All School staff and students should aim to adhere to the following when engaging in social media;

- Be aware of your association with the School when using online social networking websites
- You must always identify yourself and your role if you mention or comment on the School
- Where you identify yourself as a School employee or student, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you would present yourself to colleagues and fellow students in writing and in person
- You must write in the first person and state clearly that the views expressed are your own and not those of the School. Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for or are studying at the School, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinion of the School
- You are personally responsible for what you post or publish on social networking websites. Please be aware of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). You should not post colleagues' or fellow student details or pictures without their individual permission

6.2 Recommendations and references

- Recommendations, references or comments relating to professional attributes, are not permitted to be made about employees, former employees, students, agents or suppliers on social media sites
- Such recommendations can give the impression that the recommendation is a reference on behalf of the School, even when a disclaimer is placed on such a comment
- Any request for such a recommendation should be dealt with by stating that this is not permitted in line with School policy and that a formal reference can be sought through UCD Human Resources, which is in line with the normal reference procedure

6.3 Corrections and reporting

- Once in the public domain, content cannot be retracted. Therefore, always take time to review your social media content in an objective manner before uploading
- If in doubt, ask a colleague or fellow student to review the content for you. Think through the consequences of what you say and what could happen if one of your colleagues or fellow students had to defend your comments
- If you make a mistake, be the first to point it out and correct it quickly. You may factually point out misrepresentations, but do not create an argument
- It is very important that staff and students immediately report any inappropriate activity or behaviour regarding the School via comms.medicine@ucd.ie. All allegations made in good faith will be fully and confidentially investigated

7. PROCEDURES

In addition to the above provisions, there are a number of key guiding principles that School staff and students should note when using social media:

- Always remember on-line content is never completely private
- Review your privacy settings regularly on social media platforms to ensure they provide you with sufficient personal protection and limit access by others
- Consider all online information with caution as there is no quality control process on the internet and a considerable amount of information may be inaccurate or misleading

- At all times respect copyright and intellectual property rights of information you encounter on the internet. This may require obtaining appropriate permission to make use of information. You must always give proper credit to the source of the information used

8. UCD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

The School is active on the following social media platforms



- If you are not yet active on social media, please consider these platforms as they may serve your communications/ social media outreach needs. Please send your suggested contents for Tweets and posts etc. to comms.medicine@ucd.ie
- If you are already active on social media, please follow the School's social media accounts and the School will follow you back, as appropriate

REFERENCES

- [UCD Brand Guidelines \(2018\)](#)
- [UCD Dignity and Respect Policy \(June 2017\)](#)
- [HSE Social Media Guide \(October 2020\)](#)
- [Medical Council Guide to Professional Conduct & Ethics 8th Edition \(Feb 2020\)](#) Includes Guide for doctors on how to maintain professional standards on social media