



Guidelines for Social Media Use

Social media is a powerful means of communication. Social media often blur the lines between people's personal and professional expression, so staff and students must think carefully about their online conduct, so as to preserve and protect their own, and each other's reputations, as well as the reputation of the Australian Chiropractic College.

ACC's position on the use of social media

While social media creates new tools, the same laws, policies, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting within and outside the College community apply online. The College community remains responsible for the same things, and needs to follow the same behavioural standards expected of us every day.

Students breaching these expectations through social media use will face potential disciplinary action and staff will face the same consequences described in the College's employment contract.

While the College will moderate its own official social media sites, it will not monitor or sanitise (censor or alter) content posted externally by its staff or students at large, absent reasonable complaints and evidence, or alleged breaches of law or College policy.

Ultimately, all staff and students are responsible for their own conduct - but where staff or students use any devices, services or technology provided by the College, or specifically relating to ACC personnel or activities, all content will be open to scrutiny, moderation and consequences.

General principles for using social media

The rules don't change just because you're using social media: remember that the same standards apply online as in real life - including laws, ACC policies, behavioural expectations and the rules of common courtesy - and so do the same consequences for breaching them, including student or staff disciplinary processes in the College setting. The following principles provide some additional guidance specifically relevant to social media use:

- *Be respectful, genuine and credible.*

- Remember each social media platform is different. Make sure you understand the nuances and accepted communication style of each tool, before you start posting.
- Remember social media spreads far and wide - please therefore post appropriately.
- If you make a mistake, admit it and fix it quickly.
- Maintain your online presence. Having outdated or unresponsive content on a social media page is arguably more compromising than having no presence at all.
- Maintain confidentiality. Social media is not secure and is far-reaching in its audience. Don't share any confidential, private or sensitive information through social media.
- Protect your own safety and privacy. Consider your own privacy and safety before publishing details about yourself and make yourself familiar with privacy settings on the platforms you use.
- Be aware of liability. You are responsible for you own posts, and they are almost impossible to erase. Be sure that what you post won't come back to haunt you later.
- Think about how your posts might affect other people. If you write something negative or inflammatory about someone on a social media site, the whole community can see it - so it may have a much greater impact on others, even though you may not see that impact first hand. If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't post it online.
- Think about the capacity you are acting in. If you are acting in an official College capacity (staff member, student rep, etc) or as a person with a connection to the College, see the additional guidance below. **If you are acting in your personal capacity, be sure to make that clear** (especially where people might get confused as to whether or not you are speaking on behalf of the College).

More to consider

- Distinguish between your personal and professional capacity. Make it clear when you are not speaking on behalf of the College. If an issue relates to your role at ACC and you are commenting on it, you should identify yourself and your connection to the College. You must then behave as the College directs through policies and employment terms.
- If you are both a student and a staff member, be sure to distinguish between your roles.
- Act within your authority. Just as you need authority to speak on behalf of the College to the media or outside entities, you need authority to speak as an ACC representative on social media sites.

- Use your online presence to promote the ACC and not to damage it.
- Staff should exercise careful judgment when interacting with students on social media sites. The guiding principles should be the same as for your relationships with students in the non-online world, including that you do not exert undue influence (or give the perception of exerting undue influence, or make the student feel like they are being influenced).
- Something posted on a social media site is still a written communication, so the same legal ramifications can result, such as defamation, trade practices/fair trading violations or breach of privacy or confidentiality - and because it's written in a permanent forum, it has the same evidentiary value as a more formal, hard copy communication.
- Respect ACC branding. Structure and design your College social media communications in a way that complies with our Branding Guidelines and Marketing and Advertising Policy.
- Reach out to others across the College community who are maintaining social media sites or posts, especially when they are targeted to the same audience. Work together to ensure a consistent tone and approach (a clear "ACC voice").
- Ask yourself whether there is anyone who you should keep informed about your social media communications on behalf of the College. Think about who you would cc on the same communication if it was in hard copy or email form - the same people probably should be informed about your social media posting.

Relevant ACC guidelines/policies

[Branding Guidelines](#)

[Marketing and Advertising Policy](#)

[Equity / Anti-discrimination Policy](#)

[Ethics and Code of Conduct](#)

Other resources and guidelines

- [South Australian Government Social Media Guidelines](#)
- <https://www.chiropracticboard.gov.au/Codes-guidelines/Social-media-guidance.aspx>