



MEMBER POLICY

SOCIAL MEDIA

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy provides a framework for Fellows and trainees of the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD), incorporating Dermatology Australasia (DA) who engage in, and make public comment on social media, and outlines protocols for using social media to undertake official ACD business.

2. SCOPE & PRINCIPLES

This policy outlines an approach for Fellows and trainees to consider their use of social media platforms.

This policy complements and extends upon the ACD Code of Ethics. This policy is intended to reinforce standards and expectations of conduct associated with membership of the College and the medical profession with respect to social media.

3. DEFINITIONS / KEY WORDS / ABBREVIATIONS

Industry: commercial entity involved in the development, manufacture, sales, marketing, distribution or user support of products and services used or prescribed by Fellows. This includes but is not limited to pharmaceutical and therapeutic/medical devices, E-health and medical software, indemnity, or other related products and services.

Interest: a commitment, goal, obligation or value associated with a social relationship or practice. In healthcare the safety and welfare of patients is the primary interest, although not sole obligation or interest of health care professionals.

Social media: internet-based tools that allow individuals and groups to communicate, to advertise or share opinions, information, ideas, messages, experiences, images, and video or audio clips. They may include (but are not limited to) platforms such as blogs, social networks, video and photo-sharing sites, and are used for:

- social networking (Facebook, Twitter, WEChat, Weibo, WhatsApp)
- professional networking (LinkedIn)
- discussion forums (Reddit, Whirlpool)
- media sharing (YouTube, Flickr, Instagram)
- content production (blogs [Tumblr, Blogger] and microblogs [Twitter])
- knowledge/information aggregation (Wikipedia)
- virtual reality and gaming environments (Second Life), and
- booking sites and apps (HealthEngine, Whitecoat, Podium).

Sponsor: an entity or group that provides support to an event, activity or cause, either financially or through the provision of resources, presenters, products or services. In providing support the sponsor may seek to target or influence a particular audience.

Sponsorship: a negotiated agreement between an individual and a sponsor, where the individual receives payment for participation in sponsored activities, events or on communication platforms.

Sponsorship agreement: a document signed by the sponsor and the individual detailing scope, costs and timeframe of sponsorship activities.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Use of social media Fellows and trainees

4.1.1 Participation in online forums should reflect the same high standards of professional behaviour that are expected when ACD business is conducted in person. This includes upholding ACD's organisational values, and adherence to the ACD's Professional Code of Ethics. When engaging in social media, staff, Fellows and trainees are expected to exercise care and discretion in all online communications.

4.1.2 ACD Fellows and trainees should not purport to represent the views of ACD, and should:

- a) not use the ACD logos and branding unless authorised, and in line with the relevant ACD policies
- b) declare that all communications and content are their own and do not represent the views of ACD or their employer. For example, 'This account reflects my personal views and not the views of ACD, or any ACD committees or boards with which I am involved.'

4.1.3 When using social media Fellows and trainees must not:

- a) disclose ACD confidential information
- b) post, communicate or create content which references ACD and may adversely or negatively affect ACD's reputation, image, or commercial interests
- c) represent themselves as, or communicate in such a way that the public would believe that they are acting for or communicating on behalf of ACD
- d) post any material that defames, harasses, vilifies, discriminates against, sexually harasses, bullies, stalks, victimises, brings into disrepute, or threatens another person or organisation, in particular to: ACD employees, Fellows or trainees or any ACD affiliated body or association
- e) Not post information that is inaccurate, misleading or deceptive.

4.2 General obligations in the use of social media by Fellows and trainees

The behaviour of Fellows and trainees is guided by relevant professional policies such as the Medical Board of Australia's social media policy; the AMA Guide to Social Media and Medical Professionalism, relevant national laws and regulations relating to social media (the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law)) and the ACD Professional Code of Ethics.

4.2.1 Examples of social media behaviours that Fellows and trainees 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) disclosing confidential or personal information about their patients or their colleagues.

4.3 Use of social media for Sponsors and Industry

Posts made by Fellows and trainees where there is commercial content or partnerships evident - members should remain cognisant of their own conduct in relation to participating in commercial social media activity to ensure it does not contravene any codes or the Sponsorship – Member Policy.

5. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Fellows and trainees of College are required to comply with this policy at all times. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in ACD incurring significant legal, financial or reputational risks, and are considered to be a breach of the ACD Professional Code of Ethics. Individual members may also be subject to AHPRA investigation or Medical Defence Organisation review.

6. APPROVAL AUTHORITIES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The following authorities are delegated under this policy:

Policy	Approve new policy and major amendment		Approve minor amendments	
	Authority	Reporting Requirements	Authority	Reporting Requirements
Sponsorship	Board	Annual	CEO	Annual

CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Policy Number:	MEM004
Approval Authority:	Board
Responsible Officer:	CEO
Designated Officer:	Director, Membership & Professional Services
First approved:	19 November 2022
Effective Start date	19 November 2022
Review date	19 November 2023

HISTORY

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1	19/11/2022	Board approved

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Professional Code of Ethics](#)

[ACD Factsheet: Before you post](#)

[Sponsorship Policy – Managerial Policy](#)

[Sponsorship Policy – Member](#)

[AMA Guide to Social Media and Medical Professionalism](#)

[The Medical Board Social Media Guidance](#)

[Ahpra & National Boards Advertising Hub](#)