

Student Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Royal Veterinary College recognises that social media provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions, engage with the wider community, and share information using a wide variety of media. The College encourages students to engage in appropriate and responsible use of social media, which allows for useful communication channels and maintains the wellbeing of individuals and the wider community.

1.2 However, use of social media can pose risks to both students and the College. These include risk to the College's reputation and compliance with legal obligations. Students may also be at risk of committing offences or projecting an image that does not conform to their professional standards, which may have long term effects on their professional reputation. To minimise these risks the College requires students to adhere to this policy, which outlines student responsibilities when using social media. Staff are also asked to adhere to the [Staff Social Media Policy](#).

1.3 Nothing in this Policy is intended to restrict or undermine the right to academic freedom.

2. Purpose and scope of the policy

2.1 This policy covers all individuals studying at all levels at the College, including undergraduate, postgraduate (including PhD), visiting and distance learning students, students on overseas partnerships, Interns and Residents (collectively referred to as students).

2.2 This policy covers the use of all forms of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, The Student Room, Twitter, Reddit, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia. The College has a separate policy regarding acceptable use of the College's IT systems.

2.3 This policy applies to the use of social media for both study and personal purposes, whether during study hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the College's IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to students.

2.4 The purpose of this policy is to encourage good practice and wellbeing through guidance on the use of social media; to protect the College, its staff, clients and students; to clarify where and how existing policies and procedures apply to social media and to promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the College's activities.

3. Student's Responsibility

3.1 Students are expected to be mindful of how their identity, statements or views appear online and are advised that placement providers, employers and industry contacts may view

social media profiles when deciding to take on a placement student or when hiring to get an idea of a candidate's character, personality or employability.

3.2

4.5 The following non-exhaustive list is considered to be of an unacceptable nature and should never be posted:

- (a) Confidential information (which may include research not yet in the public domain, information about fellow students or staff or personal matters, non-public or not yet approved documents or information)
- (b) Information in any form (such as photographs) of animals or clients at the RVC or at placements. This includes live and deceased animals, as well as cadaver tissue. In respect of animals that are the property of the RVC, and cadaver material of teaching sessions, permission must be agreed with a member of staff and the local rules of the anatomy museum, dissection room and the live animals' spaces must be followed.
- (c) Details of complaints/potential complaints and/or legal proceedings/potential legal proceedings involving the College
- (d) Personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission
- (e) Comments posted using fake accounts, made-up names or using another person's name without their consent
- (f) Inappropriate material, including images, video, podcasts or other content that is, or may be perceived to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, indecent, defamatory, or hostile towards any individual, group or entity
- (g) Any other posting that constitutes, or may constitute, a criminal offence
- (h) Anything which may bring the College into disrepute or compromise the safety or reputation of colleagues, former colleagues, students, staff and those connected with the College.

4.6 Students should be aware that statements on social media that cause harm to an individual, including to their reputation, or that interfere with an ongoing disciplinary/legal process may create a potential claim against the individual making the statement. Furthermore, this may extend to the sharing of statements made by others.

4.7 Students should also be aware that communications on social media are also subject to legislation, which aim to prevent interference with legal proceedings regardless of intent to do so.

4.8

scientific or veterinary medicine specific communication in the veterinary or scientific press confirmation should also be obtained from the Course Director.

8. Breach of the Policy

8.1 Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including suspension from the College or referral to the Professional Requirements Procedure or Professional Bodies. Any student suspected of breaching this

- **Understand the expectations regarding professionalism and confidentiality.**
The RCVS has produced fitness to practice guidelines for [Veterinary Schools and Veterinary Students](#), as well as guidelines for [Veterinary Nursing Students and Veterinary Nurses](#) and [Social Media Guidelines](#). Breaching these guidelines could affect your ability to study and any future career. Students not on these courses are also expected to adhere to the RVC social media policy.

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3. Social media and your professional profile

- **Do you use your social media accounts to help with your future?** There is lots of information about your future options available through social media. This can be about **employers**, post grad opportunities, volunteering and self-employment. Use social media explain opportunities available to you.
- **Manage your online presence.** What does your digital presence look like? Do you manage it **coherently**? Make sure that your digital presence reflects your current interests both on a professional and personal level, particularly if you have chosen for your account to be public.
- **Take time regularly to review what you are posting / liking / following.** Future employers **explore** and check your digital presence. This is also a good thing to do to ensure you are 'targeting' your 'socials' time effectively to keep you informed about future opportunities. The careers consultants can talk through with you how to manage your social media accounts to develop a professional online presence.
- **Consider what you want to get out of social media.** If you are planning on using social media as a professional tool, shape your accounts to promote your professional interests, **skills** and experiences. If you're not planning on using social media professionally, remember that it's still a reflection of you and employers will still check it regardless of your intent.

Acknowledgments

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Amendments: