Social Media Policy

For Students and Staff

October 2022

RCSI Social Media Policy for Staff & Students

1. Introduction

RCSI recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media provides. Social media is a tool used to celebrate success, communicate research, leverage key activities and initiatives, share news, enhance profile and reputation, and build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders online. Therefore, RCSI actively encourages staff and students to use social media platforms in a positive, constructive and responsible manner.

While many positive opportunities are presented by social media, there are also associated risks. Often, the lines between an individual's personal or professional views and those of RCSI as an institution can become blurred. Even when an account states that 'views are personal', the views can be perceived externally as those of RCSI as an institution.

2. Purpose

This policy helps to clarify how to use social media platforms to protect and benefit the University, its staff and its students.

This policy provides guidance to all staff and students[1] on how to responsibly use social media to maximise benefits whilst mitigating risks. In particular, it provides information on staff and student responsibilities when communicating via social media.

The purpose of this social media policy is to:

- enable RCSI's staff and students to use social media in its various forms to make RCSI more accessible and visible to online audiences as a leading centre for professional education, research and innovation in healthcare.

- enable RCSI's staff and students to use social media to appropriately enhance and add value to their activities and achievements.to ensure that RCSI's reputation nationally and internationally is enhanced.
- ensure that RCSI's reputation nationally and internationally is protected.
- ensure RCSI's staff, students, patients, people under the care of and all people affiliated with the RCSI are protected.
- set out the responsibilities of staff and students when using social media.
- ensure privacy rights are maintained and that social media activity does not lead to the discovery of data that would otherwise have rightfully remained undisclosed.

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[1] See 'Scope' for further details

- ensure a consistent messaging and branding approach to social media across the University.
- signpost to staff and students resources and contacts that will support them in enhancing their social media presence and that of the University.

3. Definition

RCSI defines social media as online environments on which content is created, consumed, promoted, distributed, discovered or shared.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all RCSI staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students, PhD students, Researchers, and all those operating on behalf of the University, such as contractors, honorary appointees, agency staff, visiting academics and international and transnational operations of RCSI, hereinafter, collectively referred to as 'Users'.

This policy governs the use of social media;
- by Users communicating with, on behalf of or in reference to the University
- for both University business and personal purposes
- on platforms representing the University and/or perceived to be representative of the University
- whether inside or outside of normal University work/ study time
- whether on RCSI or personal devices

5. RCSI Academic Freedom Statement

While recognising that social media plays an important role in the context of academic freedom, the principles of RCSI's Academic Freedom Statement[2] apply also to the use of social media and the University requires responsible and scholarly use in line with this policy.

6. RCSI Social Media Platforms

A register of all official RCSI social media accounts can be found at Appendix 1. These social media accounts are managed by the RCSI Communications Department.

A register of all RCSI Departmental accounts, including details of the account type (i.e. what medium of social media), department/ theme, and the purpose and/ or aim of the account, is available on request from the Communications Department.

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[2] *'Academic freedom within RCSI is valued as the freedom to teach, speak, conduct and publish research, and participate in professional or representative academic bodies without interference, censorship or penalty, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly endeavour'.*

All accounts must also list the person(s) within the department/team/group who are responsible for the monitoring and upkeep of the account.

7. RCSI Departmental/ Team Accounts

RCSI understands that specific departments, teams, groups, clubs and societies benefit from having their own individual social media presence. The RCSI, as a whole, also benefits from this. Each department/team/ club/ society is responsible for monitoring and managing their specific social media account(s) in accordance with the contents of this policy. It is important that RCSI's online presence is kept relevant and up to date. RCSI social media accounts that are not kept current may be de-activated.

All Users should be aware that, while contributing to the University's social media activities, they are representing the University and must maintain the standards set out in this policy.

8. Setting up new RCSI Social Media Accounts

There are currently over 40 live RCSI social media accounts in use. Before setting up a new RCSI social media account, it is important to consider whether there is a different audience or set of objectives which cannot be met through an existing account(s).

In order to establish a new social media account, permission must be obtained from RCSI's Communications Department. The Department will provide guidance and advice on how to get started and how to develop a social media plan, giving careful consideration to:

- the target audience and their information needs
- the content to be shared
- how producing content and monitoring the account will be resourced
- how this account sits together with those already established across the University

Any social media site or page directly related or perceived to be representative of RCSI, currently existing or newly created without authorisation by the Communications Department will be subject to review and may be amended or removed, in line with section 10 of this policy.

9. Social Media Usage Policy – Responsibilities

Users must at all times use social media sites and pages in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of themselves, the University and of all others. In particular, Users responsibilities include the following:

9.1 General Responsibilities:

- It is the responsibility of Users to read this policy and act in accordance with it
- It is the responsibility of Users to act in accordance with the rules and guidelines set out by individual social media companies and platforms.
- Users should check the terms and conditions of social media platforms before uploading material to it; by posting material to social media platforms, ownership rights and control of the content may be released. For this reason, it is important to exercise caution in sharing information, especially where the information, expressly or by implication or innuendo, identifies a third party.
- Users should be mindful of how their identity, statements or views appear online.
- Users should be mindful that any content posted, shared or endorsed online has the potential of reaching a wider audience than expected or intended.

9.2 User Responsibilities:

- Users are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and must adhere to the standards set out in this policy and all other relevant University polices [3].
- Users must at all times respect the confidentiality and privacy rights of patients, the University, colleagues, staff, students and alumni.
- Users must not post, share or engage in content that is deemed to be, or could be perceived as, inappropriate, discriminatory, threatening, harassing, indecent, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, violent, or hostile towards any individual, group or entity.
- Users must not use pseudonyms or seek to impersonate any other person or entity online.
- Users must not infringe copyright and/or intellectual property rights. When posting, users must be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of the University and others, including those relating to images, videos, data and all other forms of copyright and or/ intellectual property.
- The RCSI name and logo, including all names and logos under the trademarks of RCSI, must not to be used to promote a cause, petition, political party or candidate.
- Users should avoid posting or sharing content that they do not wish to be in the public domain.
- On personal social media accounts, Users must take particular care to state that views are their own and not those of RCSI.
- Users must not use social media as a means of engaging in argumentative conversation.
- Users must not use social media as a means for submitting or voicing a complaint against RCSI [4].
- User must not post, share or engage in content that contravenes GDPR rules or intrudes on any privacy rights.

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[3] **Staff**: Data Protection Policies, Dignity at Work Policy, Staff Disciplinary Procedure, Equal Opportunities Policy, Grievance Procedure, Intellectual Property Policy, Protected Disclosure Policy, IT Acceptable Usage Policy, IT System Access Policy, Internet Usage Policy
Students: Student Agreement Policy, Disciplinary Regulations, IT Acceptable Usage Policy, RCSI Student Privacy Policy, RCSI Student Complaints Procedure, Student Dignity and Respect Policy
[4] This includes the University and all its campuses, staff, faculty, alumni, students, researchers, PhD students, research outputs, projects and any University related news.

10. Risks of Social Media

RCSI also wants to ensure that our staff and students are protected from possible risks associated with social media. Whereas the use of social media is generally positive, sometimes, content posted can inadvertently cause offence or breach privacy rights. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the risks as well as the benefits when engaging in communication via social media.

<u>Top Tips for Social Media:</u>
1. Become familiar with the privacy policies of the social media channels you use and customize your privacy settings to control who sees what.
2. Use a strong password and use a different password for each of your social media accounts.
3. Be careful about what you share. Don't reveal sensitive personal information about yourself or anyone else.
4. Click on links with caution. Social media accounts are regularly hacked. Look out for language or content that does not sound like something your friend or connection would post.
5. Think before you post, share, comment or engage. Put yourself in the shoes of someone else reading it and ask yourself if it could in any way be deemed upsetting.

Below are some examples of how difficult situations can arise from the use of social media:

Example A
An RCSI student on a clinical rotation takes a photo of the list of procedures planned for the day and posts it on Instagram with the caption 'A busy day ahead!'. The post was visible to all 200 of the student's followers. Although the student did not realise it, the uploaded photo of the list of procedures had some patients names listed at the side. One of the students followers comments under the photo 'Hey, the third patient on the list is my next door neighbor!' and also texts the patient to wish them good luck with the procedure.

Example B
An RCSI employee operating a Twitter account under the name of their Department retweets a post by a political party accompanied by a strong, opinionated comment and engages in argumentative conversation with another twitter user. Within 3 days, the post and comments are viewed and retweeted by over 1000 other twitter users. Many of these users begin to follow @RCSI in response, suggesting they think these views are those of RCSI's.

Example C
A staff member posts an opinion from their personal social media account which results in an argumentative exchange. An external individual is offended by the comments. They identify the author as an RCSI staff member and raises the issue with RCSI saying that RCSI's values and reputation are being undermined.

Example D
A WhatsApp group for students on rotation is created. One of the students starts to send messages to another student who had not previously agreed to share their number, asking them out repeatedly and sending messages at all hours of the day and night.

11. Breach of the Policy

In the interest of User safety, RCSI reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to be in breach of this policy.

On receipt of notice (or where the University otherwise becomes aware) of any suspected breach of this policy, the University will be required to conduct further enquiries and reserves the right to remove, or require the removal of, any content that is deemed by the University to be in breach of this policy.

Concerns may be raised not only by RCSI students or staff, but also potentially by external sources.

RCSI will take appropriate action against Users when an allegation of a breach has been identified. Action taken against Users who act in breach of this policy will be in line with the relevant University policy[3].

12. Social Media Training & Support

Supporting our staff and students to engage on social media is an important objective for here at RCSI. We want to equip Users with the skills to communicate effectively on social media in a way that builds personal profiles and amplifies our institutional efforts to enhance our reputation online.

The RCSI Communications Department has developed a number of helpful guides such as a social media toolkit, content style guide and RCSI's visual identity style guide. These guides provide information on how to get started, how to set objectives, how to create content and how to track progress. RCSI staff can access these informative guides on the staff portal here and students can request a copy by emailing the Communications Department.

13. Raising Queries or Concerns

Any staff or student who is concerned about any activity on social media regarding themselves, a student, staff member or the University in general, should contact the Communications Department immediately so that appropriate action can be taken at the earliest possible time.

The Communications Department will progress the matter, if deemed required, with the relevant professional service department (Student Welfare or Human Resources) so that dedicated support can be offered those affected.

If a breach of this policy is deemed to have occurred, as a standard action, the matter will be brought to the attention of the staff member or student involved. They will be briefed on the Social Media Policy and a full investigation will be instigated if warranted.

14. Monitoring of Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. RCSI will ensure this policy, and any future changes, are accessible to all Users.

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[5] **Staff** – Human Resources Department, **Students** – Registry@rcsi.ie

Appendix 1 - Ratified RCSI Social Media accounts

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/rcsi123/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/RCSI_Irl
YouTube: https://www/youtube.com/RCSIIrl
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/rcsi_irl
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/rcsi
Snapchat: https://www/snapchat.com/add/rcsisnaps

Appendix 2 - Consultation Group Members:

Ms. Mags Browne - Dean's Office
Ms. Paula Curtin, Head of Communications
Mr. Niall Duane – Undergraduate Students Union IT Officer
Ms. Katelyn J. Genoud – Postgraduate Students Union PR Officer
Ms. Pamela Moorhouse - Physician Associate Student, PA Programme
Prof Denni Woodmansee – Associate Professor and Programme Director, PA Programme
Prof Zena Moore – Head of School, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Dr Oran Kennedy – Lecturer, Anatomy & Regenerative Medicine
Mr Eric Clarke – Lecturer, Foundation Year Medicine and Physiotherapy
Ms. Grainne McDonough – Head of Institutional Research & Planning, OIRP
Ms. Sadhbh Smyth - Student Services Co-ordinator, Student Services
Mr Mark O'Dea –HR Partner, Human Resources
Ms Maire Ryan – HR Partner, Human Resources

Appendix 3 – Researched Policies

DCU
DeMontfort University
Queens University Belfast
Kings College London
The University of Liverpool

Document Title:			RCSI Social Media Policy (for Staff & Students)		
Name of Unit:			The Office of the Dean & Communications Department		
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1	Draft	MB & KO'S	Consultation Group	Amendments Suggested	27th November 2019
2	Draft	MB, KO'S & Consultation Group	Consultation Group	Consultation Group	17th December 2019
3	Draft	MB, KO'S & Consultation Group	Academic Council	Amendments Suggested	15th January 2020
4	Draft	MB, KO'S & Consultation Group	Academic Council		12th February 2020
5	Final	MB, KO'S & Consultation Group	MHSB		
6	Reviewed	PC & MOD	RCSI Policy Consultation Group	Senior Management Team	25th October 2022