

Appropriate Use of Social Media Guidelines

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Definitions

Affiliated Associations	Includes, but is not limited to, provincial and territorial medical regulatory authorities, health authorities and medical associations, and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA).
Learner	Faculty of Medicine (FoM) undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate or visiting student.
Personal Health Information	Information that a health-care professional collects to identify an individual and determine appropriate care. This includes, but is not limited to, identifiable information about physical and mental health, family history, organ donation, insurance coverage, and prescriptions.
Social Media	Web-based and mobile technologies that allow people to monitor, create, share, or manipulate text, audio, photos, videos, or other content with others. Examples of social media include but are not limited to: Facebook, X (the platform formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn and TikTok.

Overview

Social Media can be used for promotion, engagement, interaction, immediate, emergency communications and more. FoM faculty, staff and Learners have unique ethical and professional obligations that must be upheld in both their professional and personal life. Therefore, they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the professional and ethical standards of the medical profession, Affiliated Associations and Memorial University (Memorial). The appropriate use of Social Media, whether in a private or public capacity, is part of this obligation.

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Memorial is committed to academic freedom and freedom of speech. These guidelines are not intended to restrict freedom of expression.

Memorial emphasizes inclusion, professionalism, respect and well-being. There are a number of university policies and procedures, which help achieve this. In situations where there are concerns raised involving Social Media, the following policies could provide a mechanism to coordinate the necessary process to be utilized, as appropriate:

- Memorial's [Respectful Workplace](#) policy deals with harassment concerns and complaints that arise in the workplace environment.
- Memorial's [Student Code of Conduct](#) deals with concerns and complaints that arise involving Learners.
- Memorial's [Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault](#) policy and its procedures deal with complaints of a sexual or gender identity nature.
- [Memorial's Privacy Policy](#).
- [Faculty of Medicine's Policy for the Prevention and Resolution of Medical Learner Mistreatment in the Faculty of Medicine](#) for undergraduate and postgraduate Learners.

Purpose

To provide clarity and direction to FoM faculty, staff and Learners regarding what is considered appropriate behavior when using Social Media.

Scope

These guidelines will apply to all faculty, staff and Learners in the FoM at Memorial.

Guidelines

- 1.0 Faculty, staff and Learners should consider the following when using Social Media:
 - 1.1. **General Considerations**
 - 1.1.1. All individuals must assume personal responsibility for information they post using Social Media.
 - 1.1.2. Any Social Media post can be accessed and made public. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
 - 1.1.3. Be aware of privacy settings for Social Media accounts and monitor them on a regular basis. Keep in mind that privacy settings can be compromised.

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- 1.1.4. Social Media posts are subject to the same laws of copyright, libel and defamation as any other forms of communication (i.e., written, oral, etc.).
- 1.1.5. Refrain from making posts on Social Media that use institutional intellectual property, copyrights, or trademarks (e.g., a university crest or hospital logo) without explicit written permission.
- 1.1.6. Become familiar with, and follow, the policies and procedures in place regarding the use of Social Media for the health-care institutions, colleges, Affiliated Associations and organizations to which you belong.
- 1.1.7. Faculty, staff and Learners who are involved in the administration of Social Media pages and accounts that represent the official, institutional presence of Memorial must comply with the [University's Social Media guidelines](#).
 - 1.1.7.1 Contact the FoM Communications Office for information and support regarding Social Media.
- 1.2. **Animal-Based Research**
 - 1.2.1. Publication or posting of images involving animals or animal-based research on Social Media is subject to approval by faculty supervisors and university representatives for Animal Care and Veterinary Resources.
- 1.3 **Professionalism Considerations**
 - 1.3.1 When using Social Media, faculty, staff, and Learners must not imply that they represent, or are expressing the opinion of Memorial, FoM or Affiliated Associations. Before making any posts, ask: What is my message? What online presence am I projecting? Would the post reflect poorly upon me, the institutions I am associated with, or my profession? Who is my audience?
 - 1.3.2 Do not transmit or post material online that is considered to be inappropriate, demeaning, derogatory, discriminatory, or harassing in nature.
 - 1.3.3 Do not misrepresent professional and/or academic qualifications online.
 - 1.3.3.1 Learners must not offer medical advice in any non-educational setting, including Social Media.

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- 1.3.4 Be proactive in removing unprofessional content from personal online profiles.
- 1.3.5 Maintain professional boundaries with colleagues, patients and supervisors online and respect their right to privacy.
- 1.3.6 Retain the appropriate boundaries of the patient-physician relationship when dealing with individual patients on Social Media. The same standards of professionalism apply whether face-to-face or online.
 - 1.3.6.1 Exercise caution when considering invitations to become online 'friends' with patients and their families.
- 1.3.7 Be mindful of patient privacy and confidentiality. Patient information, including images, should never be posted online.
 - 1.3.7.1 The provincial [Personal Health Information Act](#) (PHIA) and the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (ATIPPA), [Privacy Policy](#) and all applicable privacy legislation must be followed at all times.

Related Links

[Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(ATIPPA\)](#)

[Canadian Federation of Medical Students Guide to Medical Professionalism: Recommendations For Social Media](#)

[Canadian Medical Association – Social Media Use](#)

[CMPA – Social Media: The opportunities, the realities](#)

[CMPA - Top 10 tips for using social media in professional practice](#)

[College of Physicians and Surgeons of NL - Physician Use of Social Media](#)

[Faculty of Medicine's Policy for the Prevention and Resolution of Medical Learner Mistreatment in the Faculty of Medicine](#)

[Memorial's Privacy Policy](#)

[Memorial's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault](#)

[Memorial's University Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Memorial University's Social Media Guidelines](#)

[Personal Health Information Act \(PHIA\)](#)

[Respectful Workplace Policy](#)