

## **Queen's Health Sciences social media Policy**

### **Introduction**

Queen's Health Sciences (QHS) recognizes that social media now plays an increasingly essential role in communication and self-expression, including new opportunities for communicating with our audiences including, but not limited to, students, faculty, staff, patients, community partners, and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy is to provide all persons identified above with guidelines and an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as representatives of the QHS for participating in social media, including both QHS-hosted social media and non-QHS social media in which the person's affiliation to the QHS is known. This policy complements existing university policies, and reiterates our duty to protect confidential information under law and the interests of Queen's University, its students, staff, and faculty. This policy has been closely aligned with the Social Media Policy developed by Kingston General Hospital (#01-151) to ensure similar guidelines for those individuals with appointments at our affiliated teaching hospitals.

### **Policy**

Social media may be used by all persons for business-related purposes subject to the restrictions set out in this policy. These restrictions are intended to ensure compliance with the law and with university policies including but not limited to workplace conduct, privacy and confidentiality, communications, code of conduct, and discrimination/harassment.

This policy also applies to the use of social media when a person is away from work and when the person's faculty affiliation is identified, known, or presumed. While there is a distinction between professional and personal life, actions outside the workplace can affect a person's relationship with the QHS if those actions bring the faculty's reputation and people working and learning at the faculty into disrepute or otherwise affect the employment relationship at the organization. It is important to remember that online identities and actions are visible to the public, widely accessible and available for a long time.

Known or suspected breaches of information must be reported to the university's Records Management and Privacy Office. Consequences of deliberate violations or more serious breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and/or affiliation with the QHS

### **Definitions**

**Discrimination:** Behaviour that excludes individuals or treats them unfairly because they are

members of a specific group. According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, individuals cannot be discriminated against in employment based on their race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, same sex partner status, colour ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, marital status, age, disability, citizenship, family status or religion.

**Social media:** For the purposes of this policy, the term “social media” refers to any facility that allows for online publication, commentary, and social networking, including but not limited to websites, online forums, blogs, wikis, Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), Flickr, Skype, and YouTube.

**QHS social media:** This refers to the use of corporate social media accounts, i.e. accounts that are created, branded, and utilized by the QHS for official purposes of informing, educating, and communicating with our audiences. These accounts represent the QHS as an organization.

**Non-QHS social media:** This refers to the use of social media accounts exclusively for personal purposes, i.e. self-hosted accounts used to communicate with family, friends, etc. While use of social media accounts for educational and personal/professional development is permitted, all use must comply with this policy.

## **Procedure**

### **QHS Social Media Use**

1. The creation of a social media account representing a group or body requires the approval of the leader/manager/department head of that group or body.
2. Use of the logos, trademarks and images owned by the university must be in keeping the Queen’s Visual Identity Standards and the Queen’s University Trademark Licensing Program.
3. Social media content must comply with all university policies including, but not limited to those addressing privacy and confidentiality, communication, and workplace/student conduct (see list of specific policies below).
4. Confidential information related to the faculty, the persons who teach, work, learn, or volunteer in the QHS, patients and families, or any other QHS partners may not be released, posted, or shared through social media.
5. A person may not publish, post, or share materials that are malicious, threatening or contain discriminatory or offensive comments that are known or ought to have reasonably been known to be offensive or unwelcome, including those in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code, or the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
6. Photo and video permissions
  - 6.1. Photos or video recordings of identifiable patients and families cannot be posted on social media without documented signed consent and/or approval from the relevant healthcare provider.

- 6.2. Best practices suggest that photos or video recordings of identifiable persons should first involve informing those persons of your intent to use the material on social media. However, any photograph or video on an QHS-hosted social media account should be removed at the request of any identifiable person who did not grant prior consent.
7. Photos or video recordings of patients for the purposes of medical education and/or research, particularly where classical or unusual disease entities are involved, cannot be posted on social media without signed consent from the patient or person authorized to act on his/her behalf. This holds true even when the patient cannot be readily identified.
8. Unauthorized use of the faculty's intellectual property in social media communications is prohibited. Social media users must abide by copyright laws, ensuring they have permission to use or reproduce copyrighted text, photos, graphics, video or other registered or trademark material owned by others.

### **Non-QHS Social Media Use**

1. In any personal social media use, the user must abide by all QHS/Queen's policies including but not limited to privacy, confidentiality, and harassment.
2. In any personal social media use, the user should not identify individuals as patients or ask them to identify themselves as a patient.
3. In any personal social media use, if a person identifies their affiliation with Queen's or the QHS, then he/she should visibly include the disclaimer such as: "The views expressed here are my own and do not reflect the views the Faculty of Health Sciences, Queen's University" or "views are my own".

#### Queen's University References:

Queen's Social Media Guidelines

Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure

Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy

Online Harassment and Cyber-Bullying

Student Code of Conduct

Intellectual Property Guidelines

Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy

Media Relations

#### Other References:

Kingston General Hospital Social Media Policy #01-151, 2015