

Social Media Guidelines for Engagement with Membership and Members of the Public

This document is based on guidelines produced by the American Association of Clinical Anatomists (with permission) and from guidelines produced by medical governing bodies from the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand*.

Terms of Participation

The Anatomical Society's aims are to promote, develop and advance research and education in all aspects of anatomical science. One way these aims are achieved is using Social Media. Social media provides a medium for the Anatomical Society's Website, Media and Communications Committee (WMCC) to receive and share timely information quickly and concisely with the society's social followers, many of whom are members of the society. Currently the social media platforms used by the society's WMCC are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

The Anatomical Society promotes discussion on current anatomy-related research and topics and Social Media is another tool in which the society can facilitate such activities since Social Media allows the society to increase communication and engagement with the greater worldwide anatomy community. Social Media also offers the society the opportunity to network with other relevant professional societies and associations worldwide and promote the society's professional image.

The society is committed to maintaining a safe and professional environment on Social Media, which allows for discussions to take place with mutual respect for everyone involved. Posts should therefore meet the professional standards expected from the Anatomical Society. Members of the society and the WMCC are encouraged to use Social Media when appropriate. However, occasionally it is not appropriate to use Social Media to relay information to the Society's followers due to the fact that such posts may be likely to reduce the public's trust in the Anatomical Society and the profession of anatomy.

Inappropriate posts may include:

1. Defaming, offensive, vulgar, harassing, or threatening language, personal attacks or accusations, or derogatory terms targeting individuals or groups.
2. Confidential information from a member of the society or the public which threatens their privacy (e.g., home address, credit card numbers). It is advised to get informed consent from the individuals featured in your posts before posting.
3. Photos and videos of cadavers or cadaveric material are prohibited. Bear in mind that legislation on public display of cadaveric material varies internationally and therefore you may come across Social Media posts containing cadaveric remains. Do not repost these since it cannot be ensured that consent was given for the public posting of this information and the Anatomical Society does not wish to be associated with such

information. Furthermore, while you may be accustomed to seeing cadaveric remains, the general public is not, and may consider such content to be offensive. Any posts relating to human remains should be respectful, professional, and not gratuitous.

4. Photos, videos or other media for which the society is not the copyright holder.
5. Privileged communications meant for within the society, or information that is not for public disclosure.
6. Advertising, solicitations, commercial endorsements, with the exception of corporate sponsorship that is approved by the society.
7. Personal views or information, spam, or comments that are clearly “off topic” or not conducive to the Anatomical Society’s aims. WMCC members should bear in mind that while posting for the Anatomical Society, they are representing the Society, rather than themselves and, therefore, any individual views should be reserved for their own professional accounts. All members of the Anatomical Society, regardless of whether they are members of the WMCC, should state on their own Social Media profiles that “views are my own” (or to that effect), so as to not be deemed supported or associated with the Anatomical Society or any other professional body (e.g., your employer or associated University).
8. Lobbying, political or religious campaigning, with the exception of lobbying or political support for which the society has taken an official position.
9. It is always worth bearing in mind that many Social Media platforms are within the public domain and therefore consideration must be given to the potential vast reach of these posts. Furthermore, posts are generally permanent, even if deleted by users as the relevant platforms store posts indefinitely, meaning that posts can always be tracked down and traced. Therefore, “think before you post”, as posts can potentially be viewed by anyone and for any length of time.
10. It is important that all Social Media users associated with the Anatomical Society take responsibility to use these professionally so as to maintain the public’s trust in the Anatomical Society and the anatomy profession. Each individual user is accountable for their own posts and the impression they give of both the user themselves and any professional bodies they are associated with. One common rule of thumb used by professionals on Social Media is that if they would not tell it to their mother or their boss, then they should not post it onto a Social Media forum. The American Association of Clinical Anatomists summarise this by recommending that we “Dance like no one is watching. Tweet like everyone is reading”.
11. The Anatomical Society’s Social Media platforms are managed and monitored by the WMCC, who reserves the right to remove any posts considered inappropriate for public viewing. Any Social Media users who repeatedly violate the Terms of Participation on the Anatomical Society’s Social Media platforms will be banned from participating.

If in doubt, contact socialmedia@anatsoc.org.uk

*Governing bodies and documents used to produce these guidelines.

Governing body	Document name	Link to resource (all last accessed: (21/02/2019))
General Medical Council	Doctor's Use of Social Media	https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/doctors-use-of-social-media/doctors-use-of-social-media
British Medical Association	Using Social Media: Practical and Ethical Guidance for Doctors and Medical Students & Students and Social Media	Both available here: https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/ethics/medical-students-ethics-toolkit/12-students-and-social-media
Canadian Medical Association	Social Media and Canadian Physicians: Issues and Rules of Engagement	http://policybase.cma.ca/dbtw-wpd/Policypdf/PD12-03.pdf
Canadian Federation of Medical Students	Guide to Medical Professionalism: Recommendations for Social Media	https://www.cfms.org/files/internal-policy-bylaws/CFMS%20Guide%20to%20Social%20Media%20Professionalism.pdf
Australian Medical Association and New Zealand Medical Association	Social Media and the Medical Profession	http://www.amawa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Social-Media-and-the-Medical-Profession_FINAL-with-links.pdf
American College of Physicians and Federation of State Medical Boards	Online Medical Professionalism	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23579867
American Medical Association	Professionalism Guidelines for Social Media Use: A Starting Point	https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/professional-guidelines-social-media-use-starting-point/2015-05
Federation of State Medical Boards	Model Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Social Media and Social Networking in Medical Practice	http://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/model-guidelines-for-the-appropriate-use-of-social-media-and-social-networking.pdf

Written by Catherine Hennessy and the Website Media Communications Committee members Iain Keenan and Joanna Matthan (February 2019).