

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This policy outlines appropriate participation of Australasian Dental employees in social media technology.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the boundaries employees are required to understand about private identity within the social media context. There is the need to be mindful of behaviour that can impact on employees' public roles and the reputation of Australasian Dental Group.

While the purpose of this policy is not to prescribe boundaries to an employee's private identity within the social media context, the inappropriate use of social media, either in a professional or personal capacity, can violate the privacy, breach the security and harm the reputations of other employees. Such activity may be determined as misconduct or serious misconduct, resulting in possible disciplinary action or termination of employment.

Reference to various Australasian Dental Group policies, regulations and codes of conduct regarding employee media representations, and use of information technologies, are included for consideration with this policy. Employees need to be aware of relevant policies and codes of conduct relevant to use of computers and networks of Australasian Dental Group and social media sites.

Definitions

"Employee" means a person employed by the Australasian Dental Group.

"Social media" and relevant information technology includes the transmission of text and images by, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Second Life, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Flickr, Urban Dictionary and YouTube.

Policy statement

Social media technology is now being used not only for online communities, but also as an alternative for 'traditional' business communication. For many people, participation in these forms of communication technologies is an integral aspect of their professional and social lives, which may lead to a blurring of the public face and private identity of employees.

Australasian Dental Group recognises that social media is a term which encompasses the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. These activities, and the manner in which information is presented, are dependent upon varied perspectives and the creation of shared meaning as people share their stories and understandings.

1. Use of Social Media Technologies

Australasian Dental Group supports participation in social media technologies, recognising they are:

- used for both work and private use by many employees;
- a valuable vehicle in teaching, learning and assessment processes;
- an effective way to communicate with staff member;
- a vehicle for easy, unobtrusive creation and strengthening of ties among colleagues; and
- widely used to build and maintain external professional networks, such as LinkedIn.

2. Participation as a Representative of Australasian Dental Group

The authorised use of media forums, including social media, in any capacity on behalf of Australasian Dental Group to announce achievements and public comments within an area of expertise, is more comprehensively outlined within Public Affairs' Media Policy.

3. Participation as an Individual

Australasian Dental Group has a particular concern regarding the ease which professional distance and personal use can be blurred. With the immediacy of the media and false sense of anonymity often constructed through internet communication, employees must be mindful that:

- personal views on employees' social network spaces can affect perceptions of their professional views if taken in the wrong context;
- tensions between work colleagues may be exacerbated;
- care must be taken not to share unauthorised or confidential Australasian Dental information;
- not everything on the web is free to copy and care must be taken not to intentionally or unintentionally breach [copyright](#);
- inappropriate postings may result in claims of defamation, discrimination, harassment and invasion of privacy. In any lawsuit, blogs, postings, e-mails and other digital exchanges may be subject to discovery.

4. Work computers and networks

Access to Australasian Dental Group electronic systems is granted to employees who agree to comply with conditions included in individual Contracts of Employment.

While computers and networks are provided for Australasian Dental Group purposes, employees are permitted limited personal use, which includes accessing social media sites. Access for personal use is to be managed and discussed within the work area and the "reasonableness test" applied to determine whether or not employees' personal use of these resources is appropriate and does not interfere with their work.

Employees must not deliberately access, download, store or send materials of a pornographic, racist, sexist, inflammatory, hateful or abusive.

Australasian Dental Group will respect the privacy of individuals' electronic material (e.g. email, disk files), using Australasian Dental Group computers and networks, and expects others to do likewise. However, no-one has the right to absolute privacy of material on Australasian Dental Group IT systems. Users should recognise that there may be occasions when even the most private of their material may become disclosed.

5. Obligations of Social Media Users

Individual employees of the University are obliged to:

- be responsible for what they write and disseminate;
- respect their audience; and
- respect copyright.

Any activity which represents a failure to meet these obligations may be determined as misconduct or serious misconduct, resulting in disciplinary action including termination of employment. Such action will be taken under the provisions of the relevant staff agreement or employment contract.