

Social Media and use of Public Media Procedure

Introduction.

The term 'social media' is used to describe dynamic and socially-interactive, networked information and communication technologies, for example Facebook; Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as SMS text messaging and other social networking sites.

N.B This policy uses the term 'Friend' in a social media networks context to refer to a member of the network, for example 'Friend' on Facebook or 'Follower' on Twitter.

Alignment to the expectations in sections of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

Principle 2: Engaging students as partners

Principle 9: Recruiting, selecting and admitting students

Principle 10: Supporting students to achieve their potential

Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment

1 Purpose

The purpose of this social media procedure is to:

- Encourage good practice
- Protect the College, its staff and students from harassment and sexual misconduct and other forms of disruptive or abusive behaviour
- Promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the College's activities whilst protecting the integrity of the College and maintaining a consistently high standard of communication with internal and external users.

2 Personal accounts

The College requests that staff and students with personal social media accounts are mindful of who can view their profile and act accordingly. Where staff identify themselves as a member of the CECOS College staff within a personal account, they should remember that their actions or comments could be construed as those of the College.

This procedure also outlines the College's position on external websites being used as reading lists, learning aids and supportive materials.

Where members of the College are friends with colleagues, students, prospective students or College partners, they should think about outcomes carefully before posting comments regarding the College that could cause offence, creating a hostile or intimidating environment or be viewed as contravening confidentiality rules.

3 Usage policy

a. URL / Websites and Teaching Aids / Resources

- ◆ Before setting up a new URL / webpage or social media account on behalf of CECOS, staff involved should consider the purpose of the account and what benefits it may

have. For example, when setting up accounts with Facebook it is possible to choose between a 'group' and a 'page' depending on requirements. To discuss which type of account would best suit the identified needs, please contact the Marketing and Communications Team.

N.B Please be aware that all URLs / webpages used in teaching should be correctly referenced and endorsed by the Course Tutor / Programme Manager.

- ◆ The College uses a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) 'Moodle' as the official teaching aid / resource. Any materials generated by staff and used as a teaching aid should be available on the relevant section of Moodle.

b. Social Media

- ◆ College Staff should not be 'friends' with any active students unless they have a clear and transparent reason, for example; they are a relative, family friend etc. This is recognised as best practice within the sector in order to promote a safe and transparent online environment that protects the organisation, the students and staff interests and reputation.

c. New accounts

- ◆ All new accounts to be set up on social media sites including (but not exclusive to) Facebook, Flickr, Tik Tok, Snapchat, Reddit, Twitter, YouTube, should be approved by the Marketing and Communications Team before they are created. This allows the College to maintain consistency and high standards of use, alongside approving use of College logos etc., and monitoring the range and nature of activity on the site to ensure that there is no harassment, discriminatory or sexually inappropriate content.
- ◆ On creation of accounts the Marketing and Communications Team will request administrative access to the account. This is to ensure that in circumstances such as the main administrator being away or unexpectedly absent; the account can still be moderated.

d. Existing accounts

- ◆ All administrators of existing social media accounts related to the College should contact the Marketing and Communications Team to inform them of the account details. We would also ask that the Marketing and Communications team be made an administrator of the account.

f. Blog accounts

- ◆ Blogs provide an opportunity for staff to discuss research, encourage debate or simply write about a subject that interests them. Whilst blogs are your personal work some also form part of the College web content. With this in mind please note that blogging services are subject to the terms and conditions of use set out in this document.

4. Copyright

- ◆ Social Media users are reminded that they must consider intellectual property rights, copyright and ownership of data. *[The main branches of IP law are copyright, patents, trademarks, designs, passing off and the law of confidential information. For latest information please visit <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/>]*
- ◆ Every effort has been made to ensure that nothing in the www.cec.ac.uk domain (the website) infringes UK law.
- ◆ Permission should always be sought before making links to a website, unless the website Terms and Conditions clearly state that linking is permitted.

Image and Performance Rights

- ◆ When using people for photography (staff, students or professional models), always ensure they sign a model release form. Once signed please send this to Student Services with a small copy of the student's image so this can be held on file for the duration of the agreement. Due to the Data Protection Act, the College is unable to use images without this agreement.
- ◆ Where recording a video, seminar or an event involving several people who are clearly identifiable, then an All Rights Release Agreement covering an assignment of your (and their) performance rights to the College should be completed and retained by the College. Where a recording of a lecture in front of a class is being made, but with no individual is identifiable in the recording, then it is generally reasonable provided all audience members agree to being recorded (vocal contributions, etc.).

5 Conduct expectations

1. Content

The College management believe in free speech, however in the context of social media accounts, for example Facebook pages, the College reserves the right to remove certain content posted on to College owned and administered websites and pages. The following guidance applies to all staff and students or other authorised user:

- ◆ As a general rule users can post content freely on a social media account except when content could be considered illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, demeaning, discriminatory, offensive or infringing upon intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy or otherwise, extremist, injurious or objectionable and can be construed as targeted harassment.
- ◆ Users cannot use the College name to promote or endorse any product, opinions, cause or political party. Stating that CECOS College London endorses any personal opinion is prohibited.
- ◆ Users will not knowingly or with intent to defraud provide material and misleading false information.

- ◆ Users should understand that content posted becomes the sole responsibility of the individual who originally posted the content. All opinions expressed by users of this site are expressed strictly in their individual capacity and not as a representative of CECOS. However, the site may not be used to promote any views or opinions which have the purpose or effect of violating any individual or group of individual's dignity or which may result in a degrading or hostile environment as this will be classified as harassment and subject to the College's disciplinary procedures.
- ◆ CECOS will not be liable, under any circumstances for any errors, omissions, loss or damages of any kind incurred as a result of use of any content posted on its social media sites.

Remember that all users are required to protect confidential and proprietary information regarding the College, staff members or students.

Any complaints about social media and public media content should be directed to the Marketing and Communications Department or to the College mailbox: info@cecos.ac.uk

2. Social Media and Conduct wording

Posting personal statements of a defamatory, extremist or offensive nature regarding the College, students or staff will be regarded as breaching the College's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure. Where statements are libellous, offensive or degrading, legal action may also be taken.

Likewise, personal statements that would reasonably be considered as offensive or discriminatory when posted to social media can be considered as public statements and may contravene the College's code of conduct as they could be attributed to a member of College staff or a student. Where statements are likely to cause any of the following, action will be taken against the person or persons responsible, in as much as they can be identified as likely to be considered as:

- ◆ liable to cause offence, including pornographic material or abusive language;
- ◆ being described as harassment or bullying;
- ◆ defamatory of an individual, group or the College;
- ◆ breaches copyright;
- ◆ discriminatory on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political or religious belief or contravenes the College's Equality and Diversity Policy;
- ◆ information which is confidential by the College or which is not in the public domain (consult a senior manager if unsure);

- ◆ revealing personal information about a member of staff, student, client or customer (data, contact details or photographs) without their permission;
- ◆ damaging the reputation of the College.

3. Time management

Whilst engaging with an online audience is important, and updating social media accounts can be valuable, please also remember that much time can be lost online and to balance this with the other needs of demanded of College staff and defined roles.

4. Encouraged practice

- ✓ **Academic uses** – the College recognises that social media has the potential to support /advance learning opportunities and encourages its use in this way. Social media should not, however, be used where existing supported learning technologies offer equivalent functionality.
- ✓ **Collaborative uses** – the College supports both internal (e.g. inter-department) and external (e.g. inter-College) collaboration and recognises that social media may provide opportunities for people and organisations to work together.
- ✓ **Communications and External Relations uses** – the College recognises the opportunity to communicate with prospective and existing customers through social media as part of an integrated marketing strategy.
- ✓ **Prospective and current students' uses** - these users, along with others who have an interest in the College, are active in social media, e.g. setting up Facebook groups and blogging. The Marketing and Communications Team will monitor these sites to get further insight into the needs of its customers. Possible responses to any contentious issues identified in unofficial social media sites should be referred to the Marketing and Communications Team.
- ✓ **Alumni uses** – the College recognises the opportunity to communicate with existing students and alumni through social media to develop an on-going relationship with them. These users are the responsibility of the Student Administration Marketing and Communications Team, who have ultimate responsibility for Alumni contact details.
- ✓ **Student Council users** – the College understands that the Student Council may wish to use social media to maximise the exposure of its services to existing and prospective students. These uses are the responsibility of the Student Council, and support by the Student Services Manager.

6. Privacy

All staff and students need to be aware that if they are posting content on behalf of the College using their own personal account they should check their privacy or account settings to ensure that they are not allowing a wider audience to view their personal details.

7. Monitoring and Investigation

The College may refer to social networking sites when investigating breaches of discipline, e.g. cheating, harassment, anti-social behaviour.

The College may monitor forums and blogs to gain indirect feedback on College services and facilities. The College may post replies on forums or blogs to answer queries or address factual corrections, but would generally take a cautious approach before getting involved in contentious issues.

8. Inappropriate use of Social Media relating to CECOS College London

Posting personal statements of a defamatory, degrading or offensive nature regarding the College, students or staff might be regarded as breaching the College's code of conduct and will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure.

9 Locus of responsibility

All College staff should be aware of the appropriate use of social and public media. The Student Code of Conduct makes clear that inappropriate use of social media is an offense and those in violation of the code are subject to disciplinary procedures. In addition, those who abuse social media may be liable to legal action.

The Marketing and Communications Team under the direction and leadership of the Deputy Principle whose team are responsible for the monitoring of social media content.