



College of Operating Department Practitioners

CODP Position Statement: Use of Social Media

The College of Operating Department Practitioners actively encourages responsible engagement by student and registrant ODPs with social media and positively welcomes the opportunities this gives for sharing, learning and building personal and professional networks.

Many institutions and organisations actively encourage engagement with social media, however, when not used appropriately there is potential to blur personal and professional boundaries. As health care professionals it is important to understand not only the benefits and risks associated with social media use, but also the outcomes of one's actions.

Intentional or not, ODPs who do not use social media with thoughtful consideration both within and outside their workplace can harm their patients; their employers; their educational institutions; their profession; and themselves. It is often the inappropriate use of social media that finds the practitioner facing sanctions from their employer and/or their regulatory body, the HCPC.

This Position Statement aims to clarify the College views on the use of Social Media by student and registrant ODPs.

In conjunction with the HCPC Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics (2016) and the HCPC Guidance on Social Media (2017), an ODP should consider carefully the following before and while engaging in online activities:

- ODPs represent their profession in all aspects of public life, not only while they are in the workplace or university setting; therefore the same standards apply to personal on-line conduct.
- Your online activity should not damage public confidence in your professional integrity nor the profession you represent.
- Care must be taken to ensure that anonymity and confidentiality of patients, institutions and organisations is maintained; not just through what you write but also through any images you post.

Setting Standards, Education and Promoting the Development of the Profession

Unison, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AT • Telephone 0207 1215 414

Email CODP@unison.co.uk



College of Operating Department Practitioners

- If you would not freely express an opinion in your real life, consider whether this is appropriate to be shared online.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring privacy settings are set appropriately, however be aware that everything that we post on-line has the potential to be made public knowledge.
- You should not engage in or pursue online relationships with patients.
- Inappropriate online behaviour has the potential to damage your current and future employment opportunities and indeed registration.
- Wherever you are working it is essential to ensure you are familiar with the contractual and local policy on employee's use of social media and seek clarity should this be unclear. The College appreciates that some organisations actively encourage engagement in Social Media, however it is essential that you clearly understand the boundaries of this.
- Social Media is rarely, if ever, appropriate media for raising a concern about your employer or standards of care. While 'whistleblowing' may ultimately be the only course of action left to an ODP to discharge their professional or legal responsibilities, you must do this appropriately and responsibly. The HCPC Raising a concern – guidance for whistleblowers (2019) and Unison Social media use advice for professional registrants (2020) provides additional guidance.

References

HCPC (2016) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, London: HCPC

HCPC (2017) Information for registrants - Guidance on social media: HCPC

HCPC (2019) Raising a concern – guidance for whistleblowers: HCPC

Unison (2020) Social media use advice for professional registrants: Unison

This document was updated by CODP in 2020, from the 2013 document produced by Karen Fearon, previous member of the CODP Education and Standards Committee.

Setting Standards, Education and Promoting the Development of the Profession

Unison, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AT • Telephone 0207 1215 414

Email CODP@unison.co.uk