



Royal College of Art

Social Media Policy

What is social media?

Social media can include Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Vimeo, WeChat, Twitch, Snapchat and TikTok.

It can also include things such as Blogs (Medium, Wordpress) and chatrooms (Reddit).

RCA Channels

The core RCA channels are managed by Communications & Marketing.

If you would like to request an item be shared across these channels please forward all of the information plus any images [onto the team](#). They will review your request and assess against the social media strategy to decide whether it is suitable to be shared centrally, and if so, on which channels.

Related channels (Programmes, Schools, Centres, Services) are managed by individual teams.

[A list of known channels and who currently manages them can be found here.](#)

School and Programme accounts – which channels should you consider?

We highly recommend that programmes have an Instagram account, though we recognise that this may not be suitable for all programmes.

We suggest that content is student-led, but that a member of staff keep track of the passwords and ultimately be responsible for what is shared.

Programmes are welcome to use Twitter, and in some circumstances this may be the most appropriate channel to engage with audiences. However, if running a Twitter channel you should post regularly (the life of a tweet is about 18 minutes) and engage with audiences.

Creating a new account

If you need support in setting up a new account, please get in touch with [Communications & Marketing](#). They will be happy to support you on setting things up, but will not be responsible for running the account.

Managing social media (Programmes)

- We recommend that programme social media accounts are run by students, with a staff member assigned to monitor content and platform owners.
- There is an [RCA Social Media Code of Practice](#) for staff and students involved.
- Here is a regularly updated [list of known channels and who currently manages them](#) - if you know of an account not listed on this spreadsheet please contact socialmedia@rca.ac.uk
- Consider setting up a Google Drive with a folder for each student to upload images/ descriptions to. This should give you / the team managing the account a strong source of content to pull from.
- We'd suggest creating a spreadsheet, noting the handles of each student. This will ensure that posts are tagged correctly.
- Consider managing social platforms via a scheduling, posting and reporting platform such as [Sprout Social](#) or [Hootsuite](#). Communications & Marketing manage the central RCA accounts through Sprout Social. It enables you to schedule messages across each platform and see the wider discussions happening related to your content.
- Frequency: we'd suggest posting at least twice per week on Instagram and daily on Twitter.
- Create a content calendar with pre-planned content for slow periods. Aim for standard times for postings and updates when scheduling. Check your analytics to see when your audiences are most engaged with your content, and adjust the times you schedule accordingly.

Helpful information

How long should your social media post be?

- **Instagram:** Captions with 138–150 characters have higher engagement. We should aim for short and concise detail where possible. RCA posts tend to need longer explanations, so ensure the core info is covered in the first 150 characters.
Instagram has a max 20 hashtags in a post. Make sure you tag relevant accounts, this will boost the reach of your post.
- **Twitter:** Tweets with 71–100 characters have higher engagement. Aim for short and concise detail where possible.

Note: Twitter has a 280 character limit.

- Facebook:** Industry research states that, In general, posts with 80 characters or less get higher engagement. While 80 characters is limiting we should ensure that key, attention grabbing information is always in the first 100 characters, thus encouraging people to click a link for the detail.
- LinkedIn:** Industry research states that: Posts with 50–100 characters or less get the highest engagement. This is very limiting, but we should consider ensuring that we are as concise as possible in messaging. Key, attention grabbing information should always be in the first 100 characters.

For articles, you want to post around 2,000 words.

What size image should I use on each channel?

- Use [this page](#) to find the most up-to-date information on optimising images and [this page](#) to find the most up-to-date information on optimising videos.
Generally, square images are preferred on all platforms. You don't need to upload anything larger than 1000x1000px at 96dpi.

Guide to posting content

Maintain Privacy

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured RCA community members on a social media site without their permission. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum. Additional information on the appropriate handling of student and employee information can be found [here](#).

Be Accurate

The RCA is committed to free speech, however, you must make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first, rather than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Always check the validity of statements that you publish or even repost (e.g. via a retweet or Facebook share). Legally speaking, reposting is still seen as publishing, so care does need to be taken and if you are in any doubt about your post, consult your SGM, Dean or Director who may decide to refer this to the College Secretary, who will advise or if necessary, consult further with the College's legal advisors.

Cite and link to your sources whenever possible – that's how you build a community.

If you are addressing a complex, contentious or challenging subject, first ask yourself whether social media is the best forum? Can you really summarise and do justice to a contested or controversial subject via social media?

Expressing contentious or political views

If you are communicating through social networking sites, while the RCA supports your right to freedom of speech within the law; this is however a personal right and does not authorise you to express any views on behalf of the RCA itself or its other members, students, staff or alumni. You must make it clear that any views expressed are your own views and not those of the RCA or any professional body with which you are associated. If you are managing an RCA-branded social media feed, many people will assume it represents the official views of the RCA, or a particular department or team, so you will need to be especially careful about what you choose to post. This is particularly important if you are expressing views which could be construed as contentious or political, and which might call into question the RCA's status as a charitable institution, or have a negative impact on our diverse community. If you are in any doubt - do not use an RCA branded site but your own personal account; this applies to both students and staff.

Importantly if the RCA is mentioned in the title/handle of a student-run social media account, **the bio must state that the account is run by students**. This is a condition of using the RCA name and logos on your social media account.

Up-to-date records

The Executive Lead, Digital in the Communication team of the RCA will remind all of those named individuals who control access to RCA branded social media handles to ensure that the account staff and student contact details are up to date. The RCA will close access to RCA branded accounts if it has concerns about hacked accounts or postings which have not been approved by the designated RCA brand account manager on record.

Ethical and professional conduct

Behaviour that is inappropriate at work is usually not appropriate on the internet. Avoid abusive and aggressive behaviour which is likely to cause distress or upset to an individual or group of individuals. and respond to others in a professional manner. Again, if in doubt, the RCA Brand account holder should contact their SGM, Dean, Director, or the College Secretary.

Content, copyright and intellectual property

Don't infringe copyrights. Don't put others' content online without their permission. If you're posting RCA images onto an external site, do check that you have permission to do so (the images may only be licensed to be used on the RCA domain). In cases where you cannot find the owner of the original content, you should not use it.

If using Creative Commons-licensed content, ensure that you follow the license guidelines (e.g. crediting the author, linking to the license, etc.)

If you are posting an image of a logo or trademark, always check that you have permission to use it. You may have the photographer or designer's permission, but not necessarily that of the owner of the logo/trademark.

Be careful about using screenshots of social media, particularly when it involves other users' details or content. Screenshots of social media platforms may also use platforms' own intellectual property, which they may not permit to be used.

For more information, see the [Intellectual Property Office's guide to types of IP](#).

Dealing with comments

Encourage comments, and be responsive. The more interaction there is between yourself and visitors the more you will build a community, and help gain trust from others.

Don't leave a question unanswered. Follow them up positively and quickly.

Monitor all comments. If there is an option to be emailed whenever a user comments, use it. In social media platforms where this isn't possible, ensure that this is checked reasonably regularly. Use your discretion to remove advertisements, spam, and comments that are hateful, obscene, or defamatory.

If visitors have queries, where possible refer them to information on the website rather than directly answering their questions within the social media channel. If details (entry requirements, application deadlines etc) then change they will be updated on the website and there is less risk that people will find out of date information on social media channels.

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