

# CVD Fellowship Program Social Media Guide

## Introduction

Social media can be a powerful and influential tool for fellowship programs. It can be an effective way to highlight the culture, strengths, and accomplishments of the program, faculty, and fellows. During the recruitment season, it can be a way to engage and share information with applicants and potential future trainees. This guide aims to share important background information, practical advice, and best practices to support a fellowship program's use of social media.

## Define Goals and Audience

When starting or maintaining a social media account for a fellowship program, it is important to clearly define the purpose, goals, and intended audience. Possible uses include supporting recruitment, building community, connecting viewers with the program website, highlighting fellows and faculty, and engaging with alumni or peers. Having a clear focus helps guide content and overall strategy.

## Guiding Principles

- **Alignment:** Posts should be consistent with the program's mission, vision, and values.
- **Authenticity:** Programs are encouraged to share authentic, real-life aspects of their fellowship rather than overly polished representations.
- **Professionalism:** Maintaining a professional social media presence while remaining friendly and engaging is important.
- **Institutional Standards:** Follow institutional guidelines regarding social media use, including whether program accounts are permitted, and ensure all content aligns with established branding standards.
- **Compliance and Privacy:** Always prioritize patient privacy when posting clinical content. Avoid sharing any patient identifiers or details that could make a case recognizable (for example date of visit or imaging study) to ensure HIPAA-compliance. Obtaining explicit patient consent prior to posting clinical cases, even if done without identifiers, is considered best practice.

## Best Practices and Ideas for Content Creation

- **Choose High-Quality Media:** When sharing photos or videos, use clear, high-resolution media to create a more engaging and impactful impression.

- **Use Hashtags:** Hashtags help increase visibility, organize content, and make it easier for users to find related posts. Use a mix of program-specific and widely recognizable hashtags when possible.
- **Showcase People and Culture:** Highlighting the fellows, faculty, and the training and living environment helps convey the culture of the training program. During fellowship recruitment, this is important for applicants who may be unfamiliar with the institution and/or geographic region, especially in the setting of virtual interviews.
- **Highlight Achievements:** Celebrate the accomplishments of fellows, faculty, and the program to demonstrate how the training environment supports professional and personal growth. These posts highlight the program's mission, vision, and values in practice, as well as diverse talents outside of cardiology.
- **Include Educational and Curricular Content:** Share examples of the educational experience and curriculum, such as key teaching points from conferences, journal clubs, simulation sessions, and clinical cases (see Compliance and Privacy guiding principle above).

### **Platform-Specific Considerations**

The following outlines various social media platforms and key considerations to help programs select which might best support their goals. This is not an exhaustive list of platforms or features but provides a starting point for discussion.

- **X (formerly Twitter):** Good for real-time updates, announcements, and generating discussions. Content can be text, polls, images, and short videos.
- **Instagram:** Useful for visual content and can help highlight the program's culture and environment.
- **LinkedIn:** Useful for highlighting professional achievements from the program and can help with networking.
- **Facebook:** Helpful for engaging specific groups like alumni and building communities. Content and posts are generally more enduring.
- **YouTube:** Better for long-form video content like facility tours, teaching sessions, and sharing detailed program information.
- **TikTok:** Useful for short-form videos that can be used for more creative, fun, and engaging content that highlights the program

### **Planning Content and Posts**

- **Frequency:** Posting frequency should align with the program's goals. Aim for at least a few posts per month to maintain long-term engagement, and increase posting during high-visibility periods like recruitment season.
- **Planning:** Plan content weeks or months in advance to ensure consistent engagement. Scheduling posts around key events, milestones, and educational themes can help distribute content throughout the year.
- **Templates:** Using templates for posts (e.g., fellow/faculty spotlights, clinical case pearls) can streamline content creation and ensure consistent messaging and quality.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Social Media Lead:** Designating a lead helps manage overall strategy, content planning, and content coordination.
- **Content Contributors:** Engaging a team of fellows, staff, and faculty to contribute content and ideas promotes sustainability, creativity, and a range of perspectives.
- **Program Leadership:** Even if not directly creating content, program leadership should review posts to ensure alignment with the program's values, messaging, and goals.
- **Institutional Communications Team:** Some institutions have communications or marketing teams that can offer guidance on branding, compliance, and best practices for social media use.

### **Final Thoughts**

Social media can be a valuable tool for fellowship programs when used thoughtfully. Be intentional, authentic, and engaging. Be sure to involve fellows that may have interest or experience in this space.