



**Quality Training & Skills Development**  
[enquiries@qtsd.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@qtsd.co.uk) | [www.qtsd.co.uk](http://www.qtsd.co.uk)

<b>Full name of policy:</b>	<b>Social Media Policy</b>
<b>Requirement for policy:</b>	To outline the responsibilities of Directors, Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners.
<b>Name and post of person responsible:</b>	All Directors
<b>Highest QTSD body approving the policy:</b>	Directors
<b>Date of approval:</b>	30 June 2018
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	2 years
<b>Dates of previous reviews:</b>	30 June 2016
<b>Date of next formal review:</b>	30 June 2020
<b>Equality analysis (if required):</b>	
<b>Policy Reference:</b>	Social Media
<b>Total number of pages – (including appendices and front sheet):</b>	6
<b>Comments:</b>	

# Social Media Policy

## 1. Aims and objectives

This policy aims to outline the responsibilities of Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners when accessing social media either personally or using it for QTSD purposes. It aims to manage organisational risks when social media is used for both business and personal use, and to ensure that its use is acceptable to avoid bringing QTSD into disrepute. It should be read in the context of and, where relevant, related QTSD Policies and publications including:

- Professional Boundaries Guidance for Staff
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy for IT Facilities and Systems
- Statement on Standards and Conduct for Staff
- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Notice and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, May 2018)

Social media is the term used to describe the online tools, websites and interactive media that enable users to interact with each other in various ways, through sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media involves building online communities or networks, which encourage participation, dialogue and involvement.

QTSD recognises the value that social media can have to our business if used in a responsible and professional way. While it is recognised that any Assessor, Learners and Associated Partners are entitled to a private life, QTSD is committed to maintaining confidentiality and professionalism at all times whilst also upholding its reputation by ensuring Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners exhibit acceptable behaviours.

***It is not the intention of this policy is to stop QTSD Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners from conducting legitimate activities on the internet and social networking sites: the policy is intended to flag- up those areas in which potential complications or conflicts of interest lie.***

QTSD has a duty of care to all students and staff (and this includes the health and safety of all learners and personnel).

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners by QTSD. Our commitment to equality of opportunity also extends to applicants who apply to work in QTSD. Although this policy refers to Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners throughout, QTSD is aware of its wider responsibilities to provide a positive working environment for all who work on QTSD premises (or premises rented by QTSD).

Individuals are personally accountable for their behaviour and may be held liable for any breaches of this policy. All individuals who work on QTSD premises (or premises rented by or where QTSD are delivering qualifications), including agency, contract workers and volunteers are therefore expected to support QTSD's policy on social media.

This policy applies to all Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners of QTSD and also workers and volunteers at QTSD. Separate guidance is published for QTSD students.

### **3. Legislation**

QTSD will adhere to its obligations under the legislation relevant to the use and monitoring of electronic communications, which are predominantly the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000; The Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000; The Communications Act 2003; General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, May 2018) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), The Human Rights Act 1998; The Defamation Act 1996 and The Equality Act 2010.

### **4. Data protection and monitoring**

Computers that are the property of QTSD and are primarily designed to assist in the performance of work duties must at all times have appropriate use of the internet, QTSD's internet software monitors all websites visited by Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners for business and security purposes. Therefore, Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners should have no expectation of privacy when it comes to the sites they access from QTSD computers and devices. QTSD may exercise its rights to intercept internet access under the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000.

### **5. Privacy settings and personal information**

Default privacy settings for some social media websites allow some information to be shared beyond an individual's contacts. In such situations, the user of the site is personally responsible for adjusting the privacy settings for the account. Information available on social media sites could be produced as evidence by either a QTSD or employee, should it be necessary either as part of QTSD procedures, or in legal proceedings. Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners are strongly encouraged to review their access and privacy settings for any social media sites to control, restrict and guard against who can access the information on those sites. Even if privacy and security settings are utilised, anything posted on social media sites may be made public by onward transmission. Social media offers the ability to share personal information rapidly and easily. To avoid identity theft, Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners are advised to refrain from publishing any personal or sensitive information on social media websites, e.g. date of birth, home address, telephone number or any information related to personal bank accounts.

### **6. Acceptable use of social media at work**

QTSD IT systems are first and foremost business tools, and as such personal usage of the systems is a privilege and not a right. Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites where this is part of the normal duties of their work. It is an important part of how QTSD communicates and interacts with its Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners.

Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners responsible for contributing to QTSD's social media activities should be aware at all times that they are representing QTSD. Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners who use social media as part of their job should adhere to the following rules:

- Be guided by our vision that we are a forward-thinking organisation; valued by the Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners that we serve for promoting high expectations. If what you are saying sits comfortably alongside this, you're in the right territory.
- Tone of voice is important. Be approachable and human but remember you will be seen as the face of QTSD.
- Check your spelling. Please think about how what you write and how it is expressed will appear to the public and your colleagues. Careless spelling and incorrect grammar looks unprofessional and undermines us as an education establishment.
- Think before you re-tweet, is the content appropriate?

QTSD accepts that Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners may wish to use social media channels as a way of communicating personally with the public and/or friends; however its use at work should be restricted to the terms of this policy. Assessors, learners and employees are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites from QTSD's IT network at certain times.

Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners should limit their use of social media to official rest breaks and/or when between appointments when travelling and/or times when they are not on duty (before and after work).

Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners may wish to use their own personal devices, including laptops, palm-tops, hand-held devices and smart phones to access social media websites, while at work. Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners should limit their use of social media on their own personal equipment to their official rest breaks and/or when between appointments when travelling and/or times when they are not on duty (before and after work).

Personal use of social media should not interfere with Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners work duties and responsibilities. Excessive personal use of social media or the website and abuse of this policy will be considered a disciplinary offence.

## **7. Expected standards of conduct on social media websites Appropriate conduct**

The line between public and private, professional and personal is not always clearly defined when using social media. If an employee identifies themselves as a member of staff at the QTSD, this has the potential to create perceptions about QTSD to a range of external audiences and also among colleagues and learners.

When communicating either in a professional or personal capacity, within or outside the workplace, Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners **must**:

- Conduct themselves in accordance with other policies, procedures and the Professional Boundaries Guidance for staff particularly when using QTSD social media accounts to portray QTSD's activities, as this is an extension of QTSD's infrastructure.
- Be professional, courteous and respectful as would be expected in any other situation.
- Think carefully about how and what activities are carried out on social media websites.
- Be transparent and honest. QTSD will not tolerate Assessors, learners and employees making false representations.

If Assessors, learners and employees express personal views, it should be made clear that the views do not represent or reflect the views of QTSD.

- Remove or request the removal of any inappropriate comments, images or videos of them.

## 7.2 Inappropriate conduct

When communicating either in a professional or personal capacity, within or outside of the workplace, Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners **must not**:

- Engage in activities that have the potential to bring QTSD into disrepute.
- Breach confidentiality by disclosing privileged, sensitive or confidential information.
- Make comments or engage in discussions which could cause offence or be considered bullying, harassing or discriminatory; contravene QTSD's Equality and Diversity policy or constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment and/or victimization.
- Post or upload inappropriate comments, images, photographs or video clips about colleagues or ex- colleagues, students or ex- students, parents or clients.
- Publish defamatory or false material about QTSD, other Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners
- Use offensive, derogatory or intimidating language which may damage working relationships.
- Communicate with students through personal sites, unless agreed with managers that this can be used to support teaching and learning.
- Pursue personal relationships with students, ex- students or parents. This includes accepting or inviting students, ex- students or parents to be friends on personal social media accounts or other online services.
- Knowingly access, view or download material which could cause offence to other people or may be illegal.
- Comment on any work- related matters.
- Post any material that breaches copyright legislation.
- Use a QTSD email account to create a personal social media account.

## 7.3 Acceptance of friends

QTSD encourages the positive use of social media as part of the educational process. Social media is used by many people, particularly students to communicate with their peers and the public. Students may wish to form personal relationships with Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners however to ensure professional boundaries are maintained, Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners **must not** accept and/or invite the following individuals to be 'friends' on personal social media accounts or other online services:

- students, including vulnerable students who are adults or children,
- ex- students under the age of 18, and
- parents

Entering into such relationships may lead to abuse of an employee's position of trust and breach the standards of professional behaviour and conduct expected at QTSD. QTSD reserves the right to take disciplinary action if Assessors, learners and employees are found to be in breach of this policy, with the potential of dismissal for serious breaches.

Acts of a criminal nature or any safeguarding concerns may be referred to the Police, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

## **8. Use of social media during recruitment and selection process**

QTSD will only view relevant social media websites as part of the pre-employment process, i.e. those aimed specifically at the professional market and used for networking and career development (e.g. LinkedIn). Any information that relates to applicants' protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will not be used as part of the recruitment and selection process.

## **9. Responsibilities**

The responsibility for drafting, updating, monitoring and reviewing this policy belongs to QTSD Business Development team. It will next be reviewed in 2020.

All Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and for reporting any breaches of the policy to the Director of Communications.

If Assessors, Learners and Associated Partners have concerns about information or conduct on social media sites that are inappropriate, offensive, demeaning or could be seen to be bullying, this should be reported to a QTSD Director immediately.

All Directors are responsible for maintaining QTSD's computer systems and for supporting Assessors, learners and employees in the proper usage of the systems.