



Social Media Policy

Title	Social Media Policy 1.13
Policy Owner	Full Faculty
Applies to	All Students
Campus Applicability	All Campuses
Effective Date	5/23/19
For More Information Contact	Dean's Office
Contact Information	(860) 486-0537
Official Website	http://nursing.uconn.edu/

REASON FOR POLICY

The SON is adopting the American Nurses Association 2011 Six Principles for Social Networking as outlined on the ANA website:

APPLIES TO

All students

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Nurses must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information. Nurses must know their legal and ethical responsibilities, as well as their own organization's policies, regarding their responsibility to protect patient privacy, whether online or offline. Merely removing someone's name (or face, in the instance of images) from a communication does not necessarily protect that person's identity. Under federal law (HIPAA), protected "individually identifiable information" includes health information that identifies the individual or *can reasonably be used* to identify the individual, in any form (oral, written, or otherwise) that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health of an individual.
2. Nurses who interact with patients on social media must observe ethically prescribed patient-nurse professional boundaries. The precepts guiding nurses in these matters are no different online than in person.
3. Nurses should evaluate all their postings with the understanding that a patient, colleague, educational institution, or employer could potentially view those postings. Online content and behavior has the potential to either enhance or undermine not only the individual nurse's career, but also the nursing profession.

4. Nurses should take advantage of privacy settings available on many social networking sites in their personal online activities and seek to separate their online personal and professional sites and information. Use of privacy settings and separation of personal and professional information online does not guarantee, however, that information will not be repeated in less protected forums.
5. As the patient's advocate, nurses have an ethical obligation to take appropriate action regarding instances of questionable healthcare delivery at an individual or systems level that reflect incompetent, unethical, illegal, or impaired practice. Nurses who view social media content posted by a colleague that violates ethical or legal standards should first bring the questionable content to the attention of the colleague so that the individual can take appropriate action.

If the posting could threaten a patient's health, welfare, or right to privacy regarding health information, the nurse has the obligation to report the matter to a supervisor or designated person within the institution or entity for follow-up. If the questionable practice is not addressed in the employment setting and seriously jeopardizes the patient's safety and well-being, the nurse may need to report the problem to external authorities. Accurate reporting and factual documentation—not merely opinion—should always support such responsible actions.

6. Nurses are encouraged to participate in the development of policies and procedures in their institutions and organizations for handling reports of online conduct that may raise legal concerns or be professionally unethical. Such official channels can protect the rights of those participating and can offer remedial action for the patient, while offering fairness, support, and non-punitive correction and training for a nurse's inadvertent mistakes.

This policy is to be included in syllabi for ALL clinical prelicensure courses, along with NURS 1110, and 3120. All graduate students review and give attestations during orientation.

ENFORCEMENT

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with University By-Laws, General Rules of Conduct for All University Employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and the University of Connecticut Student Code.

POLICY HISTORY

To be reviewed: Annually

Full Faculty approved 4/23/12

Full Faculty review and approval: 5/7/2018

Full Faculty review and approval: 5/8/2023