

Subject: University of Washington School of Dentistry Social Media Guidelines*

Effective Date: August 29, 2018

*Modified from the [UW Medicine Social Networking Policy and Guidelines](#)

Social networking sites can be an effective way to keep in touch with colleagues; in dental education, wikis and discussion boards are already heavily utilized. Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram have grown in popularity and application, allowing users to post content and share with virtually anyone. Organizations, including healthcare institutions, are rapidly integrating the use of social media into their education, outreach and marketing strategies. While this creates new opportunities for communication and collaboration, it also creates vulnerabilities for individuals and institutions, especially those involved in the healthcare environment. Depending on our privacy settings, anyone with access to the internet can see our profiles, photos and posted opinions and can share them anywhere. The potential impact on one's image and the institution's image is an important consideration.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES:

1. Faculty, staff and students must adhere to the University of Washington School of Dentistry (UWSOD) [policy statement on the use of social media](#), which is meant to insure that both patient and student privacy are protected.
2. **Think twice before posting.** Privacy does not exist in the world of social media, regardless of your privacy settings, and even when private messaging. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on both you and the UWSOD. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you would not say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, seek advice from your supervisor, academic advisor or program director.
3. **Anonymity is a myth.** Write everything as if you are signing it with your name.
4. **Remember your audience.** A presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective and current employers, prospective and current students, colleagues, patients and their families and peers.
5. **Familiarize yourself with and use conservative privacy settings** regardless of the content on your profile or of your posts. Practice restraint when disclosing personal information on social networking sites; your audience is everyone.
6. **Consider your professional image.** As a rule, post online only content that you would be comfortable having your chair or supervisor see. Employers often search social networking sites during the hiring process. Always consider the professional image you wish to present to your employer, coworkers, patients and their families. Even seemingly innocuous images and comments can diminish the respect and trust that others have for you.
7. **Do not "friend" patients on social networking sites.**
8. **If in doubt, do not post!**
9. **Do not engage in cyberbullying.**
10. If you make comments or post photographs or videos that could reasonably be construed as a representation of UWSOD's policies, services or programs as a whole, **disclose that the**

statements, photographs or videos are personal and not representative of UWSOD as a whole.

11. Unless you are serving as an approved, official spokesperson for UWSOD, online communications are your personal opinions and do not reflect the opinion of UWSOD. **Each workforce member is personally responsible for his/her posts (written, audio, photograph, video or otherwise).**
12. **Social media sites that use the University of Washington School of Dentistry name (even in an abbreviated or truncated form) should be administered and moderated by an approved faculty member, staff member or elected representative of the UWSOD student body.** Sites may be designed for exclusive use by particular groups within the UWSOD (e.g., those registered for a course, class members, the student body, faculty, staff, etc.), however individuals should not be blocked from accessing sites open to groups in which they are members.
13. The official UWSOD faculty listserv (SOD_faculty@uw.edu), staff listserv (sod_staff@uw.edu) and student listservs (sod-class-of-xxxx@uw.edu, sod-grad-students@uw.edu, sod-gme-residents@uw.edu) may not be used to pass along information from outside entities that does not directly pertain to University of Washington courses or other official business. Opt in listservs may be created by Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and other UW-affiliated groups to disseminate information from outside entities that may be of interest to the UWSOD community.
14. **Patient privacy and respect must be maintained in all communications.** Do not disclose information that may be used to identify patients or their health condition, without the express written permission of the patient obtained using UWSOD-approved forms. Remember that even de-identified information may be recognized by patients, their families or their employers. Students must obtain permission from their faculty supervisor before posting any photos of or information about patient treatment. Never post pejorative or critical comments about patients, even if there is no possibility of identifying the patient(s).
15. **Disclosure of professional information** – Individuals should not disclose or make public information about any students or health care providers employed by the UWSOD without their permission. Examples would be their photographs, professional associations, credentials, past work history, qualifications, etc.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may be considered a breach of University of Washington School of Dentistry professionalism standards. Procedures for reporting violations, proceedings to determine responsibility for violating the guidelines, and consequences of violating the guidelines follow those described in the University of Washington School of Dentistry's [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Dean of UW SOD:

Date: 8/29/2018



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