

**Social Media Policy**  
**For all SMHS Students**

Section: 3  
 Policy number: 3.10  
 Responsible Office: Office of Associate Dean for Health Sciences  
 Issued: 3.2024  
 Latest Review: 02.09.2023 (Bylaws Committee)  
 Latest Approval: 07.2023 (Faculty Council)

**POLICY STATEMENT**

While recognizing the educational and social value of social media platforms, technology and tools, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) is responsible for setting expectations of its students in their use of these resources.

**REASON for POLICY**

The SMHS faculty recognize the role social media plays in today’s society. However, as healthcare professionals in training, SMHS students are held to a high standard when it comes to the presentation of themselves in the community and on social media. As students enter their professional careers, it is important that they carefully consider what they are posting on social media, who they are asking to network with them, and how they respond to others on social media. Information placed on social media must not violate the University of North Dakota’s Code of Student Life (UND Code of Student Life). Conforming to the UND Code of Student Life, nothing within this policy is intended to limit or restrict freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. General statements of philosophy and principles to which the University of North Dakota (UND) subscribes are found in the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) statement of academic freedom (SBHE 401.1) and student free speech and expression policy (SBHE 503.1).

SCOPE of POLICY	
This policy applies to:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deans, Directors, and Department Heads	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Managers and supervisors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students	
Others:	

**WEB SITE REFERENCES**

Policy Office: <https://med.und.edu/about/policies/>  
 Responsible Office: <https://med.und.edu/deans-office/index.html>

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

A Nurse’s Guide to the Use of Social Media. National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

[https://www.ncsbn.org/public-files/NCSBN\\_SocialMedia.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/public-files/NCSBN_SocialMedia.pdf)

Canadian Federation of Medical Students Guide to Medical Professionalism: Recommendations for Social Media.

<http://www.cfms.org/files/internal-policy-bylaws/CFMS%20Guide%20to%20Social%20Media%20Professionalism.pdf>

Social Networking Policy. Duke University.

[https://medschool.duke.edu/sites/default/files/2022-03/Social.Media\\_.Guidelines-4.2022.pdf](https://medschool.duke.edu/sites/default/files/2022-03/Social.Media_.Guidelines-4.2022.pdf)

Professionalism in the Use of Social Media, AMA Code of Medical Ethics, American Medical Association, nd.

<https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/ethics-opinions/professionalism-use-social-media>

Social Media Guidelines for Medical Students and Physicians, 2016

<https://www.amsa.org/social-media-guidelines-medical-students-physicians-2/>

Health & Human Services Link to Cyberbullying

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it>

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DEFINITIONS	
Social Media	Social media are internet-based applications used to interact with other people through text, images, or sound. Social media technologies take on many different forms, including blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, social gaming, social networks, video sharing and virtual worlds. This does not include University of North Dakota email.
Department	Any academic department
SMHS	School of Medicine and Health Sciences
Student	Any student enrolled in Medicine, Health Sciences, including Clinical and Translational Science Program, or Biomedical Sciences within the SMHS
Harassment	Harassment is unwelcome and offensive conduct that is considered a violation when it is objectively offensive and sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual or group to participate in or benefit from university-sponsored programs or activities, including employment and academic pursuits. Harassment may be oral, written, graphic, or physical and may include, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, name calling, physical assaults, threats of harm, intimidation, ridicule, mockery, insults, put-downs, offensive objects, or pictures. (See UND <a href="#">Code of Student Life II.C.3</a> )
Cyberbullying	Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior. (From US Dept of Health & Human Services; <a href="#">What Is Cyberbullying   StopBullying.gov</a> )

RELATED INFORMATION	
Code of Student Life	<a href="http://und.edu/code-of-student-life/">http://und.edu/code-of-student-life/</a>
UND Discrimination and Harassment Policy	<a href="https://und.policystat.com/policy/9247142/latest/">https://und.policystat.com/policy/9247142/latest/</a>
NDUS Policy Manual Section 1202.1 Acceptable use of information technology resources policy	<a href="https://ndus.edu/sbhe-overview/sbhe-policies/1200-heading-policies/">https://ndus.edu/sbhe-overview/sbhe-policies/1200-heading-policies/</a>
UND Computer and Network Facilities Acceptable Use Policy	<a href="https://und.edu/student-life/housing/resnet/usepolicy.html">https://und.edu/student-life/housing/resnet/usepolicy.html</a>
ND Century Code 15.1-19-17.1	<a href="#">North Dakota Century Code t15.1c19 (nd.gov)</a>

## CONTACTS

General questions about this policy can be answered by your department's administrative office. Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone/FAX	Office/Dept
Policy clarification	Dean's Office	777.2514/777.3527	<a href="mailto:judy.solberg@und.edu">judy.solberg@und.edu</a>
Policy format	Dean's Office	777.2514/777.3527	<a href="mailto:judy.solberg@und.edu">judy.solberg@und.edu</a>

## PROCEDURES

### A. Student Responsibilities

#### 1. Academic Integrity and Professionalism

- a. Online discussion or posting information regarding content of examinations, tests, quizzes, or assignments could be considered academic dishonesty (*Code of Student Life* II.B.1). It is the student's responsibility to read the UND Code of Student Life and the student handbook regarding academic integrity and professionalism as defined by their departments.
- b. The use of social media to post comments that may be considered cyberbullying and/or endangerment, harassment, interference, menacing, stalking, intrusion, terrorizing, sexual misconduct, or other disruptive activity or disorderly conduct as defined in this document or the UND Code of Student Life must be reported to either the Department Head, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, the Associate Dean for Health Sciences or the UND Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- c. SMHS students must refrain from posts that use institutional intellectual property, copyrights, trademarks, or logos without explicit written permission. This policy extends to the unauthorized dissemination of copyrighted material, such as lecture notes and recordings. Students should not represent themselves as official representatives of the University or clinical facility in public forums. The separation between personal and professional online profiles should be explicit.

#### 2. Clinical Experiences

- a. Clinical experiences are governed by a legally binding agreement between the host facility and UND. SMHS students must adhere to clinical site, SMHS, and UND policies. Students are not allowed to post or speak on behalf of the clinic, hospital, or agency. Students must be aware of and comply with clinical affiliation policies regarding the use of computers, cameras, and other electronic devices, including personal devices.
- b. Students should not ask their faculty, clinical preceptors, clinical instructors, or fieldwork supervisors to "friend" or "follow" them on any social media platform during their time in the clinical setting. This puts the student, their faculty, and their supervisors in an unnecessary situation by sharing personal information external to the

learning or training environment. However, nothing within this policy restricts students and faculty, clinical preceptors, clinical instructors, or fieldwork supervisors' ability to mutually decide to do this after the student graduates.

3. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- a. Students violating HIPAA, FERPA, or other UND/hospital/clinic policies are subject to disciplinary action that may include dismissal from their professional program, criminal and/or civil charges, and fines. Students must not present themselves as licensed practitioners and are prohibited from providing medical advice in any non-educational setting, including on social media.
  - b. SMHS students have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times and are required to follow HIPAA and FERPA rules. Releasing confidential health information is unethical and unlawful and could result in irreparable harm and suffering to the patient as well as fines or imprisonment for the individuals who are found in violation of HIPAA and/or FERPA rules. SMHS students are prohibited from identifying patients by name to anyone outside the care facility or posting or publishing information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Students must not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if the patient is not identified.
  - c. SMHS students are strictly prohibited from capturing or transmitting by way of electronic media any patient-related information, images, or any circumstances surrounding the patient's situation. Posting information about, or images of, a research subject is also strictly prohibited.
- B. SMHS students must adhere to clinical site, SMHS and UND policies for taking photographs or video of patients for treatment or other legitimate purposes using employer-approved devices.
1. Online social contact with current or former patients is to be avoided. It is inadvisable to form or accept a social media connection with patients or individuals with whom there is an active therapeutic, supervisory, or evaluative relationship.

C. Reporting Procedure

1. The use by SMHS students of social media or personal devices to post comments that may be considered cyberbullying, endangerment, harassment, interference, menacing, stalking, intrusion, terrorizing, sexual misconduct, or other disruptive activity or disorderly conduct as defined in this document or the UND Code of Student Life may be reported by any concerned individual to either the Department Head, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, the Associate Dean for Health Sciences, the UND Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, or to any other responsible employee in accordance with UND policies governing such conduct.
2. Reports of inappropriate social media use will be referred to the respective department/program for investigation, evaluation, and action based on the

department/program policies. In addition to or in lieu of the SMHS, UND may initiate concurrent investigations pursuant to applicable UND policies.

D. Resolution Process

1. Whenever an incident of inappropriate social media use is reported, the SMHS and respective departments/programs shall attempt to resolve the issue as efficient and timely manner as possible.
2. Violation of this social media policy may result in disciplinary action by the student’s department, the SMHS, UND and/or the clinical facility. Disciplinary matters are subject, generally, to federal student privacy laws. No confidential information will be provided to individuals not directly involved in the process except as may be required for UND to comply with applicable state or federal laws.
3. Appeal/Grievance
  - a. Any student enrolled in an academic degree or certificate-granting program or taking a course(s) at SMHS shall be provided the opportunity to seek redress where they believe that school and/or program policy has not been followed with respect to academic or professional behavior, by initiating an academic grievance or subsequent appeal.
  - b. All appeal/grievances must follow the [SMHS Student Academic Grievance and Appeal Policy.](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES	
Department	Provide access to a copy of the Social Media Policy to all students
Student	Responsible to monitor their professional behavior on social media and report violations of HIPAA or FERPA to the appropriate authority

FORMS	
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