



BSN Academic Regulation/Standard

Appropriate Use of Social Media

Purpose

The purpose of this standard is to provide guidance to nursing students on best practices for use of social media. Social media has expanded and today includes a variety of platforms for electronic communication that enables sharing information, ideas, opinions, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). There are benefits to personal and professional social media and technology use. However, the same sharing, networking and access that make social media and communication technologies convenient and effective, also pose risks. “Nurses must be aware of and manage these risks, especially as technology evolves and use increases” (British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives, 2023).

Expectations

Students must at all times adhere to the UBCO SON [Professional Conduct Policy](#) which includes adhering to the nursing standards set by British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM). Failure of any student to conform to the standards may be considered a breach and will be dealt with as [Unprofessional Conduct](#) and /or as academic or non-academic misconduct policies in the [Academic Calendar](#)

UBCO BSN students are prohibited from:

1. Making disparaging comments about clinical sites, co-workers, instructors or students on social media sites, including comments that are threatening, harassing, profane, obscene, sexually explicit, radically derogatory, homophobic, racist or otherwise offensive.
2. Using social media for non-academic purposes during any clinical practicum experience.
3. Accessing agency computers for the purpose of social networking.
4. Taking pictures/video of clients or agency where client identifiers can be seen on personal mobile device or camera/recording device.
5. Using the UBC logo on a non-university social media site.
6. Posting any course content, including but not limited to exam questions, audio-video, power point presentations, and syllabi on any social media site.

UBCO BSN students use social media responsibly:

The following considerations⁽¹⁾ are suggested by the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (2023) to prevent breaching nursing standards⁽²⁾ such as: boundaries, privacy and confidentiality, professional integrity, and public trust.

Benefits and risks

Know the benefits and risks of social media. Build your competence. Know the technology and have the skills and judgment to use it appropriately and ethically. Be aware of social media's evolving culture and changing



technology. Reflect on the intent and possible consequences of your online behaviour — before you blog, post or tweet.

Professional image

Use the same level of professionalism in your online interactions as you do face-to-face. Keep your personal and professional lives separate. Use different accounts for personal and professional activities.

Confidentiality

Do not share any client information on social media sites. Leaving out details when you post information or images does not protect client confidentiality. Report confidentiality breaches to the right person, immediately.

Privacy

Set and maintain your privacy settings to limit access to your personal information. Be aware of your privacy settings and know that even if you use the highest privacy settings, others can copy and share your information without your knowledge or permission.

Boundaries

Set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Just as with face-to-face relationships, this applies online too. Communicate these boundaries to clients and end your professional relationships appropriately. Don't accept "friend" requests from clients or former clients on your personal social media accounts.

If you use social media with clients for work purposes, such as client teaching and resource-sharing, use a professional account separate from your personal one. Be clear about how your use of social media supports professional practice and make sure organizational policies addressing privacy and confidentiality are in place.

Expectations

Use caution if you identify yourself as a [student] nurse online, outside of your employment. If you do so, others may ask for advice, which could lead to a nurse-client relationship. Using a name that hides your real identity does not release you from this expectation. Know this and practise accordingly.

Integrity

Protect yours and the profession's integrity. Use proper communication channels to discuss, report and resolve workplace issues — not social media. Refer to colleagues or clients online with the same level of respect as you would in the workplace. Before you blog, tweet or share information about your practice, reflect on your intentions and the possible consequences. Even if you don't post yourself, consider the impact of "liking" someone else's disrespectful comments.

Employer [University] policies

Know and follow employer policies on using social media, photography, computers and mobile devices, including personal, at work. If you need to communicate with clients via social media, work with your employer [School] to develop policies.

Accountability

Make sure you can answer for your actions. Reflect on why, how and when you use social media and help others do the same. Know that personal use of social media while working can create client risks through distraction and interruptions; and in some situations, could be viewed as client abandonment.

If you are unable to discuss your online behaviour with others, consider this a red flag. Use professional judgment to keep your obligations to clients, colleagues and employers front and center.

1. BCCNM (2023). *Social media considerations*. Retrieved from: https://www.bccnm.ca/RPN/learning/socialmedia/Pages/Social_media_considerations.aspx
2. BCCNM (2023). *Professional standards for registered nurses and nurse practitioners*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bccnm.ca/RN/ProfessionalStandards/Pages/Default.aspx>