WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Elson S. Floyd
College of Medicine

Policy Title: Professionalism and Student Use of Technology

Policy Number: EC.09.01.170912

Applies to: WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Medical Students

Date: 4/14/2020

1.0   Policy Statement:
It is the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine policy that students use technology professionally, ethically, and in a manner consistent with the College of Medicine mission and vision.

2.0   Definitions:
Electronic Communication: Refers to the transfer of writing, signals, data, sounds, images, signs or intelligence sent via an electronic device.
Digital Content: Products available in digital form. It typically refers to music, information and images that are available for download or distribution on electronic media.
Email: Messages distributed by electronic means from one computer user to one or more recipients via a network.
Computer: Electronic device for storing and processing data, typically in binary form, according to instructions given to it in a variable program. Examples include: personal computer, PC, laptop, iPad, netbook, ultraportable, desktop, terminal and cell phone.
Social Media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content and to participate in social networking.
Public: Done, perceived, or existing in open view including communications using university resources, including university wi-fi, even on a personal device.
Private: Personal, own, individual, special, exclusive.
Professionalism: Conduct by medical students done with integrity, with respect to their peers, patients, colleagues and all members of the educational, clinical and research communities. Students should uphold the professional and ethical values essential to the practice of medicine and remain committed to the health and well-being of their patients.
HIPAA: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, was enacted on August 21, 1996. Sections 261 through 264 of HIPAA require the Secretary of HHS to publicize standards for the electronic exchange, privacy and security of health information.

3.0   Responsibility
Senior Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs

Professionalism and Student Use of Technology

4.0   Procedures Professionalism and Use of Computer Technology

Washington State University provides computers, e-mail accounts, and other communication technologies specifically to help students meet their educational and professional responsibilities. Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine and WSU computers are tools to enhance and provide learning, communication and information management. Students must utilize technology in a professional manner.

- Students must use the student learning management system adopted by the College of Medicine.
- Changing the setup of any WSU computer or device without authorization is prohibited.
- Students must comply with copyright laws regarding software and information.
- All students are to maintain the utmost respect and confidentiality of patients, faculty, and colleagues in accessing privileged information.
- The use of appropriate language is essential. Language that would be considered unprofessional to others is unacceptable.
- Distributing or responding to messages that are obscene or threatening is unacceptable conduct. Reporting the incident to the proper authorities, including the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion, is the responsibility of the student.

Other activities that are considered professionally inappropriate use of technology include, but are not limited to:

- Accessing, viewing, or downloading pornographic materials.
- Copying or downloading materials in a way that violates another's licensure or copyright protection,
- Use of WSU computing resources to harass others.

Students are responsible for knowing and complying with the [WSU Electronic Communication Policy](#) and the [Text Messaging Policy](#).

Improper use of computer technology is considered professional misconduct.

Professionalism and Social Media

Social media channels are powerful communication tools that can be of great benefit to forwarding the mission and the message of Washington State University and the College of Medicine. These tools can also have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. WSU recognizes social media sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, SLACK, etc., and individual web pages or blogs can be effective tools for exchanging information and raising the visibility of the University.

Therefore, employees and students are permitted and encouraged to follow University social media accounts and blogs that contribute appropriate content about WSU and its work. However, there are rules and guidelines when posting information about the University on both official and individual social media sites, blogs, and other forms of user-generated media.

Professionalism and Student Use of Technology

All students are to maintain professionalism when using social media platforms. The societal framework of "online professionalism" is evolving and as such, it does not have uniformly accepted standards for what is acceptable for individuals training to become physicians. However, just as in most areas of medicine, as new knowledge and tools are developed, standards can be defined and then later re-evaluated and adjusted as necessary. The College of Medicine intends to help students by clearly defining what is acceptable regarding online professionalism for medical students.

- Patients and society trust physicians with their health and lives. Anything you post online in a public forum should honor this trust and uphold the professional standards expected of you. You will be judged by your professional reputation throughout your career, and your words, images, and actions as a medical student should engender confidence by society at large.
- Patient data, patient identifiers, and other sensitive protected health information must be stored, transmitted, and retained in compliance with HIPAA and RCW 70.02. Students must de-identify protected health information under HIPAA privacy guidelines for any submission of coursework.
- Information related to patient care or clinical work should not be shared on any electronic platform that is not approved by the College of Medicine for medical education. This is especially true in cases where postings related to patient care or clinical work could compromise patient confidentiality or reveal patient identity.
- Still or video photography may not be used to capture any patient data or patient identifiers (including anatomy lab settings) unless under the direct supervision of a licensed physician for the express purpose of documentation in the official medical record.
- Taking pictures with patients is only allowed if the student is under the direct supervision of a licensed physician, if its allowed by rules and regulations of the clinical site, and if the student has secured photo releases from both the College of Medicine and the clinical site and submitted the release to the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion.
- When in doubt, ask for help. If you are unclear whether or not a post is acceptable online professionalism, contact the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion (EFLOStudentAffairs@wsu.edu or 509-368-6727).

If an individual observes a medical student not upholding the Professionalism and Social Media standards, they should submit an incident card. Observed violations of the Student Affairs Honor Code may also be reported in writing (anonymously or for attribution), or verbally to a member of the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion.

Students are encouraged to report violations involving possible discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or sexual misconduct to WSU's Office of Civil Rights Compliance & Investigation (CRCI).WSU employees may be required to report such incidents to CRCI (see https://crci.wsu.edu/reporting-requirements/).

Professionalism and Student Use of Technology

Concerns about Student Affairs Professionalism Code of Conduct that are related to the [University Code of Conduct](#) must be reported through the Office of Student Conduct via this [form](#).

Procedure for Investigation
All incident card submissions are reported directly to the Assessment Unit to be recorded and will be reviewed and assessed by the Association Dean of Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation. Incident cards related to a breach in professionalism will follow the process outlined in the Medical Student Promotion, Dismissal, and Graduation Policy.

5.0   Related Policies:
WSU EP #4 – Electronic Communication Policy
WSU EP #36 – Text Messaging Policy
WAC 504-26 – Standards of Conduct for Students
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
Washington's Uniform Health Care Information Act, RCW 70.02
Medical Student Promotion, Dismissal, and Graduation Policy SE.09.02.170808

6.0   Key Search Words

Communications, electronic, e-mail, online, social media, technology, consequences

7.0   Revision History

Original Approval	Policy number	Revision Date Approved
9/12/2017	EC.09.01.170912	4/14/2020

Responsible Office: Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion

Policy Contact: Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

Supersedes: EC.09.01.170912 dated 09/12/2017