



School of Social Work
Faculty of Community Services

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
Accredited by The Canadian Association for Social Work Education

Social Media Policy
Approved at School Council Meeting
March 23, 2015

The School of Social Work at Toronto Metropolitan University is committed to affirming human rights, equity and dignity among all people. As such, the School of Social Work values and respects the freedom of expression and academic freedom. The use of social media and technology has become a means of advancing social justice and social work education. The use of social media and technology can, however, present distinctive challenges, especially as it relates to the privacy and confidentiality of social service users. We believe it is imperative to provide guidelines and a framework to make informed decisions to the Toronto Metropolitan University Social Work community, including students, staff, and faculty, regarding the use of technology, social media, and other forms of electronic communication. The purpose of these guidelines is to maintain a respectful learning environment.

The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) Accreditation Standards (2012) state: “The academic unit has a policy regarding ethical use of all forms of social media to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the academic unit and its field practicum community and demonstrates how the policy and procedures are consistent with the relevant human rights legislation, with the mission of CASWE-ACFTS, and with the mission of the academic unit concerned.”

The CASWE Code of Ethics (2005) outlines the core social work values as:

- Respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons
- Pursuit of social justice
- Service to humanity
- Integrity of professional practice
- Confidentiality of professional practice
- Competence of professional practice

School of Social Work Social Media Policy

The School of Social Work values both academic freedom and freedom of expression and encourages these as fundamental aspects of a university education whether expressed in oral communication, print, or electronically. We recognize the importance

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of technology and social media and support the use of these communication tools among social workers.

Examples of common social media outlets include; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Vine, online blogs, YouTube videos, and so on. Members of the Toronto Metropolitan University Social Work community, including Faculty, Staff and Students, are responsible and accountable for their actions and statements on all social media platforms.

Guidelines for the use of Social Media

- Any information posted on social media platforms should be considered public documents and the parameters of privacy and confidentiality should be carefully maintained.
- Members of the School of Social Work community should refrain from disclosing any confidential or identifying information about the School of Social Work, staff and students, or any affiliated placement organizations unless permission is obtained.
- Members of the Toronto Metropolitan University's Work community must identify that the views expressed on social media platforms are those of the author/writer and not those of the School of Social Work or placement settings, unless authorized to do so.
- Unless given permission by the School of Social Work or a Field Instructor, students are not authorized to speak on behalf of the School or their practicum agency.
- Uploading photographs of clients, classmates, peers, members of the Social Work community, without consent is a breach of privacy and confidentiality.
- Any discussions or conversations held in the classroom should be considered confidential and should not be disclosed via social media. This includes any discussions within peers, students and instructors, and any other personal information disclosed within the classroom setting, unless authorized to do so.
- Any discussions that take place outside of the classroom between students and instructors should also be considered confidential and should not be shared via social media without prior authorization.
- Notes, electronic documents, lectures, and other course related content should not be posted on social media platforms unless authorized by the instructor to do so, to avoid breaking copyright rules and regulations.

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- Students must make themselves aware of and follow practicum agency policies regarding the use of electronic technologies and social media platforms.
- Students should discuss the use of electronic devices technologies for personal and placement reasons with their field instructor at the start of each field placement
- Any discussions, activities or conversations with service users, communities, or field placement agencies should be considered confidential and should not be posted to social media platforms without prior authorization.
- In addition to following the confidentiality guidelines outlined by the School of Social Work and the CASWE (2005) Code of Ethics, students are required to follow confidentiality and disclosure guidelines outlined by their respective field placement settings.

For further information regarding Toronto Metropolitan University's perspective on the use of Social Media, please refer to:

<https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/university-relations/documents/UR-Social-Media-Protocol.pdf>