

# UQ School of Veterinary Science

## Guidelines for Online Conduct

### Introduction

Students are significant users of social media. This is understandable, given their value for collaborative study as well as for personal social interaction.

UQ SVS supports student use of social media, but students need to be reminded of potential negative outcomes from its use. Please note that:

- Information you post (including photos, links, opinions, etc.) forms a record, in many cases permanent.
- This information can be (and is – we know this from our colleagues in practice) accessed by potential employers.
- Sometimes this information reflects negatively on not only the individual posting it, but on the School, the Profession, and fellow student colleagues.
- Part of the process of training to be a veterinarian involves development of professionalism. Use of social media needs to reflect this transition to professional practice.

Students are therefore offered the following guidelines for managing a professional online presence and for interacting with fellow students, staff and the wider public using IT.

### Guidelines for ethical/professional behaviour

#### *a. Professionalism*

- i. Postings within social network sites are subject to the same professionalism standards as any personal interaction. The professionalism description can be found in the Student Handbook (available on the student intranet), and UQ expectations and student responsibilities are covered under the Student Charter.
- ii. Statements made by you within online networks will be treated as if you verbally made the statement in a public place.
- iii. Do not violate copyrighted or trademarked materials. If you post content, photos or other media, you are acknowledging that you own or have the right to use these items.
- iv. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as UQ SVS student, you are creating perceptions about UQ SVS by those who have access to your online profile. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your position at the school and with UQ's values and professional standards.
- v. UQ and/or SVS logos may not be used on any social media site without the approval of UQ. Any veterinary medically oriented material must contain the disclaimer: "The posts on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the UQ School of Veterinary Science's positions, strategies, or opinions."
- vi. Use of social networking sites can have legal ramifications. Comments made regarding care of patients or their owners or that portray you or a colleague in an unprofessional

manner can be used in court or other disciplinary proceedings (i.e. State Registration Boards).

- vii. Do not give specific veterinary medical advice. You are not qualified to do so.
- viii. Unprofessional postings by others on your page can reflect poorly on you. Please monitor others' postings on your profile and work to ensure that the content would not be viewed as unprofessional. It may be useful to block content or links from individuals who post unprofessional content.
- ix. Students are encouraged to alert colleagues, and/or the School's Integrity Officer, to unprofessional or potentially offensive comments made online.

#### **b. Privacy**

- i. Closely monitor the privacy settings of your social network accounts to optimize their security.
- ii. Avoid sharing identification numbers on your personal profile. These would include address, birth date, student numbers or any other data that could be used to obtain or misuse your personal records.
- iii. Beware of tagging other people into your photos or being tagged into others' photos when these may be professionally compromising.
- iv. Maintain the privacy of colleagues, staff, and other UQ employees when referring to them unless they have given permission for their name or likeness to be used.
- v. Students must be professional also in their use of email. Students must use their UQ email address to communicate with staff, not their personal (e.g. gmail) addresses. Email is the formal mechanism of communication between the School and students – students must read and respond to emails from the School. Students should communicate with staff, both academic and professional, in a respectful and professional manner.

#### **c. Confidentiality**

- i. Confidentiality must be respected at all times between patients (records), clients (owners) and colleagues, with online discussion clearly breaking this professional confidentiality without express consent. Under no circumstances should photos of patients or clients be displayed online unless specific permission to do so has been obtained.
- ii. Do not post detailed information or photos relating to sensitive training activities, e.g. cadaver practicals, post-mortem activities, surgical procedures. The general public does not view these in the same context as veterinary students, which can result in negative or misinterpreted impressions of you, the School, and the Profession. This can lead to direct negative impacts on training opportunities for veterinary students.