

UC DAVIS SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

(as relates to faculty, staff and student personal social media accounts)

The UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) encourages participation by the SVM community on social media channels to share news about the school and their personal achievements and experiences. We want you to tell your stories and be thought leaders on the issues facing animal health, science innovation and veterinary medicine. The school also respects the privacy and dignity of all animals and their owners, and the hospital adheres to strict privacy standards for its clients and patients. The school expects its community to uphold all aspects of professionalism and ethical conduct. In order to be both encouraging and give professional guidance, this policy has been developed related to social media posts on faculty, staff or student personal social media accounts.

This policy includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, Clubhouse, and WildFire), blogs, online forums and chat rooms, and all other social media channels, including “private” spaces on social media channels when individuals are representing the school or themselves as professionals.

In this digital age, it is easy to forget that the animals seen in the course of administering patient care or in SVM learning environments, laboratories, university animal facilities, as well as medical records and scientific or course materials are essentially protected property either personally or by the university. In order to legally and ethically protect client/patient confidentially, medical record information and university intellectual property, the following policies are provided:

Strict Adherence to HIPAA and CMIA Privacy Laws: Sharing patient-specific information on social media platforms is a violation of federal and state privacy laws. The school operates in a manner consistent with HIPAA and CMIA laws and considers all client and patient information to be confidential and protected. Review and understand the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ([HIPAA](#)) and California’s Confidentiality of Medical Information Act ([CMIA](#)) privacy laws. Violations of these laws may incur criminal penalties (lawsuits, fines, imprisonment).

- Social media posts that contain information (including photographs and video clips) about animals or animal specimens owned by the university, as well as clients and patients of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH), Veterinary Medical Teaching and Research Center, Tulare (VMTRC), UC Veterinary Medical Center-San Diego (UCVMC-SD), Gourley Center and all other units within the school are prohibited.
- Photography or videography within the VMTH, VMTRC, UCVMC-SD, Gourley Center, research laboratories, animal holding facilities and all other units within the school is restricted (see SVM Photography Policy). Patient photographs or

videos that are allowed under the SVM Photography Policy are for SVM-approved use and are not permitted on personal social media channels/outlets. Photos in laboratory settings must have approval from the faculty PI or lab manager.

- Some shelters allow information (including photographs and videos) regarding shelter animals that are in need of adoption to be posted on social media. The Facility Manager at the Gourley Center is able to provide a current list of shelters that allow posting, and should be consulted to determine eligibility prior to any posts.
- Posting of information (including photographs and video) regarding student-, staff- or faculty- owned animals that participate in teaching sessions within the curriculum is prohibited on social media.
- Photographs and posts of animals and wildlife on display for an event or in a public forum such as at Picnic Day or at the California Raptor Center Open House are allowed.
- Be careful to review photos - sharing of seemingly innocent pictures such as a photo from a workplace lunch might inadvertently show patient information that happens to be visible in someone's hands or in the background. The same is true for photos in laboratory settings such as a photo which shows a colleague in the background who is not wearing required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Sharing of posts from official SVM social media accounts is always permitted and encouraged. For a complete list of official SVM social media accounts, visit <https://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/news/social>

Respect Confidentiality: You may not share confidential or proprietary information about the SVM and you must maintain patient confidentiality. Do not post photos, videos or information about patients, animal specimens, teaching material or other university proprietary material. Do not post photos of fellow students, staff or faculty colleagues without their consent.

- Electronic materials supplied as part of student, staff or faculty education is for personal use only and is prohibited on social media.

Write in First Person: If you identify yourself with the SVM or the University or if your connection to the SVM is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the SVM or the University. Sample wording: "The views expressed in this post are my own and do not reflect the views of the University or the School of Veterinary Medicine."

Be Professional: Use good judgment, be accurate and honest in your communications; avoid generalizations; errors, omissions or unprofessional language or behavior that

reflects poorly on you or on the SVM. Be respectful and professional to fellow employees, colleagues, and competitors. As a rule, if you wouldn't say your comment in a public setting, then you should avoid publishing it on social media.

Friending of Clients is Discouraged: The SVM strongly discourages the “friending” of clients on social media. Although friendships often develop with clients, in general, to ensure patient confidentiality and avoid potential comments or veterinary advice through this public forum, accepting or initiating “friending” through social media is discouraged.

University Endorsement Prohibited: The University has strict policies about endorsement of people, products, services and organizations. For personal social media accounts where your connection to the SVM is apparent, you should be careful to avoid implying that an endorsement of a person, product, service or organization is on behalf of the SVM, rather than a personal endorsement.

Personal Politics: You are free in your private individual capacity to endorse any political candidate or either side of a ballot initiative, but you must avoid any improper inference of university endorsement of a particular position. Specifically, a university employee may use his or her university title for identification purposes only, and should include a disclaimer of University endorsement if the context might reasonably cause confusion as to whether a political endorsement is made in an official or personal capacity.

Personal Social Media Account Name: Your social media name, handle and URL should not include SVM or University name or logo.

UC Davis Social Media Policies/Guidelines:

- <https://marketingtoolbox.ucdavis.edu/departments/social-media/policy-and-guidelines>

SVM Photography Policy:

- <https://secure.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/admin/policies/SVM-Photography-Policy.pdf>

The SVM encourages the participation and engagement of its community through social media in accordance with the policies and guidance laid out above. The SVM is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, the content posted by faculty, staff or students on any of their personal social media channels. Comments on any SVM social media channel may be removed to protect the privacy of its patients, faculty, staff or students at the discretion of social media administrators. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.