

## Policy on Use of Social Networking & Social Media

It has become common for people to have a significant presence on or usage of electronic social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, personal webpages, YouTube, Instagram, etc). The purpose of this policy is to provide some guidelines about any public representation of you or the URI Communicative Disorders program in social media. Although this policy applies to current common and popular forms of social media, nothing here is intended to limit it to only these public presentations.

1. If your social media posts do not include any mention or indication of the fact that you are a student (undergraduate or graduate) in the URI Communicative Disorders program, you can represent yourself as you wish in the public domain. Increasingly, universities, internship sites, and even clients are seeking out information about people through the web and social media before they make offers to interview individuals for purposes of employment, to accept students in clinical externship positions, or even clients deciding to see someone for clinical purposes. For your own potential future, we would advise that before you put anything up on the web as representing yourself, you seriously consider how that material may be viewed by future employers, internship sites, or clients.
2. Decisions to connect socially with former or current clients online should keep professional boundaries very clear. Under no circumstances should you “friend” a former or current client on social networking sites, or otherwise accept or solicit personal connections with former or current clients online. Your relationships with former and current clients must remain strictly professional.
3. Under no circumstances should you discuss client cases or share client identifying information in emails, listservs, websites, web groups, or blogs; include any information that could lead to the identification of a client; or compromise client confidentiality in any way. Even if you think you have de-identified client information, consider how such communication could be viewed if seen by the client, or someone who knows the client. You are not in control of this information once it is released to the hundreds or thousands of people on a listserv or web group discussion board, or on a website that will “live” electronically online for years.
4. If your social media posts DO identify you as a speech-language pathology graduate student, or as affiliated with the URI speech-language pathology graduate program, then the URI Department of Communicative Disorders does indeed have some responsibility for how you (or it) is portrayed. Your social media posts must meet all legal and ethical guidelines from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (e.g., you cannot represent yourself as a “speech-language pathologist”) (see: <https://www.asha.org/Code-of-Ethics/> for additional information). Additionally, your posts must be professional in their content and must not contain objectionable material. We will not actively search out URI Communicative Disorders students’ social media posts. However, if we become aware of posts that identify you as a speech-language pathology student, or as a student in the program and these post(s) are considered by the program faculty to be unethical, illegal, or to contain objectionable material, we will ask you to modify or remove the problem material. Should you choose not to modify or remove the material, the Chair of the Department of Communicative Disorders in consultation

with department faculty will follow the existing university procedures for dealing with student misconduct and/or unethical behavior.