Western Carolina University
Athletic Training Education Program

Social Networking Policy

Faculty & Preceptor Policy:

The Western Carolina University (WCU) Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP) promotes professional interactions between faculty, preceptors and students. In maintaining this professional interaction, the program prohibits faculty and preceptors from interacting with current athletic training students using social networking media. Faculty and preceptors should not accept nor request any interaction involving social networking media with any student currently enrolled in the WCU ATEP, regardless of whether the faculty member or preceptor is currently providing didactic or clinical education to the student. This policy also applies to graduate assistants and graduate interns employed by the WCU ATEP or WCU Athletic Department. Former faculty (those no longer employed by WCU), former preceptors (those no longer being used in the role of preceptor by the WCU ATEP), and former students (alumni or students no longer enrolled in the WCU ATEP) are not affected by this policy.

Athletic Training Student Policy:

The Western Carolina University (WCU) Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP) promotes professional interactions between clinicians and patients. In maintaining this professional interaction, the program prohibits athletic training students from interacting with current patients or student-athletes, not associated with Western Carolina University, using social networking media. Athletic training students should not accept nor request any interaction involving social networking media with any current patient or non-WCU student-athlete, regardless of whether the athletic training student is directly responsible for the patient’s care. This includes refraining from social networking with student-athletes from athletic teams with whom the athletic training student has no direct contact and patients being treated by another clinician at the athletic training student’s clinical education site. This policy further prohibits social interaction with patients and student-athletes by text messaging and electronic mail.

Furthermore, it is unacceptable for athletic training students to interact through social networking media, text message, or electronic mail with patients or student-athletes who are minors, no matter if they are currently working with the minor or if they are no longer providing healthcare for the minor.

Athletic training students should also refrain from sharing any materials, including but not limited to, text, images or video, related to patient diagnosis and care through social networking media, text message, or electronic mail. Any such disclosure of information is in violation of HIPAA guidelines and the WCU ATEP Patient Confidentiality Policy.