

# SCHOOL OF NURSING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## School of Nursing Policies and Procedures

### Policy on Criminal Background Checks

Applicants must submit and satisfactorily complete a designated criminal background check as a condition of admission. An offer of admission will not be final until the criminal background check(s) is received and deemed favorable. Admission may be denied or rescinded based on results of the background check. In addition selected agencies where students pursue clinical experiences, may require that students placed in their agencies pass an additional criminal background check before being allowed to practice in their facilities. Additional expenses incurred will be at the student's expense.

### Undergraduate Criminal Background Check

The Texas Board of Nursing (TBON) (<http://www.bne.state.tx.us>) conducts the background checks and has legally granted power to deny permission for a candidate to take the NCLEX-RN (<https://www.ncsbn.org/nclex.htm>) examination if it is demonstrated that the individual has not demonstrated "good professional character." The Board may refuse to:

- Approve persons to take the licensure examination.
- Issue or renew a license or certificate of registration to any individual who has been convicted of a felony, a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, or engaged in conduct resulting in revocation of probation imposed pursuant to such conviction.

All nursing students must continue to show evidence of good professional character while enrolled in a nursing program.

Candidates with a positive background check will also be notified by TBON and asked to submit a petition for a "Declaratory Order." The petition will be reviewed by the TBON. Please contact the Office of the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services.

Continuing students who are charged or convicted of an offense while enrolled in the nursing program will be required to notify the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies at the time of the offense and to petition TBON for a declaratory order. The student will be removed from clinical courses while obtaining the Declaratory Order, and may need to take a Leave of Absence. Failure to report any new incidents following the initial background check to the School may potentially cause the student to be dismissed from the program. The Board investigates each incident based on its own information. Many of the factors used by the Board can be viewed online (<http://www.bon.texas.gov/disciplinaryaction/discp-guide.html>).

### Graduate Criminal Background Check

The School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) Office of Admissions and Student Services will designate an approved company to conduct the background checks for graduate students who are already licensed as a Registered Nurse. Results from a company other than those designated will not be accepted. Students and applicants must contact this designated company and comply with its instructions in authorizing

and obtaining a background check. Applicants are responsible for payment of any fees charged for the certified criminal background check.

### Non-Degree Students Criminal Background Check

Non-Degree students who wish to take a non-clinical course(s) offered at the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) must satisfy the Health Science Center criminal background check requirements. The School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services will verify with appropriate entities on behalf of the student for the acceptable background checks.

### Urine Drug Screens

Urine drug screens may be required by certain clinical agencies. Students will be notified by the Office for Academic Affairs if a urine drug screen is required. Any additional expenses that the clinical agency may incur will be at the student's expense.

### Immunization and Health Insurance

Prior to matriculation, all students are required to complete the immunizations requirements and submit evidence to the Student Health Clinic. All students must remain in compliance while enrolled.

For more information on immunizations see Health Science Center Student Health Clinic. See Student Services - Health Insurance (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/studentlife/2013/03/health-insurance>).

### Professional Liability Insurance

Students enrolled in programs that involve direct patient care activities are required to purchase professional liability insurance through the university. Liability insurance purchased through the Health Science Center is applicable to the student role only. Nurse practitioner students are required to pay an additional insurance fee.

### Computer Requirement

All courses in the School of Nursing have an online component or other requirements that necessitate the use of a computer. Students are required to have certain minimum computer competencies. Minimum competencies include basic familiarity with computers, use of Internet, word processing, email and presentation software. The official method of communication is via students' Health Science Center "livemail" account.

All students admitted into the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) undergraduate program will be required to purchase a laptop computer with a privacy screen from the Health Science Center when entering the program. Windows-based and Apple platforms are available. The computer will be formatted with standard programs and online learning resources.

Graduate students are expected to have a computer that meets specifications for the School of Nursing.

Specifications can be found online (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu/students/faq.asp>).

The Microsoft Office Suite, which includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook, is available to students through the bookstore at a significant savings. The most up-to-date version of the suite is available for Windows and Mac. This software is required for all students.

## Financial Aid

To determine eligibility for federal, state and private sources of financial aid, please visit The Office of Veterans' Services and Financial Aid (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/financialaid>).

## Scholarship and Stipends

For School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) Scholarships, undergraduate and graduate nursing students are encouraged to 1) submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid Form (FAFSA) and 2) a School of Nursing Scholarship application (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu/students/finAid.asp>), which must be completed every semester.

Students can access scholarship applications by logging into the Student Portal during March for summer and fall awards and October for spring awards. New students submit scholarship applications with their admission paperwork. The School of Nursing Scholarship Advisory Group reviews all applications and selects recipients based on criteria for each scholarship. Scholarship recipients are required to provide a thank you note for the donor and to attend a yearly reception.

The School of Nursing Office of Admissions and Student Services works collaboratively with The Office of Veterans' Services and Financial Aid (VSFA) to facilitate identification of federal, state and private funding sources. Click here (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/financialaid>) to view services available through VSFA and the process for applying for financial aid.

Please be aware that a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed annually. Click here (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>) to apply for all federal/state grants and student loans. The Renewal FAFSA is available for those who applied the previous year. The school code for the FAFSA is 003659.

## Tuition

For details about tuition and fees, please contact the Bursar's Office (<http://uthscsa.edu/business/bursar4students>).

## Independent Study

Students may design their own Independent Study course for one to three semester hours of credit. Guidelines for design and approval of Independent Study are available from the Academic Coordinator for the undergraduate or the graduate program in the Office for Academic Affairs in the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>). The Committee on Undergraduate Studies or Committee on Graduate Studies must approve the Independent Study before a student can register for the course. Requests for approval of Independent Studies are due to the appropriate committee by April 15 for summer and fall semesters and October 15 for spring semesters.

## Full time/ Part Time Statuses

Undergraduate students enrolled for a minimum of 12 semester credit hours (SCH) in the fall and spring semesters or 6 SCH in the summer are considered full-time students. Students enrolled in less than 12 SCH are classified as part-time.

Graduate students enrolled for a minimum of 9 semester credit hours (SCH) in the fall and spring semesters and 6 SCH in the summer, are considered full time students. Students enrolled in less than 9 SCH in fall and spring or less than 6 SCH in the summer are classified as part-time.

Students may not change their program plan from part-time to full-time or vice versa without consultation with the Office for Academic Affairs. All requests for change will be based upon space available in the requested course(s), and availability of courses

## Course Numbering

Each course consists of a prefix that represents the discipline (NURS for Nursing) and a 4-digit number. The School of Nursing uses the following numbering system:

The first digit is the Level of course: 1=Freshman, 2=Sophomore, 3=Junior, 4=Senior, 5=Introductory Graduate, 6=Advanced Graduate, 7=Doctoral. The second digit is number of semester credit hours (0=variable semester credit hours). The third and fourth digits distinguish one course from another within the discipline.

## The Semester Credit Hour

The unit measure for credit purposes is the semester credit hour (SCH).

One semester credit hour of credit is given for each 15 clock hours of lecture and 45 clock hours of clinical/laboratory in the undergraduate program and 15 clock hours of lecture and 60 clock hours of clinical/laboratory in the graduate program.

## Adding and Dropping Courses

Students are expected to pre-register for all course work. After the first day of classes and prior to census day student may add classes with the approval of the appropriate Associate Dean.

Dropping refers to the procedure by which students remove themselves from one or more of the courses in which they are enrolled while continuing in the remainder of their courses. A student who is enrolled in only one course must either withdraw or apply for a leave of absence if he/she intends to drop the course. Please refer to the Office of the University Registrar's section of this catalog.

## Repeating a Course

Students cannot enroll in nursing courses for a grade, if the course has already been completed with a passing grade.

## Voluntary Withdrawal

Withdrawal refers to the procedure by which students voluntarily remove themselves from all courses in which they are enrolled. Withdrawal from all courses constitutes withdrawal from the nursing program and university unless the student is granted a leave of absence. A student wishing to withdraw from one or all courses in the School of Nursing initiates the process through consultation with the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. When approved, the student must obtain a drop slip for said course(s), and, if withdrawing from the program, complete the Student Clearance Form from the Office of the University Registrar (317L MED). Failure to clear campus appropriately will affect the students' ability to obtain transcripts, be readmitted to the program in the future, or obtain financial support.

A student who completes a semester, but does not plan to continue in the School of Nursing during the next semester, must withdraw or apply for a leave of absence.

A student who discontinues class attendance in any course without completing the formal drop or withdrawal process will receive the grade they have earned for the course. See policies for administrative Leave of Absence (LOA) in the Health Science Center catalog. A student who has previously withdrawn is subject to the same admission requirements, procedures, and acceptance considerations that apply to first-time applicants.

## Procedures for Dropping a Course or Withdrawal

All students who complete the formal withdrawal process through the Office of the University Registrar will be awarded the grade of W. Students who do not complete the formal withdrawal process will receive the letter grade which they earned.

The student discusses dropping with the clinical/course faculty. The student makes an appointment with the appropriate Associate Dean for Undergraduate or Graduate Studies through the Office for Academic Affairs to discuss the decision, explore options, and make necessary changes to the degree plan. The student will have to have an official drop form signed by the course coordinator/course faculty after the form has been provided and signed by the appropriate Associate Dean.

The Office for Academic Affairs will submit the completed official drop form to the Office of the University Registrar and will notify the Registrar and Financial Aid office of the change in status and change in the student's graduation date.

## Leave of Absence

Any student who is in good standing (passing all required courses with a 2.0 or above GPA in undergraduate program or 3.0 in the graduate program; no incomplete grades in a course, and no failures) may, under special circumstances, take a leave of absence. A leave of absence may be granted for a maximum period of one year.

Students who are experiencing special circumstances that hinder their studies or students who receive an "F" or a "W" in a required undergraduate course that is offered only once a year should make an appointment through the Office for Academic Affairs to discuss their issues with the appropriate Associate Dean.

If together the student and the academic administrator agree that a leave of absence is appropriate, the student will be sent to The Office of the University Registrar to obtain the required Student Clearance Form. The student will "clear campus." Failure to clear campus appropriately will affect the students' ability to obtain transcripts, be readmitted to the program in the future, or obtain financial support.

The student may return to school at any time during the year, but no later than one year from the time when the leave started. The student must notify the Office for Academic Affairs at least three months prior to returning to campus. Return to school will coincide with the beginning of a semester. Courses that had not been completed at the time of initiating the leave will have to be repeated in total. Students who do not return from leave within the one-year limit will be withdrawn from the nursing program and will have to apply for admission as a new student.

## Attendance

The School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) faculty believes that attendance at scheduled classes, examinations, clinical experiences, and clinical learning laboratory is crucial to meeting course and program objectives. Excused absences may be granted by the instructor in

such cases as illness or personal emergency and are considered on an individual basis. Please see course syllabus for attendance requirement.

## Clinical Attendance

The School of Nursing faculty expects that its students will recognize that they have entered a profession in which commitment to full participation in clinical experiences is an essential component as students are considered to be part of the nursing team. Therefore, regular attendance in clinical, laboratory and simulation experiences is mandatory.

Missed hours can prevent adequate development and assessment of the required knowledge, skills, attitudes and clinical judgment. Absence from clinical/lab/simulation jeopardizes the student's ability to successfully meet the required clinical course outcomes and competencies. Punctuality is expected in professional workplaces. Students are expected to arrive on time for clinical/lab/simulation experiences and stay for the entire time allotted for that clinical/lab/simulation experience. Important information affecting patient care is communicated to students at the start of clinical experiences. Therefore, tardiness for clinical/lab/simulation experiences jeopardizes the student's ability to give safe nursing care.

## Learning Laboratory Attendance

Learning Laboratory is considered clinical time. Attendance is essential and students are expected to review course syllabus regarding attendance requirement. Students arriving late for Learning Laboratory are not given extra time for skill practice or performance.

## Clinical Absences

Absences from clinical experience are closely monitored by faculty and should occur only in rare circumstances. Clinical absences will be evaluated on an individual basis. If the student has any clinical absences during the semester, clinical may be made up through a plan developed by the clinical/lab instructor. However, the opportunity to make up absences may not be possible, depending on the length of the clinical rotation, the availability of the faculty and/or the agency to which the student is assigned and may result in inability of the student to meet course outcomes.

If it is determined by the faculty team that a student will be unable to meet course objectives due to clinical absences or if a pattern of absence develops or excessive absences exist, the appropriate course coordinator will refer the student to the appropriate Associate Dean to determine progression in the program.

## Excused Absences

The student is responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for absence. Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the School of Nursing are the following:

- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family. Immediate family may include: mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, spouse, child, spouse's child, spouse's parents, spouse's grandparents, step-mother, step-father, step-sister, step-brother, step-grandparents, grandchild, step-grandchild, legal guardian, and others as deemed appropriate by the Dean or Dean's designee.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.

- Religious Holy Day (Notification must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs: <http://students.uthscsa.edu/registrar/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/06/HolyDayAbsForm.pdf>).
- Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class or clinical. Immediate notification to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services should be attempted via email as quickly as the student's health condition allows.
- Injury or illness of three or more days. For injury or illness that requires a student to be absent from classes for three or more business days (to include classes on weekends), the student should obtain a medical confirmation note from her or his healthcare provider. The Student Health Clinic or an off-campus healthcare provider can provide a medical confirmation note only if those providers are directly involved in the care of the student. The medical confirmation note must contain the date and time of the illness and the provider's confirmation of needed absence.
- Injury or illness less than three days. Faculty members may require confirmation of student injury or illness that is serious enough for a student to be absent from class for a period less than three business days (to include classes on weekends). At the discretion of the faculty member and/or Associate Dean(s) standard, as outlined in the course syllabus, illness confirmation may be obtained by confirmation of a visit to a healthcare provider affirming date and time of visit.
- Students required to miss clinical experiences due to injury or illness may be required to receive clearance from a healthcare provider to perform the essential functions of the clinical if patient safety might be jeopardized or if it is perceived that participation in clinical might cause further harm to the student.
- Required Military Duties (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/studentabsences/>).
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.
- In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the School of Nursing shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period as is deemed medically necessary by the student's healthcare provider. Requests for excused absence related to pregnancy should be directed to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services; questions about Title IX should be directed to the University's Senior Director of Student Success and Title IX Director.

In addition to the above, there may also be extenuating circumstances where the dean or designee may provide a letter for the student to take to the instructor stating that the dean has verified the student's absence as excused.

If the absence is excused, the instructor must either provide the student an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the final grade or provide a satisfactory alternative by a date agreed upon by the student and instructor. If an instructor has a regularly scheduled make up exam, students are expected to attend unless they have a School approved excuse. The make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 30 calendar days from the last day of the initial absence. Clinical experiences may not have the opportunity to be made up, but students will not be penalized for missed clinical time due to an excused absence.

The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence. If the student is absent for excused reasons for an unreasonable amount of time during the semester, the dean or designee may consider giving the student a grade of W during the semester enrolled.

Whenever a student is absent for unknown reasons for an extended period of time, the instructor should initiate a check on the welfare of the student by reporting to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services.

## **Military Absences**

Under certain circumstances, a student who is required to participate in active military services is excused from scheduled classes or other required activities and will be allowed to complete an assignment or exam within a reasonable time after the absence. The excused absence is permitted only if the student will not miss more than 25% of the total number of class meetings or the contact hour equivalent (not including the final examination period) for the specific course or courses in which the student is enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service.

Students expected to be absent from classes for active duty must obtain approval from the appropriate Associate Dean in order to take a Leave of Absence. All related procedures, including completion of a Student Clearance Form, must be followed.

## **Incomplete Grades**

A student may be granted a grade of "Incomplete" (I) for a course when the student is unable to complete all course work within allotted semester time under certain special circumstances. The student wishing to petition for extended time to complete course requirements must request the extension, incomplete grade, from the faculty.

An Agreement for a Grade of Incomplete form must be signed by both the student and the course instructor and/or course coordinator. Forms are available in the Office for Academic Affairs. The faculty may consult with the appropriate Associate Dean regarding the effect of granting a grade of "I" on the student's progression in the nursing program. Students have up to one calendar year to complete course work that is incomplete. However, if the incomplete course is a pre-requisite to another course, progression in the program will be delayed. If the course is a required course, the student will not be allowed to progress in the program until the incomplete grade has been removed and a letter grade substituted. Once the coursework is completed, the faculty member must complete a Change of Grade Report Form. If coursework is not completed by the designated date, the course grade of "I" will be converted to an "F".

## **Intra-semester Report**

At the middle of each semester, the faculty reports the names of students doing work below the passing grade to the appropriate Associate Dean. Students may be referred to the Student Success Center and/or the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services for advising. Students who are failing will receive a midterm fail notice.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

Students are responsible for knowing and observing the University's procedures and regulations governing Student Conduct and Discipline and the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents. In addition to

these regulations, standards of professional conduct may be set by each school of the Health Science Center.

Recognizing that professionalism is a critical nursing competency, the faculty member shall have the authority to administer appropriate consequences within the course if there is a perceived violation of the Code of Professional Conduct within the academic experience (e.g., lowered grade, course failure, suspension from clinical, etc.). If the violation occurs outside of the course, the alleged Code of Professional Conduct violation will be adjudicated by the Office of Admissions and Student Services.

The Associate Dean for Admissions & Student Services of each school shall have the responsibility for the administration of discipline in cases concerning scholastic dishonesty and student misconduct. The processes afforded a student subject to disciplinary sanctions are governed by Series 50101 of the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System and the Health Science Center's Student Conduct and Discipline Policy.

## Professional Conduct Guidelines

The goal of the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) is to create nursing professionals who can access and critically examine a reliable and extensive body of knowledge and apply it consistently to maximize the clinical benefit of patients. School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) students are expected to demonstrate academic professionalism and honesty, and to maintain the highest standards of integrity according to the Board of Regents (<http://www.utsystem.edu/sites/utsfiles/offices/board-of-regents/rules-regulations/50101.pdf>) that embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty. The Health Science Center School of Nursing Code of Conduct Document has established that nursing students have certain rights and responsibilities, and serves as an affirmation that students are a party to the social trust shared by all in the university community.

The School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) follows the recommendations of the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses as well as the Texas Board of Nursing, Nurse Practice Act.

Professional behaviors include application of the nursing process, providing care and counsel, or health teaching to persons experiencing alterations in health based on synthesis of knowledge and understanding of basic scientific principles (Texas Board of Nursing, Rules and Regulations Relating to Nurse Education Licensure and Practice, February, 2012).

A code of professional behavior cannot encompass all potential issues of conduct which may arise. Therefore, it is impossible to specify all behaviors deemed to be unprofessional. Students are expected to hold themselves and their peers to professional standards of behavior throughout their course of study. Included among these standards are five fundamental values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, fairness, respect and personal accountability. The principles in the code of professional conduct as outlined in the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) document signed by all students upon enrollment in the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) should be reinforced throughout the curriculum.

## Professionalism

Principles of professionalism are not rules that specify behaviors, but guidelines to provide direction in identifying appropriate conduct. These principles include the safety and welfare of patients, competence

in knowledge and skills, responsibility for consequences of actions, professional communication, confidentiality, and lifelong learning for maintenance of professional skills and judgments. Professionalism and professional ethics are terms that signify certain scholastic, interpersonal and behavioral expectations. Among the characteristics included in this context are the knowledge, competence, demeanor, attitude, appearance, mannerisms, integrity and morals displayed by the student to faculty, peers, patients, clients and colleagues in other health care professions. Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner and to exhibit characteristics of a professional student.

The American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses is offered online (<http://nursingworld.org>). The Rules and Regulations of the Texas State Board of Nursing are also provided online ([https://www.bon.texas.gov/laws\\_and\\_rules\\_rules\\_and\\_regulations.asp](https://www.bon.texas.gov/laws_and_rules_rules_and_regulations.asp)).

## Students Rights and Responsibilities

Each individual student is responsible for their behavior and is expected to maintain standards of academic honesty. Students share the responsibility with faculty for creating an environment that supports academic honesty and principles of professionalism. Proper relationships between faculty and students are fundamental to the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) function and this relationship should be built on mutual respect and understanding together with shared dedication to the education process. It is a fundamental belief that each student is worthy of trust and each student has the right to live in an academic environment free of injustice caused by dishonesty. While students have an obligation to assist their fellow students in meeting the common goals of their education, students have an equal obligation to maintain the highest standards of personal integrity.

Click here (<http://www.utsystem.edu/sites/utsfiles/offices/board-of-regents/rules-regulations/50101.pdf>) to view Regents Rules 50101. The School of Nursing Code of Conduct (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu/students/pdf/codeOfConduct.pdf>), ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses (<http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses>), and the Rules and Regulations of the Texas State Board of Nursing ([https://www.bon.texas.gov/laws\\_and\\_rules\\_rules\\_and\\_regulations.asp](https://www.bon.texas.gov/laws_and_rules_rules_and_regulations.asp)) are all available online as well.

## Faculty Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the faculty to specify in their syllabi the limits of acceptable resources that may be used for the purposes of the course.

It is the responsibility of students to honor and adhere to those limits.

The faculty should establish with the students what is considered to be academic dishonesty. Encouragement of group work varies greatly. Faculty shall convey to their students the acceptable level of individual versus collaborative work. Faculty, students, and administrators share the responsibility for creating an environment that encourages academic honesty.

## Social Media Guidelines

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and privacy of students, faculty, staff, patients, and visitors. Students and faculty members must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) when using social media. These

guidelines are informed by the American Nurses Association (<http://www.nursingworld.org>) *Principles for Social Networking and the Nurse*.

No student may post, release, or otherwise disclose photos, identifiable case descriptions, images, or records related to the educational, clinical, or research activities of the school via social networking sites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), non-educational blogs, message boards, Internet websites, personal e-mail, or anything other than standard professional means of query and/or dissemination.

No student may post statements about the School of Nursing community (employees, staff, students, and visitors) that are defamatory, obscene, threatening or harassing.

Failure to comply with this policy may be a violation of legal, professional, and/or ethical obligations. Violation will result in disciplinary action by the School of Nursing up to and including dismissal from the professional nursing program.

The School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) assumes no duty to monitor Internet activity but reserves the right to take appropriate action in accordance with this policy.

### **Netiquette**

The School of Nursing has developed Netiquette Guidelines for on-line courses which align with the social media policy. Please see the student handbook for the School of Nursing Netiquette Guidelines.

### **Think twice before posting**

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Before each posting, students are encouraged to consider how the item may reflect both on the author of the post and the School of Nursing. Something that would not be said in person should not be posted in social media. Imagine your posting on the front page of the local newspaper.

### **Strive for accuracy**

Students should be certain that anything they post on a social media site is factual. The posting should be reviewed for grammatical and spelling errors, especially when posting on behalf of the School of Nursing.

### **Be respectful**

Posted responses and comments should be respectful and considerate.

### **Photography**

Students should be aware that photographs posted on social media sites can easily be accessed by visitors to those sites. Posting unauthorized photos on a website or social media network site can result in disciplinary action.

### **Rules**

It is important to review the terms of service, privacy settings, and other policies of the social media network before use.

### **Scholastic Dishonesty**

Nursing students are expected to maintain an environment of academic integrity. Actions involving scholastic dishonesty violate the professional code of ethics and are disruptive to the academic environment. Students found guilty of scholastic dishonesty including but not limited to plagiarism, falsification, sharing exam items, and misrepresentation

violate the professional code of ethics and are subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from the school.

Both professional misconduct and scholastic dishonesty are governed by the guidelines contained in the procedures and regulations governing Student Conduct and Discipline (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/institutionalpolices/studentconductanddisciplinepolicy>) of the Health Science Center (<http://www.uthscsa.edu>) contained in this Catalog. Any nursing student who fails to demonstrate to the faculty the intellectual, ethical, or behavioral attributes necessary for a member of the nursing profession is subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## **Graduation**

Official commencement ceremonies are held each year in December and May. Graduates may not participate in commencement prior to completion of their program. Official School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) graduation invitations are ordered at the Bookstore (<http://uthscsa.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet>) on the Health Science Center's (<http://www.uthscsa.edu>) Long campus.

Graduates of the Ph.D. program are hooded at the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences commencement in May. Students are invited by the School of Nursing to attend and be recognized at the School of Nursing commencement.

Commencement is considered an important event which is steeped in tradition; therefore, we request graduates to adhere to the academic ceremonies protocol.

## **Student Concerns**

### **Academic Appeals and Grievances**

Student academic appeals and grievances are handled through established policies and procedures for the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) as outlined in the General Academic Policies (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/grievances>) section of this Catalog.

The Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services is available to explain, discuss, and facilitate this process with students and refer as appropriate to the appropriate Associate Dean. This office also deals with issues directly related to other student life concerns, including, governance, mentoring, counseling and resource needs, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator (EEOC) and concerns related to harassment, threat, or violence.

## **Procedure for Academic Review**

### **Section I: Purpose of Procedure**

The purpose of Academic Review is to provide the student who has a concern about grades with the opportunity to pursue the concern through administrative channels if initial discussions with the faculty member/s who assign the grades are not perceived as fair or equitable. A grievance is an accusation or complaint about a grade or unfair action regarding academic achievement in the nursing program. The student has the right to grieve a grade or unfair action if the student's perception is that the grade received was awarded capriciously, arbitrarily, or prejudicially. The

student is required to provide a rationale explaining his or her perception at this time.

A student may only grieve the final grade for the course. For individual assignments, students may review the procedure for requesting a second reviewer on graded assignments.

The student may appeal the same grade only once. From the time the grade is released, the student has 10 business days to initiate Step 1 of the grievance procedures. A grievance is not the same as a request for a second reader of a graded paper. Confidentiality is essential for all academic review/grievance procedures. Students may seek counsel or advice concerning the academic review process from the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services.

## Section II: Procedure to be followed

Prior to initiation of an academic review or grievance, the student must contact the faculty involved to discuss the concern. If resolution is not achieved, the student may pursue an academic review or grievance.

## Grade Appeal Process

### Step 1

1. A written petition must be submitted by the student to the faculty of the class. This petition should contain:
  - a. name of student
  - b. course
  - c. grade which is being challenged
  - d. dates student received grade
  - e. name of faculty member/s involved
  - f. dates student met with the faculty
  - g. student's reason for grieving the grade and a brief statement of the student's concerns
  - h. evidence of how the grade was awarded arbitrarily, capriciously, or prejudicially.
2. Within seven business days (unless there are special circumstances, such as progression in the program, that require more rapid action), the faculty will respond to the student in writing with a decision. For the purpose of this grades appeals process, business days are established by the Health Science Center.
3. The student should retain a copy of the documents submitted for his or her records.
4. If the student concern is not resolved by the faculty in charge of the course then the grievance moves on to Step 2.

### Step 2

1. A written petition will be submitted by the student to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services who will engage the appropriate Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies).
2. The petition should contain the same information included in Step 1.
3. The appropriate Associate Dean will review the grievance.
4. An informal hearing with the student filing the grievance may be called if the student, faculty or Associate Dean feels it would be beneficial to discuss the complaint.
5. Within seven business days (unless there are special circumstances, such as progression in the program, that require more rapid action), the appropriate Associate Dean will respond to the student in writing

with a decision. A written copy of the decision will also be provided for the faculty in charge of the course for which the grade is grieved.

6. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the grievance may proceed to Step 3.

### Step 3

1. The written petition, including the same information as listed in Step 1, will be submitted by the student to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services who will brief and forward the petition to the Dean of the School of Nursing.
2. Information supporting the decision in Step 2 should also be forwarded to the Dean by the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services. This petition should contain the nature of the problem as stated in Step 1. A statement that an attempt was made to resolve the issue directly with both the faculty and/or the appropriate Associate Dean must be included.
3. The student should keep a copy of the documents submitted for his or her record.
4. The Dean may convene an impartial (e.g.: faculty who are outside the course or the department and a student) Grades Appeals Committee (GAC), which shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Dean. The manner of appointments and the number of members on the GAC shall be determined within the School of Nursing. The Chairperson of the GAC shall be appointed by the Dean. A decision will be made within seven business days unless there are special circumstances, such as progression in the program, that require more rapid action. The Chairperson of the GAC will make a recommendation to the Dean. The Dean will respond to the student in writing with a decision. A copy of the document stating the recommended decision will be sent to the faculty in charge of the course and the appropriate Office of Academic Affairs staff member(s).
  - The decision of the GAC will be directed specifically to the charge (grade is indicative of the student's achievement or the grade is not indicative of the student's achievement). A rationale will be provided. If the GAC recommends reconsideration of the grade, the faculty member will implement the overturned decision within seven business days unless there are special circumstances, such as progression in the program, that require more rapid action.
  - A written report of the review is provided to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services following the recommendation. The written record will be maintained in compliance with the records retention policy.
  - The timeline for meetings of the GAC will be conducted under the Health Science Center regular hours of operations. Under unusual circumstances deadlines may be extended.

## Procedure for Second Readers of Papers and/or Projects

If a student disagrees with the grade given on a paper or project, he/she must discuss this with the faculty member who graded the paper. If an agreement is not reached, the following procedure will be followed to request a second reader.

1. The student must submit a written petition for a second reader to the faculty member in charge of the course no later than seven business days after receiving the grade. The petition should state which portions of the criteria are being challenged.

2. The student must also submit, to the faculty member in charge of the course, an unmarked and unaltered copy of the original paper. The student's name will be removed from the paper to allow for a blind review.
3. Through an impartial process, the faculty member in charge of the course will assign a faculty member, who is familiar with the course level and content, to serve as second reader.
4. The second reader's evaluation will be returned to the original instructor for her/his consideration. The grade is reviewed by the second reader and faculty responsible for the course with the original faculty member assigning a final grade.
5. A request for a second reading may result in a final grade that is the same, higher, or lower than the first grade.

## Non Academic Appeals and Grievances

Student appeals and grievances are handled through established policies and procedures for the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) as outlined in the General Information section of this Catalog. The Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Services is available to explain, discuss, and facilitate this process with students at any point in the process as well as to deal directly with any other student issues, including student life, governance, mentoring, counseling and resource needs, ADA, EEOC, and concerns related to harassment, threat, or violence.

## Patient Safety

The nature of clinical nursing courses is such that students are involved in the direct or indirect delivery of patient care services. The primary purpose of any course is to provide education for students. However, when direct patient care is involved in the learning experience, the safety and well-being of patients are of paramount concern. Within the structure of nursing clinical courses, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate increasing independence and competence in providing nursing care as they progress through the program.

Students are expected to demonstrate achievement of clinical objectives by the end of a clinical course. If, in the instructor's professional judgment, a student is consistently unable to provide safe nursing care to patients and cannot remedy the deficit in the given clinical time, the student will receive a grade of "F" for the course. Faculty, or staff in the clinical agency, has the right to remove a student from the clinical area at any time for cause.

## CPR Requirements

Students are required to maintain American Heart Association Health Care Provider Basic Life Support certification in order to participate in clinical experiences. Students who do not have a current American Heart Association Health Care Provider Basic Life Support certification will not be allowed to participate in clinical experiences.

## Clinical Sites

All students are expected to be prepared to provide nursing care for the patient(s) to whom they are assigned in each clinical activity. Students are expected to complete any other assignments that constitute preparation for activities in the clinical environment. The faculty has the right and an obligation to remove a student from a clinical setting/agency if the student is not prepared. Students assume responsibility and are

liable for their own actions. Students also are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of *all* forms of patient information.

Students should be in the clinical agency only during scheduled times. The student's faculty and the agency personnel must consent to all other visits. Students must obtain prior approval from their clinical instructor if they plan to contact any agency personnel. If the student is already assigned to an agency, and the purpose for the contact differs from the clinical assignment, clearance must also be obtained from the clinical instructor. Faculty assumes responsibility for the assignment in the clinical agency or setting.

Students are expected to achieve the clinical objectives within the allotted time. In order to accomplish objectives, students are expected to attend every clinical session in its entirety. Failure to do this will jeopardize the student's progression in the course. Classes and clinical practicum experiences may be held during the day or evening hours or on weekends. The time of day for class and clinical offerings varies from semester to semester and from course to course. Thus, a student may expect to attend a class or clinical practicum during the evening hours or weekend at some point during their program of study.

Any additional expenses that the clinical agency may incur to include but not limited to drug screening, background checks, ID badges, etc., will be at the student's expense.

## Clinical Passport

Undergraduate Students are required to maintain a clinical passport and have this on their person at all times while in the clinical setting.

## Transportation

Students must provide their own transportation to the various agencies for clinical experience. Parking fees associated with clinical practice are the responsibility of the student.

## Learning Laboratory and Center for Simulation Innovation

The Nursing Learning Laboratory and Center for Simulation Innovation was designed as a specific area where clinical competence and associated psychomotor skills are developed within the curriculum. Varied low, medium and high fidelity manikins are programmed to mimic human reactions to health care interventions; task trainers and health care equipment are used by students to begin to learn how nurses care for patients and to develop confidence that will facilitate learning in the authentic clinical environment. Attendances in Learning Laboratory or Center for Simulation Innovation activities are considered clinical time. Learning is facilitated when students actively participate in the activities that have been carefully constructed for each laboratory period to promote acquisition of new competencies and continued advancement of competence. There are typically readings, study guides or other activities that students are expected to complete prior to arriving in the lab so that they are fully prepared to extract maximum value from the learning experience.

Students may gain extra practice in the laboratory outside of assigned laboratory periods. The course faculty, Simulation Specialist and graduate assistants are available to help students. They will monitor practice activities and demonstrate skills. They all collaborate to develop



learning activities that are best suited to amplify student learning in the simulated environment. .

The following requirements are designed to help students maximize the benefits of using this environment.

1. Students may only practice those nursing procedures that they have previously been taught during regular Learning Lab classes.
2. Graduate students, undergraduate students, and faculty may schedule practice labs with the Manager of the Learning Laboratory and Center for Simulation Innovation or her/his designees.
3. Scheduling of sessions is dependent upon availability of space and supplies.
4. In the interest of safety for all students, practice of invasive procedures requiring needles, syringes, and intravenous supplies must be supervised by a faculty member or one of the Simulation Specialists. Arrangements for such supervision are the student's responsibility.
5. Practice sessions not requiring supervision must also be scheduled with Learning Laboratory and Center for Simulation Innovation personnel.
6. In light of the high volume of student activities scheduled in this environment, make-up labs for scheduled lab sessions are not offered, unless specifically scheduled by the faculty who will teach extra labs. Therefore, attendance is crucial.

Equipment, literature, audiovisual, and practice materials may be used in the Learning Lab, and many of these items may be checked out for use in other areas. Items to be checked out should be reserved in advance with the staff. The borrower is responsible for items on loan. The Learning Lab staff should be consulted for instructions on use, and they should be made aware of equipment not operating properly. Extra books and other nonessential items should be stored before the student enters the Lab. Lockers are available in the laboratory area. If equipment or supplies are damaged or lost the student is responsible for replacement cost.

## Student Center

The Online Student Center via The Portal is a one stop center to provide services and information to assist students in achieving their academic goals. The Student Center allows students to review policies, procedures, and student handbooks, enroll in classes, view their bill, check financial aid status, make payments, view their holds, change address, enrollment verification and more all from a single anchor page.

## Non-degree/Special Student Status

Non-degree/special student status may be considered under special circumstances and on a space available basis to an individual who wishes to enroll in a course(s) in the School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) without entering a degree program. Students must communicate in writing their desire to enroll as a non-degree seeking student to the School of Nursing Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services.

- Students must receive approval of the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services. If approval is granted, a non-degree seeking application must be submitted.
- Availability for non-degree seeking status enrollment is provided only on a space-available circumstance as determined by current enrollment targets.

- A student may register as a non-degree student for a specified number of credit hours at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services.
- Non-degree seeking students who wish to pursue degree seeking status must formally apply for admission through NursingCAS.
- The application deadline for fall is March 1 and for spring is August 1
- Non-degree applicants are not guaranteed admissions as degree seeking students have priority for enrollment in courses.

Courses taken as a non-degree seeking student will be evaluated by the appropriate Associate Dean for transfer credit. Please contact the Office of Admissions and Student Services (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu/students>) for further details about the process. The School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) and the Office of the University Registrar work collaboratively to process non-degree/special student applications. Students do not have to register consecutively for classes each semester and may skip a semester without penalty. The grading policies for non-degree students are the same as those for degree students and will be included in the student's transcript. Courses and grades taken as a non-degree student will be included in the computation of the cumulative GPA of the student admitted to a School of Nursing (<http://nursing.uthscsa.edu>) undergraduate or graduate program.

International non-degree seeking students should follow the Health Science Center international visitor policy.