

## **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

The College believes that professional behavior is an integral part of each student's nursing education. The College asks each student to acknowledge (by reading and signing a statement at orientation) the importance of personal integrity in nursing, including the standard set by the University of Utah Student Code and the commitment to the public trust made by the College of Nursing.

Nursing is a profession which has earned the public's trust. The importance of student integrity, trustworthiness and honesty are very serious concerns due to the implications to patient safety. A faculty member may refuse to have a student continue in their course, and the college may dismiss a student from the program, if the student's character does not uphold the professionalism of nursing. This is a serious matter for both the college and the student.

The College of Nursing identifies unprofessional behavior as a cause for an academic dismissal. An academic action may be overturned on appeal only if the academic action was arbitrary or capricious (i.e., all of the important facts were not considered).

The ANA Code for Nurses defines professionalism, as follows:

1. The nurse provides services with respect for human dignity and the uniqueness of the client, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse safeguards the client's right to privacy by judiciously protecting information of a confidential nature.
3. The nurse acts to safeguard the client and the public when health care and safety are affected by the incompetent, unethical, or illegal practice of any person.
4. The nurse assumes responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions.
5. The nurse maintains competence in nursing.
6. The nurse exercises informed judgment and uses individual competence and qualifications as criteria in seeking consultation, accepting responsibilities, and delegating nursing activities to others.
7. The nurse participates in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession's body of knowledge.
8. The nurse participates in the profession's efforts to implement and improve standards of nursing.

9. The nurse participates in the profession's efforts to establish and maintain conditions of employment conducive to high quality nursing care.

10. The nurse participates in the profession's effort to protect the public from misinformation and misrepresentation and to maintain the integrity of nursing.

11. The nurse collaborates with members of the health professions and other citizens in promoting community and national efforts to meet the health needs of the public.

Unprofessional behavior is also defined in Section 58-1-501 (Part 5) of the Utah Nurse Practice Act.

### **COLLEGE OF NURSING GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

All students in the College of Nursing are expected to maintain professional behavior in both the clinical and classroom settings. This professional behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Attending orientations, class and clinical.
- Taking exams as scheduled.
- Arriving and leaving class and clinical as scheduled.
- Adhering to the appropriate dress code when in clinical.
- Accepting responsibility for their own actions.
- Giving prior notification in writing or voice mail to the faculty when they are unable to meet commitments and detailing how and when they will make up requirements.
- Dealing with others (peers, faculty, patients and clients) in a respectful, sensitive and nonjudgmental manner.

The faculty acknowledges that true life emergencies do exist and will work with students in these situations as they arise. Note: True life emergencies do NOT include:

- Scheduling work or vacation during class or clinical, or final exam times. (Missing class in order to work is not an excused absence.)
- Non-emergent doctor or dental appointments.
- Being fatigued due to your own actions.
- Planning "special" events that interfere with class or clinical time.

The following are expectations and professional standards for classroom and clinical behaviors for both students and faculty.

1. Respecting other's space and quiet time (i.e., no pagers or cell phones in class or clinical)
2. Start and end class on time
3. Professional appearance and image
4. Accountability for preparation for class and clinical
5. Constructive verbal and non-verbal behavior
6. Care for others in an empathetic manner
7. Honest, open, assertive communication

8. Confidentiality of all patient information
9. Teamwork and helping behavior for colleagues
10. Honesty and integrity
11. Personal and professional ethics
12. Respecting all individuals' differences (i.e., culture, ethnicity, religion, work experience, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.).

### **CONSEQUENCES OF UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

When problem behaviors are identified, the involved faculty member will:

1. Counsel the student on the unacceptable behavior and indicate what type of behavioral change is expected and within what time frame. The student's unacceptable behavior and the specific counseling will be documented by the faculty in the student's file. In addition, the faculty member will notify the appropriate academic directors and committees. For undergraduates, the Executive Director for Undergraduate Programs and the BAAC will be informed. For graduate students, the Executive Director for Graduate Programs and the relevant Master's Specialty Directors and Masters Program and Curriculum Committee will be informed. In all cases the Manager of Academic Affairs/Student Services will be informed as well. The student will be given a copy of the documentation which was submitted to his/her file.

If the behavior is a major infraction, the student will be counseled, referred to the Semester Team Leaders, the Manager of Academic Affairs/Student Services, and the appropriate academic directors and committees (see above); documentation will be placed in the student's file. The appropriate committee will ultimately evaluate the student's situation. Dismissal is a possibility.

If the student violates the University of Utah Student Code, he/she will be counseled and documentation will be placed in the student's file. The appropriate academic directors and committees (see above) and the Manager of Academic Affairs/Student Services will be notified. The appropriate committee may either refer to the University of Utah Academic Misconduct Committee (refer to <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10R3.html>) or make a recommendation to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

2. If the behavior from the minor infraction does not change within the given time frame, the faculty member will document the incidents and the attempted interventions. The documentation will be reviewed with the appropriate academic directors and committees as noted above and the Manager of Academic Affairs/Student Services. The documentation will be placed in the student's permanent file at the College of Nursing.

3. If the behavior occurs a third time, the faculty has the right to fail the student with further documentation being completed and placed in the student's file. The appropriate committee will ultimately evaluate the student's situation. Dismissal is also a possibility. The committee may make a referral to the University of Utah Academic Misconduct Committee.

Students are held responsible for content presented in class or clinical. Students whose behavior is unprofessional will receive sanctions, which may include: class or clinical grade being lowered, failing a course, or probation, suspension or dismissal from the class or program.