

# 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 an 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 in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual unrestricted by consideration of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health and safety and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to the practice, education, administration and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in the promoting community, national and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing as represented by associations and their members is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

## 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 if 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 or 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 the 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 Directors for Undergraduate Programs and the Baccalaureate Admissions and Advancement Committee will be informed. For graduate students, the Executive Director for Graduate Programs and the relevant Master's Specialty Directors and Master's Program and Curriculum Committee will be informed. In all cases, the Director of Academic Programs and 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 Director of Academic Programs and 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 Director of Academic Programs and Student Services will be notified. The appropriate committee may either refer to the College of Nursing Academic Appeals Committee (refer to <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.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 Director of Academic Programs and 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 College of Nursing Academic Appeals 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.