SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

The Valley Foundation School of Nursing

The Professional and Safe Practice Policy for SJSU Nursing Students*

Providing safe nursing care for clients is an ethical and legal responsibility for professional nurses. In the School of Nursing (SON), this includes both faculty and students. **This policy covers situations in any School of Nursing context (in other words, a variety of types of classes/ situations and in all the clinical settings).** Safe practice is mandated by the California Board of Nursing's Nurse Practice (rn.ca.gov) and supported by the American Nurses Association, as well as individual professional nursing organizations. Individuals who do not meet the stated professional standards for ethical and legal conduct are held accountable to the University's and the School of Nursing's policies/procedures. Procedures are identified within the School of Nursing for sanctions, as well as within the University. The School of Nursing (SON) seeks consultation with the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) on matters that affect nursing practice and those that challenge ethical standards, criminal conduct, and unsafe clinical practice, and/or potential legal standards of the profession. **Unprofessional conduct, in any venue related to the School of Nursing's functioning, as well as situations that jeopardize others, are grounds for disqualification from the nursing major**.

If the student fails to maintain professional conduct, or if the student is considered unsafe by the faculty and/or the agency in which the student is enrolled (e.g., classroom or clinical), that student is removed from the setting/agency. Any environment is defined as a classroom, skills lab, and/or a clinical setting. If the student is unsafe or unprofessional, this situation constitutes a NO CREDIT or a non-passing final grade for the specified graded course (e.g., C- or below, as a final course grade). Refer to the School of Nursing's current policy for grievance and disqualification. Unsafe clinical and/or classroom practices are carefully managed at the administrative level so that the student and the fellow classmates are provided with maximum learning opportunities, while others (e.g., faculty/staff) are adequately protected.

If, in the opinion of a designated SON faculty committee/s (e.g., Curriculum Coordinating Committee, Semester Curriculum level committees, Executive committee, etc.) the student fails to follow ethical/legal guidelines of the profession and the School of Nursing,

disqualification from the major may be recommended. When that occurs and if the student so desires, he/she must follow the University's policy and procedures for grievances which are outlined in the University's catalog on the website.

Students will be oriented to Professional and Safe Practice Policies during the first semester of enrollment in the major, and both faculty and students will review the policy prior to beginning all clinical rotations. All nursing students have access to the Student Handbook, which delineates these policies (see sjsu.edu/nursing). Drug testing and criminal background checks are required for all nursing students before beginning clinical rotations.

A. POLICY:

(1) A student whose pattern of behavior is found to be unsafe/unprofessional may be terminated from a clinical or a classroom setting for reasons of unsafe/unprofessional practice/s at any time during the semester and receive a grade of "no credit/non-passing" for the course.

(2) If a student fails to maintain professional conduct, the student may be disqualified from the program, or other sanctions may be determined by appropriate parties.

B. DEFINITIONS:

The student will demonstrate patterns of professional behaviors which follow the legal and ethical codes of nursing; promote the actual or potential well-being of clients, health care workers, faculty, fellow classmates, and self in the biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural realms; demonstrate accountability for meeting course objectives and show respect for the human rights of individuals.

Indicators to be used as guidelines for evaluating safe practice and professional conduct in a clinical or a classroom setting include the following, but not limited to the following:

1. Guidelines: The student practices within the boundaries of the California State Nurse Practice Act, the ANA Nursing Code of Ethics, the guidelines and objectives of the School of Nursing, and follows the rules and regulations of the health care agency and/or all SJSU Nursing guidelines.

Students are bound by (a) the rules and regulations of the health care agencies, as well as (b) the School of Nursing.

Examples of deviations from the accepted norms, include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. failure to notify the agency and/or instructor of absence on a clinical day (or violations of the absence policy on course syllabi from non-clinical courses).
b. failure to adhere to the SON dress code.
c. presenting under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
d. failure to make up missed clinical experiences, if asked to do so.
e. habitual tardiness- this applies to both classroom and to clinical.
f. excessive utilization of faculty time by one student to the detriment of other students.
g. inadequate and/or poor preparation for clinical or for class.
h. language, or behavior or conduct not consistent with the profession, harassment, bullying, gossiping that could be interpreted as hurtful, acting aggressively, confronting, using phone or laptop when informed that this is not acceptable, showing bad manners, being unresponsive to directions, lying, cheating, and stealing, etc...

2. Ethical: The student practices according to the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and the California State Nurse Practice Act. Examples of unsafe practice and/or unethical behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

a. inappropriate behavior in a classroom/or clinical setting.
b. ignoring unethical behavior(s) of other persons in the clinical /classroom setting(s).
c. violating policies/guidelines for academic integrity (see the University's academic integrity policy on the University's website).

3. Biological, Psychological, Social, and Culture Realms. Examples of unsafe practice or violations of this policy, include but are not limited to the following:

a. failure to display stable mental, physical, or emotional behavior(s) which may affect others' well being.
b. failure to follow through on suggested referrals or interventions to correct deficit areas which may result in harm to others (deficit areas defined in (3a) above).
c. acts of omission or commission in the clinical care of clients, such as, but not limited to: physical abuse; placing in hazardous positions, conditions, or circumstances; mental or emotional abuse; and medication errors.
d. interpersonal relationships with agency staff, co-workers, classmates, or faculty resulting in miscommunications, or disruption of clinical/classroom functioning.
e. promoting lateral violence against others, displaying bullying, discrimination of others based on lack awareness of diversity of classmates/clients/faculty/staff/others; violating diversity, equity, and inclusion policies (both in classroom and clinical settings).
f. placing fellow classmates, faculty, and/or staff at personal and/or professional risk.
(For further information on weapons/firearms/ substances, see University policies).

4. Accountability: The student is responsible for the preparation, documentation, and promotion of continuity in the care of clients. Accountability outside of the clinical area that pertains to academic issues is also an expectation of students in nursing. Examples of these practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. unable to communicate effectively.
b. attempting activities without adequate orientation or theoretical preparation/supervision or appropriate assistance (applies primarily to skills/simulation/ and or clinicals).
c. dishonesty.
d. failure of the student to take responsibility for corrective action.

5. Human Rights: The student's conduct shows respect for the individual, client, health team member, faculty, classmates, and self, including but not limited to the

innate legal, ethical, and cultural realms. Examples of unsafe practice include but are not limited to the following:

a. failure to maintain confidentiality of interactions.
b. failure to maintain confidentiality of records.
c. dishonesty in relationships and/or in actions.
d. utilization of stereotypical assessments which are detrimental to others.
e. failure to recognize and promote other person's rights.
f. failure to report client abuse across the lifespan or abuse related to faculty, classmates, and other professionals. This can be physical or verbal abuse.

C. PROCEDURE:

A student whose pattern of behavior or lack of academic integrity endangers the safety or threatens the integrity of a patient, peer, staff member, clinical instructor, faculty member, fellow classmates or agency personnel will be given a verbal and written warning by the instructor, or by the School of Nursing Director (or representative). Potential critical episodes require immediate actions, documented evidence from the student, faculty, and/or staff will be considered in the decision to terminate a student from a clinical practicum or classroom setting; whether further action is needed will determine whether disqualification from the nursing program is warranted. Students may be required to have a medical and /or behavioral health evaluation before returning to learning environment.

1. If circumstances warrant the student's disqualification, the director has the decision-making ability, in consultation with the School's Executive committee.
2. The student will be referred to the Special Progression/Disqualification Policy (in the student handbook).

Additionally, the **primary instructor in the designated course** will:

a. provide instruction, guidance, and interpretation of the student's failure to either meet objectives or a violation of these professional and/or safe practices.

b. suspend the student from the course if the issue of safety or unprofessional conduct is of significant magnitude and/or if a situation potentially jeopardizes the well-being of patients, staff, faculty, or classmates, until a decision has been obtained through the conflict resolution process.

c. document patterns of behavior related to attainment of course objectives. Documentation may include direct observation/s by the course instructor (or in the case of a clinical situation, the observations/comments of agency personnel and patient comments, as appropriate). Written work will also be evaluated.

d. give a verbal and written warning for unsatisfactory performance, or remove student from situation if student is placing others in unsafe situations.

To that end, the instructor will:

(1) provide specific facts of problem areas or deficiencies in relation to course objectives, evaluation tool(s), and performance.

(2) delineate corrective action and expected outcomes in writing with copies given to the student and the course instructor. The undergraduate coordinator will be notified. One copy of the written writeup will also be placed in the nursing student's file. The student and the instructor sign the written warning (however, if the student does not sign, the instructor will then document on the form, that the student has had the opportunity to sign the warning and opted not to sign); pertinent discussion at the time the student reads the written warning should also be documented. Copies will be provided to the Semester Chair, Undergraduate Coordinator, and School of Nursing Director.

(3) set a specific time for a change in the behavior to be accomplished (in the write-up).

e. reevaluate progress: If attainment of expected outcome/s is positive, then the student will be allowed to continue with the course. The

warning may not be removed from student's file until the completion of the program.

f. provide the student an opportunity for input and/or data regarding the evaluation of his/her performance.

g. consult with the Semester Chair and/or School Director as needed for problem-solving and guidance.

3. The School's conflict resolution process will be used in unresolved situations (see the Nursing Student Handbook guidelines).

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(* included in SJSU The Valley Foundation School Nursing Student Handbook)

REFERENCES

- for University policies: www.sjsu.edu (under "search")
- Google: California State Nurse Practice Act, and the ANA Nursing Code of Ethics,
- www.sjsu.edu/nursing (School's web pages)