

College of Nursing



BSN Student Handbook 2021-2022

The BSN Student Handbook provides guidance and direction for students accepted or enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program at Tusculum University. Students are held accountable for the current academic year and book and should neither revert to the year of admission to Tusculum University. This handbook augments and does not replace the Tusculum University Catalog or Academic Policies.

Date Modified: August 2021

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Tusculum University BSN Program General Information.....	6
Our Mission.....	6
Purpose.....	6
Philosophy and Conceptual Framework.....	6
Core Values.....	8
Program Outcomes.....	9
Graduate Student Learning Outcomes of the Baccalaureate Nursing Program.....	9
Progression and Continuation Requirements.....	10
Academic and Professional Integrity and Honesty.....	11
Additional Academic Integrity Expectations for the School of Nursing.....	12
Grade Appeal and Complaint Process.....	13
Professional Dress Code.....	13
General overall dress code.....	14
Classroom dress code.....	14
Laboratory and Clinical Dress Code.....	15
Core Performance Standards.....	16
Core Performance Standards for BSN Students*.....	17
Criminal Background Check.....	18
Drug Screenings.....	19
Licensure Eligibility and Application for Licensure.....	19
Communication with Faculty and the Dean.....	21
Tusculum University Student E-Mail Accounts.....	21
Participation of Students in Program Governance.....	21
Changes in Published Course Offerings.....	21
Change in Health Status, Personal Illnesses, Injuries and/or Accidents.....	22
Chapter Two: University Services and Resources.....	23
Tusculum University Student Policies.....	23
Information Technology.....	23
Health and Counseling Services.....	23
Library Services.....	24

Academic Resources.....	24
Disability Services.....	24
Chapter Three: BSN Program Academic Standards	24
Attendance and Participation in Class, Laboratory and Clinical	24
Student Advisement.....	26
Student Contact Information.....	26
Classroom Behavior and Civility.....	26
Electronic Devices (e.g.: phone) in the Class, Lab or Clinical Setting.....	26
Social Media Policy	27
Assignments, Evaluations and Grading.....	28
HESI Examinations.....	30
Review of Exams, Quizzes, Graded Assignments.....	31
Maintenance of Academic Standing and Grading Policies	31
Grading Scale for Didactic BSN Courses	31
Clinical Evaluation	32
Concept Maps Requirements for Clinical courses	32
Clinical courses evaluation.....	32
Late Assignments	32
Incomplete Coursework.....	32
Remediation Process:	33
Remediation for Didactic and Clinical Didactic Exams	34
Clinical Evaluations	35
HESI Remediation	35
Additional Information Concerning HESI Testing & Remediation.....	36
HESI Remediation Plan of Action	37
Readmission	39
Professional Conduct.....	39
Dismissal from the BSN Program.....	40
Steps in the Dismissal Process.....	41
Right to Appeal.....	41
Inclement Weather	42
Chapter Four: Progression and Graduation Policies	42
Leave of Absence	42

Requests for Exceptions and Appeals to Progression	43
Academic Withdrawal	43
Grade Appeals and the Appeals Process.....	43
Graduation.....	43
Chapter Five: Student Clinical Requirements	44
Performance Evaluation.....	44
Medication and Dosage Calculations.....	44
Health Forms and Immunizations.....	44
Tuberculosis (TB) Screening.....	46
Criminal Background Checks	46
Drug Screening	47
BLS Certification	48
Professional Liability Insurance	49
Personal Health Insurance	49
Confidentiality and Patient Privacy	49
Travel.....	50
Clinical Orientation.....	50
Student Identification Badge	50
Latex Allergy.....	51
Medical Error/Incident Report Policy.....	51
Blood Borne Pathogen or Tuberculosis Exposure	51
Post –exposure Protocol for Blood Borne Pathogens.....	52
Student and Faculty Responsibilities.....	52
Post-exposure Protocol for Tuberculosis	53
Removal of a Student from Clinical.....	54
Unsatisfactory Clinical Progress	54
Student Employment in Healthcare Facility	55
Hazardous Chemical Right-to-Know Law	55
Loss of Personal Property.....	55
Student Employment Hours	55
Appendices	56
Appendix A: Blood Borne Pathogens and Transmission-Based American Nurses Association, 2015	56

Precautions56

Forms58

Tusculum University Incident Form58

Chapter One: Tusculum University BSN Program General Information

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree prepares graduates for beginning practice as a generalist Registered Nurse (RN) in a variety of settings. The BSN is the professional degree that is the cornerstone of education for professional practice, career mobility and advancement. Upon completion of the four-year baccalaureate program in Nursing, the graduate is eligible to take the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensure exam (NCLEX) to become a Registered Nurse.

Tusculum University's BSN program provides students with the opportunity to provide nursing care in a variety of practice settings. Small classes and clinical groups allow for individualized attention. The BSN program has experienced faculty that provide mentorship and support to students. The emphasis of the program is on the use of knowledge and skills to plan and implement nursing care. However, critical thinking and clinical decision-making skills are also emphasized and upon completion of the program, you are also positioned and prepared to progress into graduate studies in Nursing if you so desire.

Our Mission

The mission of the BSN Program is to prepare qualified registered nurse professionals who enhance the quality of life for individuals, families, groups, and communities.

Purpose

The Baccalaureate Nursing program at Tusculum University will prepare individuals to assume entry level, generalist professional nursing positions through educational experiences that are built upon previous nursing preparation and knowledge of the arts and sciences. The program will create an atmosphere in which individuals can develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes consistent with professional values and evidence-based care.

Philosophy and Conceptual Framework

The Nursing faculty affirms the mission, vision and purpose of Tusculum University. In addition to the University's core values, the BSN faculty holds the following values and beliefs as foundational for educating baccalaureate prepared nurses. Further, these beliefs guide interactions with students, patients, colleagues, healthcare professionals, and the public as well as providing the framework for preparing graduates to practice in the changing and complex social, political, economic and healthcare environments.

Person: A unique individual, possessing dignity and worth, who is in constant interaction with the environment. A person is composed of physical, psychological, socio-cultural, developmental and spiritual dimensions, but when examined as a whole, is more than the sum of the parts. The term “person” incorporates the concepts of learner, self, individual, family, group, community and population.

Health: Health is a dynamic multidimensional state represented by the health-illness continuum and is affected by personal choices, values, and interactions with the environment. The physical, psychological, interpersonal and social aspects of health are inseparable in the individual. The degree of balance between the person and his/her internal and external factors determines the person’s level of health. The practice of nursing promotes an awareness of healthy lifestyles and choices. Nurses compassionately assist persons to re-establish health and cope with illness or impending death.

Environment: The environment is the domain in which people exist. It is the collective of all conditions, circumstances, and internal and external forces. The interaction between the environment and people affects health, well-being, growth and development throughout the life cycle.

The diverse and ever-changing environment is affected by internal and external factors. Internal factors include the biological, psychological, and spiritual attributes of the person, while external factors comprise physical, chemical, socio-political, cultural, economic, political, legal, ethical, and organizational elements. The environment is influenced by and responds to dynamic forces including technology; education; values; and economic, geopolitical and population characteristics.

Nursing: Nursing is a professional practice discipline, which combines the science of Nursing and the art of caring for others. The science of Nursing is the body of knowledge generated from Nursing theory and research as well as knowledge applied from the sciences, liberal arts, and social sciences. It involves knowledge, critical thinking skills, and collaboration with other disciplines to provide high quality, safe, effective patient-centered, holistic care. Nurses as caregivers, teachers and patient advocates must use evidence-based practice and technology that incorporates ethical, moral and legal standards.

The art of caring is the creative and dynamic application of Nursing knowledge. Caring emanates from a commitment to preserve and enhance the integrity and dignity of persons. Caring relationships begin with the self and embrace all that one touch within the environment.

Professional Values: Professional values and the behaviors they exemplify provide a foundation for the practice of Nursing. Exhibiting professional values is the

demonstration of high-level personal, ethical and skill behaviors that characterize a member of a profession. Nursing is an accountable, autonomous practice profession that is guided by a body of knowledge and a professional code of ethics. Professional nursing also supports research and education to expand Nursing knowledge and its use.

Nursing Education: Nursing education is a process that involves the educator and the learner in collaboratively pursuing and sharing knowledge. Learning is a deliberate and dynamic process characterized by the acquisition of knowledge, self-awareness, breadth and depth in critical thinking, and by cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills all of which change the behavior of the learner. Learning occurs best when the learner's rights are respected and when the learner accepts responsibility for self-direction and his/her own decisions.

The focus of nursing education is critical inquiry that enables the learner to recognize phenomena, take appropriate actions in a variety of situations, and to interactively evaluate outcomes. The reflective process emphasizes creative insight, valuation and self-realization. The goals of liberal and scientific education must be integrated with those of professional development for students to become competent practitioners of nursing care. Thus, the integration of the principles of liberal and scientific studies with the principles of Nursing care is essential to the students' discovery of the conceptual knowledge of Nursing; one that leads to lifelong learning and improved patient care outcomes.

Educator enters the learning environment as a facilitator, mentor, resource person, and co-learner who uses multiple teaching methodologies. The educator respects and values the knowledge and experiences of students and fosters their continuing professional role development. The educator guides students by developing, organizing, and structuring knowledge; by fostering a spirit of inquiry, a sense of discovery, and a desire for life-long learning.

Students are viewed as adult learners who engage in the educational process by assuming responsibility for their learning and their decisions. The learner enters the process with a unique personal and cultural history that serves as a rich resource for the learning process. This background energizes the learning environment and provides the impetus for lifelong personal and professional growth.

Core Values

As the College of Nursing moves forward with its mission, it is guided by the core values of Tusculum University and its own values that are grounded in professional Nursing practice that embraces clinical and scholarly excellence. The faculty, staff and students will:

1. Communicate with integrity and act with ethical values and principles.

2. Create an environment of inclusiveness where individual, intellectual and social diversity are valued.
3. Promote and practice life-long learning, inquiry, and critical thinking.
4. Partner with our healthcare communities by creating relationships to promote common interest and shared values.
5. Practice good stewardship through fair and responsible management of gifts and resources.
6. Generate commitment and passion for the practice of Nursing.

Program Outcomes

Graduate Student Learning Outcomes of the Baccalaureate Nursing Program

1. Integrate and apply knowledge and skills from the arts, sciences and social sciences to the practice of safe, high quality nursing care for individuals, families, groups and communities.
2. Apply leadership and communication skills to implement and evaluate patient safety and quality improvement initiatives for one's own practice and healthcare team coordination in a variety of settings.
3. Integrate evidence-based practice knowledge, clinical judgment, intra- and inter-professional perspectives, communication skills, cultural aspects, and patient preferences in planning, implementing and evaluating outcomes.
4. Utilize the nursing process as the foundation for nursing practice.
5. Apply the concepts of population-focused health promotion throughout the lifespan including assisting individuals, families, and populations to prepare for minimizing health consequences of emergencies or mass casualty disasters.
6. Develop professional leadership skills necessary to coordinate and manage care within the healthcare system.
7. Integrate and use knowledge of healthcare technologies, information systems, and ethical standards related to data security to provide and support safe nursing practice.
8. Apply knowledge of professional regulations and statutes, healthcare regulatory environments, healthcare economics and advocacy practices to the practice of professional nursing and assess the impact of these factors on vulnerable populations.
9. Incorporate collaborative and team building strategies to promote positive intra-and interprofessional relationships in the delivery of evidence-based, patient-centered care.
10. Demonstrate professional standards of conduct, including

- a. Accountability for one's own professional practice,
 - b. Respect for privacy and confidentiality,
 - c. Respect for peers, healthcare professionals and staff, and
 - d. Identification of resources that may be used to solve ethical and practice dilemmas.
11. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of individualized, culturally and developmentally appropriate patient-centered care to individuals, families, groups, and population aggregates.

Progression and Continuation Requirements

After admission into the BSN program, students must meet the following conditions to remain enroll in the BSN program and remain in good academic standing.

1. Maintain a passing grade of "C" or better in all identified courses in the BSN program of study.
2. Grades of "U", "D", "W" and "F" indicate unsatisfactory performance and the student cannot progress.
3. A student will not be able to enroll in any nursing course where the course is failed or there is unsatisfactory performance. Once the course in question is repeated and a satisfactory grade is earned, the student may continue progression in the nursing program.
4. A student may repeat no more than one nursing course during enrollment in the program.
5. If two courses are failed (earning a "U", "D", or "F") during the same semester or at any time during the enrollment in the program, the student will be recommended for dismissal from the program. Any student dismissed from the program is not eligible to return. The student may appeal the action in accordance with the university policy https://web.tusculum.edu/academics/academicpolicies/#undergraduate_policies.
6. In a course which includes both a didactic and clinical component, the student must pass both components in order to pass the course. If the student receives an unsatisfactory grade in the clinical component of the course but passes the didactic component with a grade of "C" or better, then the student will receive a "F" for the course. The entire course must be repeated.
7. Maintain BLS certification (American Heart Association BLS Healthcare Provider).
8. Submit and maintain TB skin test results and flu immunization documentation by designated deadlines.

A student can be dismissed from the BSN program at any time if, upon review of student performance and behavior in accordance with university procedures outlined in the Tusculum University Academic Policies, Catalog and/or the BSN Program Undergraduate Handbook, the student is unsafe, engaged in academic dishonesty, has

violated patient confidentiality or safety, or is convicted or plead guilty or nolo contendere or received a deferred or other qualified adjudication. Dismissal from the program may result in the student being ineligible for readmission to the nursing program.

Academic and Professional Integrity and Honesty

Tusculum University seeks to create an environment that encourages continued growth of moral and ethical values, which include personal honesty and mutual trust. The University places the highest value on academic integrity and regards any act of academic dishonesty as a serious offense. Academic dishonesty is considered unethical and in violation of Tusculum University's academic standards and Christian commitment.

High standards of integrity and honesty are expected of all nursing students in all classes and professional practice within the clinical setting. Integrity and honesty within a holistic framework of care requires that one demonstrates respect for oneself and others. In the clinical setting, a student's behavior will be based on the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/>

Most importantly, the Code for Nurses expects nurses to maintain patients' confidentiality, to refrain from abusing patients under your care, refrain from using or misusing patient medications, and to be honest in documenting a patient's condition and your own assessments and interventions. Nursing students must maintain high professional standards, including being physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically prepared for each clinical experience with their patients. Students must demonstrate professional, ethical, and legal conduct at all times.

Faculty and students have a professional responsibility to take appropriate action when they detect any form of professional dishonesty. This could range from errors of omission or commission, where a patient received inappropriate or inadequate care or failed to receive any care at all. Examples of violations of the standards of integrity and honesty include failure to administer medications as prescribed for the patient, cheating on exams or assignments, taking home parts of a medical record or revealing confidential patient information to others. NOTE: These are examples of possible violations of the standards of integrity and honesty and does not represent a comprehensive listing.

If faculty or students become aware of any violation, they should bring the incident to the attention of the faculty and/or Dean of the College of Nursing. Behavior that is deemed unethical or unprofessional by the faculty and/or Dean of the school may result in a student being dismissed from the program.

In addition to the standards defined herein, Tusculum University Nursing BSN students are subject to the Tusculum University Academic Policies as found in the Catalog <https://catalog.tusculum.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=601> and Non Academic Student Code of Conduct and Policies.

<https://tuemail.s3.amazonaws.com/2020-21-Non-Academic-Student-Code-of-Conduct-and-Policies-rev-03.13.2021.pdf>

Nursing majors are expected to adhere to the following principles as outlined below:

1. Respect and uphold the rights of patients/clients, family members, peers and other individuals by:
 - a. Treating individuals with respect and dignity.
 - b. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.
 - c. Safeguarding privacy rights and personal property.
 - d. Performing own work and giving appropriate credit to the work of others.
2. Respect and uphold the rights of all patients/clients by providing services and care with respect for human dignity and uniqueness regardless of the patient/client's social or economic status, personal attributes or unique health problems.
3. Protect the patient/client from incompetent, unsafe, unethical, or illegal practices by:
 - a. Providing high quality nursing care.
 - b. Participating in efforts to improve the standards of nursing practice.
 - c. Being free from substances, which interfere with judgment and/or motor coordination.
 - d. Reporting incompetent, unsafe and/or unethical nursing practice to the appropriate individual.
4. Assume responsibility and accountability for individual actions at all times including classroom and clinical behavior and individual nursing judgments and actions.

Additional Academic Integrity Expectations for the School of Nursing

Plagiarism- plagiarism is using someone else's thoughts or words as one's own. Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. It can result in

failure of a project, failure of a course, or dismissal from Tusculum University. It is HIGHLY recommended that the student review plagiarism in the University Catalog.

The College of Nursing considers each course assignment to be essential to achieving the graduate outcomes of the program; therefore, the student should turn in original work for each course. Although thoughts and excerpts from previous, similar assignments are permissible, they should be synthesized, integrated, and referenced in subsequent assignments and may only represent a small portion of the completed assignment. No student may turn in an assignment from a previous course in its entirety to meet the requirements of a different course. Falsification of any document submitted to the school of nursing is grounds for immediate dismissal of the program.

Grade Appeal and Complaint Process

Students may resolve complaints informally or formally. Students are encouraged to resolve informal complaints by dealing directly with the individual (faculty or staff member) or office (student service or administrative) involved. If the student is unable to resolve the issue informally, the student can file a written complaint as outlined on the TU website at <https://web.tusculum.edu/life/student-feedback-written-complaints/>.

Grade appeals are the only complaints that are reviewed at the program level. The students of the CON utilize the TU Grade Appeal policy for formal complaints. The Grade Appeal policy can be found in the current TU Catalog on the website <https://catalog.tusculum.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=736> . The university policy defines a formal complaint as “If a student believes a final course grade is an unfair reflection of his or her performance in a given class, a review of the coursework may be requested.” (Current TU Catalog). The Grade Appeal policy has a clearly established procedure for students to request a grade appeal. All appeals must be made within 30 days of when the final grade was assigned. The student may also file non-grade and/or non-academic related appeals. The policies for non-academic complaints can be found on the TU website and in the student handbook found at <https://tuemail.s3.amazonaws.com/2020-21-Non-Academic-Student-Code-of-Conduct-and-Policies-rev-03.13.2021.pdf> . The student’s written complaint must be filed electronically at <https://my.tusculum.edu/forms/student-complaint-form> . Once the complaint is received, the reviewing administrator will notify the student of receipt and will provide a response within 15 days. If additional time is necessary, students will be advised in advance.

Professional Dress Code

Students must read and understand completely the required BSN Program Professional Dress Code. Standards for appropriate and proper professional dress in the classroom, laboratory and clinical setting are as follows. Professional dress is an expected student behavior.

General overall dress code

The appropriate classroom, laboratory and clinical settings dress code consists of:

- All clothing must be size-appropriate, as sagging or tight-fitting clothing are not acceptable.
- Undergarments must be worn but not be visible.
- Unnatural or extreme hair colors are not permitted. Hair color must be a natural color; hair may not be dyed any unnatural colors, such as pink, blue, green, orange, etc.
- Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed and groomed.
- Nails should be manicured with a rounded tip no longer than the tip of the finger. Long slender nails, artificial, or glued on nails are not permitted. Nails should be trimmed and clean and can be polished with a clear nail polish, fingernail polish cannot be chipped.
- Jewelry is limited to one set of rings per hand and three small post earring per ear lobe; hoops and dangling earrings are not to be worn.
- Other visible pierced jewelry must be removed, such as nose, tongue or eyebrow rings. Flesh-colored plugs for ear gauges.
- Effective daily personal hygiene is to be employed so that there are no offensive body odors; proper precautions should be taken to avoid odors related to foods, smoking or lack of deodorant. Students should not wear scents, colognes, aftershave, or perfume.
- Make-up should be use in moderation and consistent with a professional image
- Clothing and/or uniforms should be clean, in good repair (free of wrinkles, stains, tears, frays, and rips), and with appropriately size and fit to the wearer.

Classroom dress code

The appropriate dress for the classroom consists of:

- Clothing worn will be professional, conservative, and conducive to safety
- Miniskirts, hip-hugging or low-riser pants are not permitted at any time in the classroom or lab area.
- Slacks or khakis
- Denim (no tears, rips, or holes)
- Woven fabric sleeved dress shirts or knit collared polo style shirt
- Dress with modest neckline and length
- Skirts with modest lengths

- Shorts, skorts which must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee
- Blouses or sweater
- Sweatshirts
- Knit/cotton t-shirts
- Athletic wear (i.e., Tusculum apparel)
- Capri pants that are at least mid-calf
- Leggings as a hosiery item and/or with tops/dresses that extends to midhigh (buttocks should be covered) above the knee
- The following are examples of attire which DO NOT support the organization's business and professional image:
- Warm-up clothing, sweat suits, wind suits, or any other type of exercise clothing. Please note: Tusculum athletes who are coming to class from practice may change at the first break to maintain dress code compliance.
- Fleece or outerwear jackets on clinical units or in labs.
- Tank tops or any tops with a low neckline, spaghetti straps, or any backless or low back dress, unless worn with a jacket.
- Exposure of skin at the waist and upper leg is not acceptable.
- Any revealing fabrics or styles including low-cut necklines.
- No offensive content allowed on any type of clothing.

Laboratory and Clinical Dress Code

The required laboratory and clinical dress code consist of:

- A valid student and/or clinical provided identification badge must be worn whenever a student is in uniform or lab coat. Pins, stickers, ribbons, extra emblems, etc., may not be attached to the identification card itself. ID badges should be worn on a lapel, collar, or chest pocket, never at waist level or lower.
- Clinical identification must be clearly visible at all times. For the mental health rotation, students will be provided instructions by the clinical instructor as to whether they wear the ID badge or not.
- An approved lab coat may be worn as designated by the clinical faculty for clinical courses.
- For clinical and lab days: Black with orange trim scrubs with the Tusculum logo.
- A plain white or black T-shirt or turtleneck may be worn under the scrub top; sleeves should be the type that can be pushed up when hand washing or providing patient care.
- For warmth on clinical days, students may wear the approved scrub jacket.

- Other items considered part of the uniform are a wristwatch with a second hand, stethoscope, bandage scissors, penlight and a black pen with permanent ink.
- Stethoscopes must have a bell and diaphragm.
- When going to clinical agencies for assignments and non-patient care activities, students will be advised by the clinical faculty on the appropriate dress and students are expected to follow faculty directions.
- Hair styles must be neat, clean and professional appearing; long hair should be neatly pulled back and secured; hair should not fall forward if student is leaning forward
- Tattoos (i.e., forearms, wrists, ankles, necks, etc.) are to be covered at all times and should not be noticeable while in clinical or while representing Tusculum University. Tattoos should be covered with plain, skin-colored devices unless covered with clothing. Skins that are any other color or that have a design are not appropriate for the clinical setting.
- Cologne, perfume or scented body lotion is not permitted.
- Chewing gum is not permitted in clinical settings or when representing Tusculum University at community events.
- Shoes should be clean, polished and in good repair and must be enclosed. They should be non-porous and continuous surface (no holes that would allow seepage of liquid). They should be primarily leather/leather-like material. Shoes should be primarily white, gray or black.

Note: The Uniform Policy is NOT debatable. Students who are not dressed appropriately will be sent home from the class, lab or clinical setting. Clinical absences due to dress code violation will be considered unexcused absences and will result in a grade of zero (0) for any assignments for the day. All attire will be subject to instructor approval.

Core Performance Standards

In addition to the above admission requirements, Tusculum University BSN Program sets forth its essential eligibility requirements for its BSN program by citing the core performance standards. The standards set forth cognitive, sensory, affective and psychomotor performance requirements for every BSN student and Nurse. Each core performance standard is accompanied by examples of activities BSN students and Nurses are required to perform while executing patient care. The standards are used to assist applicants and students in the determination of need for American Disabilities Act (ADA) related accommodations and medications. The core performance standards are intended to constitute an objective measure of:

- A qualified applicant's or student's ability with or without accommodations to meet the program performance requirements.

- Accommodations required by a matriculated student who seeks accommodations under the ADA.

Applicants and students with disabilities seeking accommodations under the ADA, as amended, should be referred to the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights document titled, *Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities* (US Department of Education. September 2007).

Core Performance Standards for BSN Students*

Every nursing applicant and student is required to have the following abilities in order to perform safe, effective professional BSN care.

Ability	Standard	Activity Examples
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause and effect relationships in clinical situations • Use scientific method in development of care plans • Evaluate effectiveness of nursing interventions
Professional Relationships	Abilities sufficient to establish interaction with a diverse population, individuals, families and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rapport with patients and colleagues • Ability to engage in conflict resolution • Demonstrate peer accountability
Communication	Ability for professional interactions with others in verbal, non-verbal and written form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching, and documentation. • Interpret nursing actions and client responses • Utilizes effective and appropriate communication techniques.
Movement	Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move around in patient rooms, workspaces and treatment areas • Administer rescue operations- cardiopulmonary resuscitation
Motor Skill	Gross and fine motor skills sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calibration and use of equipment • Therapeutic positioning of patients • Ambulating patients

Hearing	Auditory ability sufficient to assess and provide safe and effective nursing care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to hear monitoring device alarms and other emergency signals • Ability to discern auscultated sounds, heart sounds and cries for help
Visual	Ability sufficient for observation and assessment in nursing care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to observe patient condition and responses to treatment • Ability to discern colors
Tactile	Ability sufficient for physical assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to palpate in physical assessment and in various therapeutic procedures

*Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing

Criminal Background Check

The Joint Commission and/or state law requires hospitals, childcare facilities and other agencies to perform criminal background checks on all persons involved in direct patient care, to include employees, medical personnel, volunteers and students. This is to ensure a safe clinical environment for patients. All students are required to complete a criminal background check at their expense through the school's designated agent as noted by the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Refusal to complete a background check will result in the student's non-admission or non-progression in the BSN program. Problematic criminal background and/or FBI results will be reviewed individually by the Dean of the College of Nursing. Students readmitted to the BSN Program following a leave of absence or withdrawal will be required to repeat the process prior to readmission.

Positive criminal background checks will be reported to the clinical agencies per the clinical contracts with such agencies. Students, at the time of admission, will give permission to the College to share the criminal background check results with the clinical affiliates. If a clinical affiliate does not grant the student permission to complete clinical experiences at their facility, the College is under no obligation to provide alternative experiences. Failure to participate in clinical experiences due to positive background checks will result in the student's inability to meet course requirements and subsequently, result in dismissal from the program.

BSN students should be aware that clinical facilities have the right or responsibility to preclude students with certain criminal histories from their facilities. Additionally, the state board of Nursing may deny licensure based on a student's criminal history. Even if licensure is granted, certain employers may preclude applicants with certain criminal histories from employment.

Findings of Past Criminal Conviction

Upon notification that a student's criminal background check resulted in a finding of past arrests and/or criminal conviction, representatives of the BSN Program will:

1. Arrange for a meeting with the student in question within an appropriate time period.
2. The student will be required to meet with the clinical affiliates' representatives in order to obtain clearance for clinical experiences.

Drug Screenings

Area healthcare agencies are drug free places of employment and require a satisfactory

(negative) drug screen of all nursing students that will be in clinical rotations at their facilities. The drug screen must be collected and processed using National Institute of Drug Abuse approved laboratory protocols and facilities. The drug screen test will be performed through the College's designated agent at the student's expense and will be completed prior to final acceptance into the program. Students will not be permitted to matriculate unless the drug screen is negative or in the event of a positive drug screen, student provides documented legitimate use of identified drug(s).

NOTE: Students readmitted following a leave of absence are required to repeat the drug screen prior to attending class.

Students must be free of any chemical dependency condition, including alcohol, which may interfere with their ability to practice nursing. Students may be tested at any time if suspected of substance abuse. These checks are subject to the mandates of the clinical facility to which a student is assigned. Area healthcare agencies can require substance abuse screening of students and faculty without cause and without advance notice when such screenings are standard policies for employees of the healthcare agency. Positive screenings will be reported to the Dean of the College of Nursing. Many agencies reserve the right to inform student employers of any positive screenings if students are employed in a health-related area or is already a health care provider.

Licensure Eligibility and Application for Licensure

During the last semester, students are eligible to apply for licensure by examination (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses - NCLEX-RN). Licensure to practice as a Registered Nurse is granted by the Board of Nursing in the state of intended practice (see Tennessee Board of Nursing Rules & Regulations 1000-01-.01 <https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/1000/1000-01.20150622.pdf>).

All new graduates must submit to the criminal background check process as required by state Board of Nursing Rules and Regulations when applying for licensure in Tennessee. A graduate may not be provided an Authorization to Test (for the licensure exam) if there are any issues with the criminal background results until the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Board. An applicant who passes the licensing examination and is under investigation for possible violation of the Nurse Practice Act (arrested or convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation) may not be issued a license until the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Board. If the charges are substantiated, the license may be denied or sanctioned despite the applicant meeting all other criteria for licensure. The Tennessee Board of Nursing has the right to refuse to grant a registered nurse license to any individual regardless of his/her educational credentials under circumstances of:

1. Falsification of application for licensure.
2. Conviction of a felony or crime of moral turpitude.
3. Other moral and legal violations specified in Tennessee Law.

Passing the examination is one criterion for licensure as a registered nurse. Another important criterion is that the applicant be “of good moral character.” The NCLEX application requires individuals to identify any prior convictions, both misdemeanor and felony.

All applicants should be aware that any felony and/or certain misdemeanor charges, where applicant was convicted or plead guilty or nolo contendere, or received a deferred or other qualified adjudication, may prevent the applicant from being eligible for licensure as a registered nurse after completing the BSN program. Each state has different laws and rules regarding licensure eligibility. Many states have laws that prevent licensure if an individual was terminated for cause from any State Medicare or Medicaid Program. Applicants with prior charges or convictions should speak to the Dean of the College of Nursing regarding their individual circumstances prior to enrolling in the BSN program. Students who do not disclose this information may be at risk of not becoming eligible for licensure once they graduate or could face possible dismissal from the program when they have positive criminal background checks.

NOTE: BSN program applicants/students who have been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation may be ineligible for licensure per state law. For more information, contact the Dean of the College of Nursing. Any arrests and/or convictions **MUST BE REPORTED** to the Dean of the College at the time of occurrence while enrolled in the BSN program. Failure to report an arrest or conviction will result in immediate dismissal from the BSN Program and BSN courses.

Professional nurses are prohibited by law from the practice of nursing until they are licensed by the state. Graduates must pass the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Upon completion of degree requirements, each graduating student must make application for licensure to the Board of Nursing in

the state where he or she wishes to practice. Detailed instructions regarding the application process will be given to students during their final semester in the BSN program.

Communication with Faculty and the Dean

Faculty members and administration make every attempt to be available to students. Office hours are posted on each faculty member's course syllabus. Students are encouraged to make an appointment in advance, whether the appointment is in person, by email or telephone. As part of professional development, students are responsible for problem-solving and using appropriate communication channels when faced with an issue and to utilize the chain of command when addressing concerns or issues. Administration, faculty and staff contact information is available on the BSN Program website. For students admitted to the College of Nursing, Faculty and Administration will only use a student's university email address for email communication.

Communication via Email

Due to issues of student confidentiality, Tusculum University has a policy that all official email communication with students by Tusculum University employees must be conducted using the Tusculum-supplied student email account. This applies to all interactions with academic and staff offices for purposes of conducting business, requests for assistance, providing information and communicating classroom assignments and related correspondence. This also applies to online forms submitted through the Tusculum University website. The policy states:

Tusculum University Student E-Mail Accounts

The Tusculum University e-mail address will be the primary e-mail address for student communication. Tusculum e-mail accounts will be used by Tusculum University administrative offices and by faculty for purposes of conducting business, providing information, and communicating classroom assignments and related correspondence.

All students are responsible for checking Tusculum University email daily.

Participation of Students in Program Governance

Students have the opportunity to provide perspectives and opinions regarding the BSN program via membership on selected committees and student evaluations. Student membership to committees is via invitation.

Changes in Published Course Offerings

Schedules of classes, labs and clinical rotations may vary from the published schedule. Although every effort is made to adhere to the published schedule, clinical

facilities must be shared with other Nursing programs and sometimes changes will need to be made. It is not always possible to confirm clinical times prior to the publication of student's or course schedules. Full-time employment while enrolled in the BSN program is discouraged as the course and clinical demands may require 30 hours per week, plus substantial study time.

Change in Health Status, Personal Illnesses, Injuries and/or Accidents

Students who enter the nursing program are expected to complete all assigned academic and clinical activities. Any change in health status including but not limited to pregnancy, presence of disease, changes in motor function, physical illness, post auto or other accident/injury, physical alteration, or mental well-being that requires restrictions on academic or clinical activities, and/or limits ability to perform the Core Performance Standards.

In the event of illness or exposure to a disease or injury, neither Tusculum University, its Board of Trustees, officers, employees nor agents (including the College, Dean of the College, Faculty and/or clinical agency) are responsible for providing and/or covering the cost of medical care.

If a student becomes ill, injured or exposed to a disease while in a clinical facility, the student will comply with the facility's policy regarding medical care and will be financially responsible for the care rendered. If the student declines medical care, the student will be responsible for any adverse effects for not receiving medical care.

In preparation for clinical nursing courses, students will be taught proper procedure for the use of **standard precautions** to prevent exposure to pathogens. It is the student's responsibility to put these techniques into practice when caring for patients. If exposure occurs (even in spite of scrupulous technique), the student must inform her/his clinical faculty immediately. Healthcare facility policies will be followed in the event of an injury or exposure to a disease. The financial responsibility for medical treatment provided to a student will be assumed by the student.

Pregnant students are responsible for their own healthcare. Pregnant students are required to inform the BSN Program of the pregnancy and to obtain a physician's verification of their ability to continue in the BSN Program and to complete any clinical assignment.

If a student develops or anticipates a change in health status, he/she must notify the faculty immediately. The **student must provide written documentation from his/her health care provider addressing the specific restrictions and estimated duration.** If the restrictions affect the ability of the student to meet program or course requirements, the Program Director, in consultation with the appropriate faculty, will

determine course and clinical implications. The health care provider (non-family member) responsible for the ongoing care of the student is required to provide written documentation when restrictions are no longer necessary, and the student can return to full participation according to the Core Performance Standards. This clearance must be submitted **prior to attending any learning experience** to the Program Director and Assistant Dean.

Disclaimer: The contents of this Handbook are subject to change and do not constitute a contract.

Chapter Two: University Services and Resources

Tusculum University Student Policies

Students in the BSN Program are expected to abide by the established and approved policies. Students are encouraged to become thoroughly familiar with the University's Academic and Student Policies. Academic policies are available at

<https://web.tusculum.edu/academics/academic-policies/> and in the University Catalog <https://web.tusculum.edu/academics/registrar/catalog/>. Information in this chapter is taken from the handbook for your use in the BSN Program and is not intended to be comprehensive.

Information Technology

Information technology services are provided by the Department of Information Systems (IS) and the Office of the Webmaster. IS is responsible for the infrastructure that provides all voice and data services and support to all campuses. A central information technology Help Desk is available to assist students in accessing all information technology resources. Requests for assistance can be made by calling the help Desk at 423-636-7346 (off campus) and 5346 (on campus) or stopping by the Help Desk on the fourth floor of the Niswonger Commons building.

Health and Counseling Services

The University's Health and Wellness Service program is available to assist students with issues that interfere with academic progress and personal growth. Tusculum University provides students with general first aid support and guidance in accessing community medical services as well as individual, couples and group counseling in a confidential environment at no cost. Counseling Services also provide psycho-educational programs, alcohol and other drug education programs. The University has partnered with Ballad Health Systems to provide student health services through an

onsite student health center that opened fall 2021. The student health center is housed on the ground floor of the Meen Center and is staffed at posted times by a nurse practitioner who is a faculty member for the College of Nursing. Virtual medical services are available during times the student health center is not open. Counseling and ADA Services is located in the Garland Library, Room 233 and additional information is available on the website <https://web.tusculum.edu/ada/counseling/>.

Library Services

The Thomas J. Garland Library's holdings include 55,000+ book volumes, 200 print and 27,000+ online periodicals with full text access to over 50 online research databases, 100,000 electronic books and over 800 vides and DVDs. The library may be accessed 24/7at <http://library.tusculum.edu>.

Academic Resources

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) houses the academic advising, career development, learning support and disability services units. Services include academic counseling, transitions from university to work, tutoring services and support for those needing disability accommodations.

Disability Services

Tusculum University makes available to qualified disabled students those reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids or services as are necessary to provide such students with unrestricted access to the learning environment and the opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement. For more information, please see *Support Services for Individuals*

with Disabilities section of the current catalog or visit the website <https://web.tusculum.edu/academics/disability-accommodations/>

Chapter Three: BSN Program Academic Standards

Attendance and Participation in Class, Laboratory and Clinical

The instructional work of the BSN Program is designed for regular student attendance. However, Tusculum University is a non-attendance taking University. Nonetheless, students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class/lab/clinical for the entire scheduled class period as outlined in the course syllabus.

Students are expected to be present and on time for all laboratory and clinical experiences and are held responsible for any learning activity missed.

All laboratory and clinical experiences are mandatory program requirements. Lab or clinical absences **are detrimental** to the student's ability to meet lab and clinical course learning objectives and skill attainment. These learning opportunities are scheduled and cannot be made up in the clinical facility due to the limited number of days assigned to Tusculum University for clinical rotations. Students are expected to arrive on time and to remain in the lab or clinical setting during the entire class period. Permission from the supervising faculty/preceptor is to be obtained before leaving the clinical unit. Students should not schedule appointments during clinical or lab class times. When necessary for extreme circumstances, students are required to notify the instructor at least one (1) hour prior to the scheduled clinical and/or lab time if they will not be able to attend a clinical activity. **ALL clinical make-up is subject to availability and is determined by the faculty member. The inability to complete all clinical requirements of a course may result in a grade of "incomplete" or "unsatisfactory/failure".**

All lab and/or clinical absences will operate under the following guidelines:

1. If a student must leave the clinical area for any reason, the student will be required to make-up a full clinical day.
2. A student arriving 15 minutes or more late to the clinical area may be asked to leave the clinical area and will be required to make-up a full clinical day.
3. A no call/no show to the clinical or laboratory is a serious occurrence and may result in failure of the day and clinical failure for the semester.
4. Necessitate make-up work at the lead faculty's discretion to assure completion of course learning outcomes OR,
5. Student will be given an incomplete grade for extreme mitigating circumstances OR,
6. Absence may result in repetition of the course and accompanying co-requisite course(s) if the course learning outcomes cannot be met, and the student earns a "failing" grade in the clinical course.
7. Lab or clinical lateness: On time arrival to labs and clinical experiences is a professional behavior and an expectation for all students. As indicated above, absences may be detrimental to the student's ability to meet lab and clinical course learning objectives and skill attainment. Students who are late or absence from a lab may not be able to make up the missed session. Clinical absences without following the written protocol may result in dismissal from the clinical site.
8. All lab or clinical lateness and absences will result in meeting with the course faculty and a counseling note will be placed in the student's file. A second

absence will result in a written warning and the third offense may result in dismissal from the program.

Student Advisement

Once admitted to the University, a faculty advisor will be assigned to the student. Each nursing student is expected to make a face-to-face appointment with the advisor during each registration period to validate progression. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with advisors, particularly in the case of any unusual circumstances, special needs, or issues.

Student Contact Information

Prior to the first day of each semester and upon any changes, students will ensure that the University and the nursing program have accurate contact information. This information includes phone numbers and local and permanent mailing addresses. Students will be assigned Tusculum University email addresses. Faculty members will only use the University email address to contact students.

Classroom Behavior and Civility

Faculty and students share the responsibility for creating an appropriate learning environment and have the right and responsibility to expect appropriate classroom behavior. Faculty reserve the right to require students to leave the classroom if they display inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior (significant inappropriate behavior will result in referral to the Dean of Students office for Code of Student Conduct review for violation of policies related to disruptive behavior). Students will be required to sign a Civility statement annually which includes but is not limited to the following:

- Be attentive to classroom, laboratory and clinical learning activities.
- Behave in a manner that does not distract others.
- Students should not:
 - Create inappropriate or disruptive noise such as using cellphones, having side conversations, and frequently moving about the classroom.
 - Read for or study other subjects during class.
 - Use technology inappropriately during class such as texting, emailing, surfing the Internet or working on items unrelated to class.

Electronic Devices (e.g.: phone) in the Class, Lab or Clinical Setting

Electronic Device (e.g.: phone) use in class is only permitted for class participation as warranted by the instructor. Electronic Devices (e.g.: phone) are not permitted on the student during any exam, quiz, or test.

In the clinical or lab setting, electronic devices (e.g.: phone, smart watches) are **NOT permitted in a direct patient care area or at the Nurses Station on the units and work areas** for any reason. A student may use a device in the conference room or room designated by the faculty. Students must follow the direction that the clinical faculty has provided for acceptable use of devices. If a cell phone is in the clinical setting (with permission and use as directed), the cell phone must be **placed on vibrate** and only used during **approved breaks and in appropriate designated areas**. If a student has a cell phone in the clinical facility, the student may be sent home and receive an unsatisfactory for the day's work.

If there is the potential for a family emergency, the students should give their family the office number (423-636-7430). Family is to call the office and office personnel will give the message to the clinical instructor to provide to the student. At all other times, phones and beepers are to be turned off and not used in the class or lab. If an emergency does arise unexpectedly, families may call the nursing office and every attempt will be made to locate the student.

Social Media Policy

Tusculum University College of Nursing supports social media usage that leads to positive outcomes for its students. Social media technology affords interaction with individuals and organizations that establish strong connections and participation. Social media can also be a factor for increasing student engagement on campus and assistance for transitioning to college life, all of which may be considered positive effects. The negative effects of social media technology are likewise a university and College of Nursing concern that stems from the limited context available in digital communication. Online social spaces provide privacy limitations, and students using social media are expected to be careful, respectful, responsible, and accountable.

Unacceptable behavior by university and College of Nursing students through such technology includes but is not limited to the following:

- behavior that promotes or produces an unlawful end.
- action that promotes an act of violence or harm.
- action that meets university standards of harassment, defamation, and/or obscenity.
- action that is counterproductive to the mission of the College of Nursing and the University.
- postings that may be unprofessional or negative in the role of the student, the COHS and/or the healthcare professions.
- HIPAA related and sensitive information related to patient care or the clinical setting.
- action that violates guidelines outlined in the university and/or College of Nursing handbook.

Tusculum University's policy on student use of social media will be strictly enforced. Violation of this policy will warrant disciplinary action up to dismissal from the Nursing program.

Assignments, Evaluations and Grading

Testing and Grading Policy

Course Examinations

Examinations are utilized throughout the nursing program to facilitate formative and summative evaluation of student learning and foster preparedness for licensure examination following graduation.

Exams are property Tusculum University College of Nursing. All exam content is confidential and may not be divulged to any other individual or entity. Unauthorized access, reproduction, or disclosure of any exam materials at any time is considered academic dishonesty and cheating and may result in dismissal from the nursing program.

The College of Nursing supports and utilizes computerized testing. It is required that a student have a laptop upon matriculation into the nursing program. Computerized examinations will be administered in the computer lab or classroom on either university computers or personal laptops with a lock-down browser feature. The following procedure will be followed for all course examinations:

Computerized Testing

1. Prior to arrival to the assigned testing room, students should place all personal belongings in a secure place as personal belongings are not permitted in the testing room.
2. Students must be in seats and ready to begin exams at the scheduled time. The begin time and end time of the exam will be clearly communicated to students. If in class, this will be written on the white board in the classroom. No students are allowed to enter the room once the exam has begun. If the student arrives late, they will be required to make up the exam unless the instructor has previously been notified and approved a late start to the exam. Late students will not be given extra time to complete the exam.
3. Students are only allowed to bring a writing utensil (pen or pencil) with them into the room.
4. Upon arrival, students will be required to show their Tusculum University identification badge to gain entry to the exam.
5. Students must leave all mobile devices (cell phones and smart watches) outside of the testing room. Failure to do so will result in a "0" for the exam and the student will be required to leave. Exam proctors will monitor for evidence of such

- devices and may confiscate any devices found during the exam. Any violation may result in failure of the examination and/or disciplinary action.
6. Only approved calculators, scratch paper and writing utensils are permitted. No utensil pouches are allowed in the testing area.
 7. No food or drink will be allowed in the testing area.
 8. No front-open jackets or sweaters are permitted. No hats will be worn during testing. It is recommended that a student dresses in layers for warmth as the temperature control in the room is unpredictable.
 9. Students are not allowed to leave the room during the exam. Bathroom breaks should be taken before the exam starts. If a bathroom emergency should occur, one Proctor must accompany the student to the restroom and select the stall the student will use. The student will be provided privacy during this time.
 10. In the event of technical issues while taking the exam, raise your hand to alert the proctor.
 11. Upon completion of the exam, exit the room quietly and maintain quiet outside of the testing room. Do not discuss the exam with other classmates outside of the room, as voices may still be heard in the testing room.
 12. All online or computer format testing will be done in the classroom or proctor center unless intended as an open book test.
 13. Students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity during the exam process. Academic honesty and the honor code apply to all examinations. Students will be asked to sign an honor pledge prior to the start of an exam which will serve as their scratch paper.
 14. Students are expected to report evidence of cheating before, during, or after the exam to the faculty member.
 15. Violations of integrity (cheating) will result in penalties from an "F" in the course and recommendations for dismissal from the program.
 16. Test security protocols outlined by the testing software (ExamSoft, Canvas, etc.) must be followed.
 17. In the event of a verified illness or COVID quarantine, students will have the opportunity to take a makeup exam using a different/alternate exam covering the same material and is left to the instructor's discretion. Makeup exams will only be given in cases of excused absences. Excused absences are to be approved by the course instructor and the program director. Excused absences may include illness or family emergencies or sports related absences. Documentation of illness or emergency may be required. Make-up exams will be given at a date assigned by the instructor but no longer than one week following the scheduled exam.
 18. Any student requiring ADA accommodation must provide documentation from Disability Services. The faculty must be notified of accommodations at least one week prior to an exam and/or quiz in order to arrange the accommodation.

Online Proctoring:

1. Students may be required to complete some online proctored exams and will be responsible for the proctoring fees at the time of the exam. Many exams may be proctored through Canvas and/or Zoom proctoring
2. The student must sit at a clear table or desk. This means the removal of all books, papers, notebooks, calculators, etc. unless specifically permitted in posted guidelines for that particular examination. Students will be allowed a white board/marker for scratch paper during the exam which must be presented to the proctor upon the examination completion.
3. All windows/programs except for the examination browser must be closed during the exam. The following should not be on the desk/desktop or laptop or used during your exam unless specifically allowed for that examination:
 - Excel
 - Word
 - PowerPoint
 - Textbooks
 - Websites
4. No use of headsets, earplugs, smartwatches (or similar audio devices) is permitted. The student will not have distractions such as music or television in the background. No other persons except the test-taker should be permitted to enter the room during testing and no communication will be allowed with others.
5. The student must not leave the room during the testing period at any time unless specifically permitted in posted guidelines for that particular examination.
6. The student cannot use a phone for any reason. The only exception is to contact support or your instructor in the event of a technical issue.

HESI Examinations

HESI Specialty Examinations are administered during specific BSN courses. The exams are used to determine the amount of knowledge the student has gained while enrolled in specific BSN courses and also are used to determine NCLEX-readiness. Most exams cover the content of one semester of coursework. HESI exams are proctored, secured exams so each exam will be administered on one scheduled day in a computer lab or secured classroom environment. There is no makeup for missing a HESI exam unless cleared by faculty and program director.

Prior to taking the actual HESI exam, students may be required to take the HESI practice exam. If required, students will be notified when the practice exams are available to them. Students **MUST** earn a score of 75% on the practice exam before taking the scheduled HESI exam. Students may take the practice exam twice to earn the required 75% score. Students not completing assigned work or attainment of the required score, will not be allowed to take the HESI exam and will meet with the course faculty to determine course of action which may result in the grade of "0".

A minimum score of 850 on the HESI exam is needed to receive a grade for the exam and final score recorded for the course grade will be based on the overall analysis and conversion score of the HESI. If a student achieves a score of >900 on the HESI, they will be exempt from taking the course comprehensive final exam.

Attainment of a score less than 850 will result in additional remediation (see remediation Policy) and the requirement to take an additional HESI exam. The remediation plan is based on the areas of weaknesses from the students' performance on the HESI exam. Students are required to complete the entire assigned remediation prior to retaking the HESI exam. The second administration of the HESI exam will result in a 10% reduction of the final score earned on the HESI. Please note: Students only have a total of two (2) attempts to achieve the minimum required score of 850. If the required score of 850 is not attained on the second attempt, the student will receive a "0" for the HESI which **could** result in a failure for the course.

Review of Exams, Quizzes, Graded Assignments

Students are to review exams, quizzes and graded assignments within seven days of grades being posted, in order to enhance individual learning. Students will have an opportunity to review items missed on course examinations immediately following completion and submission of the exam. Remediation may be required for students whose performance falls below acceptable (below a grade of 75%). Students may request a meeting with the course faculty to review any graded items and are encouraged to seek assistance with performance on assignments and examinations that fall below acceptable performance (below a grade of C).

Maintenance of Academic Standing and Grading Policies

The BSN Program follows a consistent grading policy for all nursing courses. Although the number of grading components may vary from course to course, each course will have either a: 1) didactic theory component and/or 2) clinical performance component. For courses without a clinical laboratory component, there may be components related to professional writing and didactic requirements.

Grading Scale for Didactic BSN Courses

- A 93-100%
- A- 90-92%
- B+ 86-89%
- B 83-85%
- B- 80-82%
- C 75-79%
- D 60-74%

F below 60%

Clinical Evaluation

Clinical performance is designated as Pass/Fail and the student must pass the didactic portion of the course that has a clinical component in order to pass the course. Students must achieve a minimum of “C” or “Pass” in each course in the BSN curriculum as well as maintain an overall minimum GPA of 2.0 in order to matriculate to the next semester.

Concept Maps Requirements for Clinical courses

Some classes will require that each week, students submit a completed, passing (satisfactory) Concept map-based plan of care for an assigned patient. If incomplete or inaccurate Concept maps are submitted, students will receive a “Fail” (unsatisfactory) grade. Students must make satisfactory progress throughout the semester in order to meet clinical performance expectations. Failure to do so will result in the failure of the clinical component of the course which further results in the failure of the course.

Clinical courses evaluation

Students completing the clinical portion of courses will be evaluated using the clinical evaluation tool included in the course materials and is based upon meeting the minimum standard for safe practice in the clinical area. Students are required to submit written work as delineated by the clinical faculty which might include but not limited to journaling, care plans/concept maps, etc., and faculty, nurse preceptor and clinical site evaluations reviews.

Late Assignments

Due dates are clearly posted for all assignments and papers. If you have an emergent situation, do not hesitate to contact your professor to collaborate on a solution. However, assignments, submitted after the due date, are subject to a 10% grade reduction per day if the assignment is late regardless of the reason for submitting the assignment late. If the assignment is five business days late, the assignment will be given a grade of zero. Students who miss the due date for a graded assignment and have not contacted the instructor prior to the due date, will receive a grade of zero. If you are ill or have a serious problem that prevents you from submitting an assignment on the day it is due, please contact your professor prior to the deadline and he/she will arrange an alternative date if appropriate. Additionally, students with incomplete assignments at the end of the course will be given the earned final grade. An incomplete (I) will not be given except under extenuating circumstances that are discussed with your instructor and the Dean before final grades are assigned.

Incomplete Coursework

A temporary grade of incomplete “I” may be given if extenuating circumstances result in a student being unable to complete the work in a course, the student may, at the instructor’s discretion, be assigned a grade of Incomplete. If granted, the instructor will complete an Incomplete Grade Form that is signed or verified electronically by the instructor and students and will submit it to the dean and registrar. To qualify for an incomplete grade, the student should have completed at least half of the coursework and with a passing average.

The instructor will determine the deadline for completing the coursework, but in all cases, the Incomplete grade must be replaced by a permanent grade within 6 months. Failure to complete the coursework within the prescribed period of time will result in the Incomplete grade being converted to a permanent grade of F. An Incomplete grade earns no quality points.

It is the student’s responsibility to seek information about the impact of the incomplete grade on financial aid and/or athletic eligibility. It is expected that the Incomplete Grade Policy be followed which is outlined in the university catalog.

Remediation Process:

The remediation process is designed to promote the success of students at risk of failing a course because they have difficulty accomplishing course objectives and/or meeting course requirements. The process is not intended to replace course curriculum or course requirements but to supplement the student’s learning. The remediation process is initiated to address the following situations:

- **Academic jeopardy (i.e., low quiz/exam scores)**
- **Lack of clinical competency** (i.e., failing a clinical competency or math exam, unsafe behavior in the clinical environment)

If a student is struggling in multiple areas, separate remediation plans are established for each at risk behavior. The remediation process is initiated by faculty as soon as an at-risk student is identified. The faculty member is responsible for meeting with the student to discuss the identified concerns and develop an individualized remediation plan.

The remediation plan must be documented on the form “Nursing Student Remediation Contract/Remediation Worksheet” (see attached) and meet the following guidelines:

1. The Remediation Plan must clearly describe the area(s) of deficiency.
2. Remediation outcomes must identify specific, measurable goals the student must attain or perform to demonstrate success.
3. Remediation activities must be individualized to the student’s area of weakness. They may include, but are not limited to, completion of suggested computer-based practice tests, written review materials, practice questions,

instructor-developed materials, hands-on laboratory skill practice, or any other materials/methods suggested by the faculty.

4. A time frame for completion must be agreed upon and documented in the remediation plan.
5. The remediation form must be signed by faculty and student.

Once the remediation plan is signed, the student at risk will follow the appropriate procedure outlined below. Faculty will be available to support the student during this time, but it is the student's responsibility to contact faculty to request additional assistance if/when it is needed.

Upon the completion of the remediation, the student will schedule a meeting with the faculty to determine whether the remediation outcomes have been met. If evidence supports successful attainment of remediation outcomes, the remediation plan will be considered complete once it is signed by faculty and student. If evidence does not support successful attainment of remediation outcomes, the remediation will be considered unsuccessful, and the student will meet with the BSN Program Director or designee to determine the next course of action.

Course instructor will notify the BSN Program Director and additional faculty for the student of the referral by email. If the BSN Program Director is unavailable, faculty will act in the place of the BSN Program Director.

Contract will remain in effect despite the absence of the student's signature. The original of the completed remediation plan will be given to the course instructor. After review, the plan will be maintained in the student file. A mandatory remediation plan is a formal course requirement. Failure of the student to complete the remediation plan and obtain appropriate signatures by the deadline dates will result in course failure.

Remediation for Didactic and Clinical Didactic Exams

1. If the student scores less than 80% on any of the theory exams, they will need to meet the instructor for mandatory exam remediation. Remediation may be done one-on-one. Review of content may be completed in a group setting; however, the student will set up an appointment to complete the remediation plan with the instructor.
2. Remediation will entail reviewing the student's exam and the questions that were answered incorrectly. The student will fill out an exam remediation form. This form is used as tool to specifically decipher why the student answered the question wrong. Based on why the student answered questions incorrectly, the student and instructor will formulate a study plan for the next exam. The instructor may provide studying tips and assistance to the student with the goal of a higher-grade percentage on the next scheduled exam.
3. Remediation is mandatory. There will be no reminders- the student is expected to initiate this process independently. Remediation is required to be completed at the assigned date determined by the faculty. If a student does not complete the remediation at the assigned date, then the student will be unable to take the next exam and the student will receive a grade of "0" for that exam.

Clinical Evaluations

Students will be evaluated periodically by the faculty in Specialty courses and at midterm in Adult Health courses to identify weaknesses, areas of knowledge deficit or the performance of unsafe practice. Faculty will meet with the student to review deficiencies, make an action plan and sign the Evaluation Form. They will provide students with a copy of the Evaluation Form and keep the original in a secure place until the final clinical evaluation. Clinical Faculty will notify lead course faculty immediately of any students placed on an action plan. Failure to improve in the deficient areas will lead to failure of the clinical portion of the course which will lead to failure of the entire class.

HESI Remediation

Following the administration of a HESI custom/specialty and/or exit examination, students are required to remediate based on their individual HESI examination score. Students with lower HESI scores require more intense remediation, whereas students with higher HESI scores require less remediation. HESI examination scores are indicative of a student's success in the program and on their NCLEX examination for licensure.

Students who perform below 900 on a HESI Exam, must complete a HESI Remediation Plan of Action (as listed in the HESI Testing & Remediation Policy) based on their individual HESI exam score(s).

The HESI Remediation Plan of Action must be developed, initiated, and completed successfully by the assigned date in order to progress to the next nursing course. Students will also complete a HESI Remediation Plan of Action Contract (contract template will be made available to the student) that will outline their individual plan. This document will be signed by both the student and the course faculty.

If a student scores less than 850 on any HESI exam, it is a progression requirement (see Academic Standards & Progression Policy) that they perform the identified remediation activities and/or assignments as outlined in the HESI Testing & Remediation Policy and HESI Remediation Plan of Action. HESI Remediation Plans of Action are graded as Pass/Fail. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to provide evidence of successful completion of remediation and to schedule a conference with the course faculty. If the student does not take these steps or does not complete the HESI Remediation Plan of Action as outlined, their lack of action will result in the grade of an "F" for the course. This will impact the student's ability to progress and may result in not only course failure, but dismissal from the BSN program depending on the number of course failures the student has obtained.

Reference: Culleiton, A.L. (2009). Remediation: A closer look in an educational context. *Teaching & Learning in Nursing*, 4, 22-27.

Additional Information Concerning HESI Testing & Remediation

Following the completion of any HESI examination, students who have not successfully met the course guidelines for the exam are required to be accountable for their remediation by accessing their individual HESI remediation plan via the Evolve website within two weeks of the availability of the results of their performance on the exam. Within one week of the beginning of the following semester, students are required to contact and schedule a remediation meeting with the course leader/designee of the course in which the HESI was housed. A proposed remediation plan of action based upon the student's individual identified deficiencies of the specific HESI exam should be completed prior to attendance at the remediation meeting.

Failure to schedule a meeting or complete a plan of remediation may negatively impact the student's success in courses throughout the BSN curriculum as well as success on the NCLEX-RN (licensure exam). Students may be required to complete additional remediation as deemed necessary by the course faculty.

HESI Remediation Plan of Action

HESI Score	Essential Packets	Adaptive Quizzing	Case Studies	Other
900 or above	Remediation is encouraged, but optional. Consider completing at least one packet to reinforce your learning of content in your weak areas.			
800-899	You are required to complete your top ten (10) Essential packets in full (total=10 packets). Minimum of five (5) hours of study is required. HESI Dashboard reporting student activity will be reviewed.	Adaptive Quizzing: Create ten (10) ten item quizzes based on content from your top ten (10) Essential packets and obtain required mastery score. You will need to continue to take quizzes until mastery score is obtained.	Select one (1) Evolve HESI Case Study in a content area of weakness based on your HESI Exam Student Report and obtain 100%.	Other as recommended by faculty (as applicable).
700-799	You are required to complete your top ten (15) Essential packets in full, and another five (5) packets from your Recommended category (Total = 20 packets). Minimum of six (6) hours of study required. HESI Dashboard reporting student activity will be reviewed.	Adaptive Quizzing: Create ten (10) ten item quizzes based on content from your top ten (10) Essential packets and two (2) 10 question quizzes from your Recommended category. obtain required mastery score (See Note Section for Mastery Score Breakdown). You will need to continue to take quizzes until mastery score is obtained. A screenshot of each quiz's mastery level should be included in your remediation packet.	Select two (2) Evolve HESI Case Studies in a content area of weakness based on your HESI Exam Student Report and obtain 100%. A screenshot of each case study's grade should be included in your remediation packet.	Other as recommended by faculty (as applicable).

Below 700	You are required to complete ALL Essential and Recommended packets provided in your remediation (Total could be as many as 35, or more). Minimum of 8 hours of study is required. HESI Dashboard reporting student activity will be reviewed	Adaptive Quizzing: Create fifteen (15) ten item quizzes based on content from your top (15) Essential packets and obtain required mastery score (See Note Section for Mastery Score Breakdown). You will need to continue to take quizzes until mastery score is obtained. A screenshot of each quiz's mastery level should be included in your remediation packet.	Select three (3) Evolve HESI Case Study in a content area of weakness based on your HESI Exam Student Report and obtain 100%. A screenshot of each case study's grade should be included in your remediation packet.	Other as recommended by faculty (as applicable).
-----------	--	---	--	--

Optional Remediation as determined by course faculty for scores < 799:

Create a NCLEX style (Select all that apply) question based on the content of *Essential* and *Recommended* packets. 20 questions will be created. Each question will have the correct answers marked and rationale for each correct and incorrect answer option. Each question must have resources noted in APA format.

HESI Student Access

Students must be logged into their HESI Student Access account and the online test specific remediation content for the number of hours specified. Do not print and log out of HESI remediation to study. Time spent in remediation content will be monitored. Creating and printing study packets will not count as completing remediation. Students must spend time studying the material as directed. Only the time spent under the online remediation will count towards the required remediation hours. Students may break up the required remediation into multiple sessions. Time spent on adaptive quizzing and case studies will not count towards remediation hours.

Students are required to access all their *Essential & Recommended* packets according to the description above; access and review the online remediation; review specialty/subspecialty areas, quick book review; in depth book review; view and submit practice questions in each area that is in the HESI remediation packet if applicable; view and submit case studies if applicable (within HESI Remediation); view multimedia if applicable.

Readmission

If a student has to withdraw or has failed a course, the student may wish to seek readmission. Students seeking readmission should notify the Dean of the Nursing Program in writing no less than 60 days before the start of the term that the student is seeking to reenter the program. Readmission is not guaranteed and is based upon available seats in a class and continued qualifications of the student. Students are only permitted to be readmitted once.

Professional Conduct

The Tusculum University BSN Program reserves the right to discipline a student who does not demonstrate professional conduct up to and including dismissal from the College (the same conduct may subject the student to removal from the institution through the Code of Student Conduct allegation resolution process administered through the Office of the Dean of Students). Unprofessional conduct may include, but is not limited to:

1. Physical, verbal or sexual harassment or abuse as well as the use of obscene language that may be perceived as threatening the safety of patients, faculty, students and healthcare providers,
2. Physical or emotional problems that do not respond to appropriate treatment in a reasonable period of time,
3. Exceeding the scope of nursing student practice,
4. Behavior that conflicts with safe nursing practice,
5. Violating patient confidentiality or HIPPA guidelines,
6. Use of drugs/substances that may impair nursing practice,
7. Behavior that results in removal from the clinical area by the agency,
8. Violation of accepted standards of practice within the agency,
9. Omission of essential components of patient care,
10. Providing unsafe nursing care that places the patient at risk for injury,
11. Repeated failure to recognize and promptly report significant patient data,
12. Failure to understand one's own limitations in practice and seek appropriate guidance,
13. Falsification of College or agency reports,
14. Theft or damage of property,
15. Possession of dangerous weapons on university or agency property,
16. Conviction of a felony,
17. Cheating, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, and
18. Other violations of Tusculum University Code of Student Conduct (including alcohol and substance abuse and other policies).

Dismissal from the BSN Program

The faculty of the BSN Program has the academic, legal and ethical responsibility to protect the public and the healthcare community from unsafe or unprofessional nursing conduct or practice. Nursing students who fail two nursing courses, or who fail the same nursing course twice, will be dismissed from the BSN program. The following are additional examples of conduct or practice that are considered serious and can lead to dismissal from the clinical site and/or from the BSN program; the list is not exclusive.

1. Failure to meet clinical objectives.
2. Students who place patients/clients at risk physically and/or emotionally.
3. Students who are unable to interact and communicate appropriately with others, including patients/clients or families. This includes any verbal abuse (profane language, threats, etc.) directed toward another student(s), university employee, clinical site staff, peers, or clients.
4. Students who are unable to perform in a professional manner, and who cannot accept supervision and/or constructive criticism.
5. Students who consistently fail to abide by professional codes, such as adherence to dress code.
6. Students who are unable to use professional judgment, including seeking help for problems which interfere with professional practice.
7. Students who are consistently unable to demonstrate knowledge, values (such as honesty, integrity, respect), and skills necessary for generalist nursing practice.
8. Failure to comply with confidentiality regulations such as HIPAA.
9. Failure to respect the rights of others as evidenced by verbal, physical or mental abuse of others, harassment of any kind, assault, or any action which endangers the rights of others.
10. Failure to abide by federal, state, and local laws which prohibit the use, possession, and sale of illegal substances.
11. Willful destruction of university or clinical site property.
12. The possession, use, or impairment of a student from prescription drugs, illegally obtained drugs and/or alcohol while in a clinical setting or classroom.
13. Failure to undergo criminal background check or drug screening.
14. Indication of criminal behavior as evidenced by criminal background check that preclude a student from going to the clinical setting.

At any time a student enrolled in the nursing program may be dismissed for academic or unprofessional conduct. A student may be suspended from the Nursing Program on an interim basis **pending a hearing on the matter of suspension**, if, in the opinion of the Nursing Faculty, the student is unsafe, engaged in academic dishonesty, violated patient confidentiality or safety, been arrested, or been alleged to have violated

a Tusculum University Code of Student Conduct policy which could result in separation from the institution if found responsible.

Steps in the Dismissal Process

1. When a faculty member judges a student's behavior to raise a concern as to possible dismissal, the faculty member shall share the observation with the student and determine whether there is a sufficient explanation to dismiss the concern. If this initial informal hearing does not resolve the matter, the faculty member shall notify the student in writing that they have been suspended from activities and to immediately cease attendance in the clinical experience or other BSN Program activities.
2. The faculty member will describe the student's behavior in writing to the Lead course faculty member, who in turn notifies the Dean of the Nursing Program, this documentation is due within 24 hours.
3. The Dean of the Nursing Program shall appoint a Chair from the College of Health Sciences, who will notify the student of the time and place for a called meeting for the matter to be heard before members of the faculty and staff appointed by the Dean for this purpose. The Chair will offer to explain the hearing process beforehand to the student in person or provide a brief written overview.
4. The involved student will have the opportunity to provide oral and/or written information regarding the incident. If the student does not appear, the meeting will proceed as scheduled.
5. The faculty and staff will meet in executive session after all information has been presented and any questions can be pursued to clarify their understanding of the matter. They will make a determination as to whether accountability should attach to the student for the incident and make a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Nursing Program as to what action should result.
6. The Dean of the College of Nursing shall review the findings and, if the student is indicated to be responsible, shall develop an appropriate outcome in consideration of the recommendations of the hearing committee, past precedent, institutional policy and any legal guidance which shall inform the decision and the student and any other parties with an educational need to know shall be notified of the final decision within five business days.

Right to Appeal

The involved student has the right to appeal to the Dean of the Nursing Program in accordance with the standards of appeal outlined under the Code of Student Conduct contained within the *Tusculum University Catalog and Academic Policies*.

Inclement Weather

When Tusculum University classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, all BSN classes and clinical experiences are cancelled. If classes are cancelled while students are in clinical agencies, students will be dismissed after arrangements are made to cover their assignments and an evaluation of personal safety related to traveling to and from the clinical agency. In the case of inclement weather and the University is not closed or is on a delay, students and faculty are to exercise good judgment concerning personal safety related to traveling to and from the clinical agency. If the University does not close and students miss labs or clinical experiences, the missed day will be counted as an absence.

Tusculum University will post information regarding closings or changes in the schedule on the home page of the website, as well as to the Tusculum Facebook page and the Twitter feed. All students are encouraged to sign up for the Pioneer Alert system by following the instructions at <http://www3.tusculum.edu/pr/inclement-weather-policy/>.

Chapter Four: Progression and Graduation Policies

Leave of Absence

Any BSN Program student who is in good academic standing may request a Leave of Absence for up to one year. Parameters governing the request are as follows:

- A student may request only one leave of absence during the enrollment in the BSN major.
- Requests to return to active student status may be processed in the first full semester after the leave was granted.
- Leaves of absence and reinstatements are not guaranteed; reinstatements will be based upon space available basis.
- If a leave is approved by the Dean of the Nursing Program in consultation with BSN faculty, any conditions for remediation (skills, course audits) will be at the student's expense.
- If and when a student is readmitted, he or she must abide by academic policies in place at the time of readmission.
- To be considered for readmission, the student must be in good academic and conduct standing with Tusculum University and the BSN Program (GPA of at least 2.0).
- BSN students who take a leave of absence without prior approval from the Dean of the Nursing will be required to reapply to the BSN Program.

Requests for Exceptions and Appeals to Progression

A student may not earn less than a “C” or “Pass” in any BSN courses; however, students who earn a “D” often feel that circumstances merit an exception to progression guidelines. Students have the right to make a one-time appeal to the progression policy under the following guidelines:

- An extenuating circumstance is an event that is out of the ordinary, unforeseen, unexpected and occurring within the semester for which the appeal is requested.
- Examples of extenuating circumstances include death of an immediate family member, a major natural disaster affecting the student and/or immediate family members, or a onetime problem or trauma affecting the student.
- Student files a written request with the Dean of the Nursing Program who confers with the student, and the student's course and clinical faculty.
- Students are required to request an exception before final grades are assigned for the semester.
- The student will be notified in writing of the decision by the Dean of the Nursing Program.
- The decision is final at this point unless the student has new information that was not available at the time of the review, in which case the Dean of Nursing Program shall determine whether further review is appropriate.

Repeating Coursework

A student who appeals and receives an exception to progression is admitted to nursing coursework at the discretion of the Dean of the Nursing Program. Placement will be on a space available basis and is not guaranteed. A student may only repeat one semester of coursework.

Academic Withdrawal

A student who chooses to withdraw from nursing courses during the first half of the semester due to failing grades will not be guaranteed a seat in the subsequent class. Placement will be on a space available basis. A student may only repeat one semester of coursework.

Grade Appeals and the Appeals Process

To read the full policy from the University Catalog, please go to

<http://www.tusculum.edu/academics/policies.html>

Graduation

Students who have completed all program requirements and are eligible for graduation will be required to file for intent to graduate and pay the graduation fee as outlined in the University Catalog.

Chapter Five: Student Clinical Requirements

Performance Evaluation

Faculty evaluates students in the clinical settings using the Clinical Performance Evaluation (CPE) tool. Students must demonstrate successful achievement of the critical elements identified in each core competency. Performance will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Progression in the clinical sequence of courses can be denied for unprofessional behavior, unsafe clinical practice, or unsatisfactory academic or clinical performance. To progress, students must pass the entire clinical experience in order to receive a passing grade in the clinical course. Failure in either the theory course or the clinical course will result in the student being required to repeat both the theory and clinical courses.

Medication and Dosage Calculations

Knowledge of medications and dosage calculations is critical to professional nursing care. Students will be tested on medications and dosage calculations knowledge at the beginning of each semester. The exam will be administered prior to clinical opportunities and remediation/ retest, if necessary, will be set by the program faculty. All students are expected to achieve at least the minimum score of 90% on the medication/dosage calculation exam to progress in the BSN program. Students may repeat the exam a maximum of 3 attempts. Students who have not successfully passed the dosage calculation exam will not be allowed to prepare or administer medication with their instructor or preceptor during clinical. Failure to achieve the identified score will result in failure of the clinical course. In addition, faculty may integrate medication and dosage calculations questions and other assessment methods in course exams which are essential to evaluate critical thinking and clinical judgment

Health Forms and Immunizations

Evidence of physical and emotional health that will enable the student to provide safe nursing care to the public is required prior to the first clinical nursing course and must be updated yearly for the student to progress in the BSN program. Students are to be free of communicable diseases. The required health history, physical health status and immunization forms will be provided to the student after the student are completing their core courses and are about to begin their nursing courses (Fall of their Sophomore

year). The health history form is to be filled out, signed, and dated by the student in black ink. The physical health status form should be completed by a physician or nurse practitioner and returned to the nursing office by the indicated deadline. Immunization requirements form must be signed by a physician or nurse practitioner. The individual student is expected to update their health documentation each year that they remain enrolled in the BSN program. Failure to update health status will result in the inability to attend clinical nursing courses.

Students must be physically, emotionally and cognitively able to meet the requirements of clinical practice without threat to themselves or others. Students should be able to perform all of the Core Performance Standards as outlined in Section 1 of this handbook. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Academic Resource & Student Services Center at Tusculum University for assistance. The BSN Program faculty will work with students who have documented disabilities and personnel from the above-named office to provide reasonable accommodations. However, students with accommodations will have to be able to perform the Core Performance Standards as outlined in the previous section.

All clinically required immunizations must be obtained and maintained current during enrollment in the Tusculum University BSN Program. History of disease is not acceptable; students must submit proof of immunization administration or positive titer. As of the printing of this edition of the Handbook, the following are the current immunization requirements:

- **Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td) booster** dose within the past 10 years
- **Annual influenza vaccine**
- **MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) immunizations:** Must have evidence of one of the following:
 - Documented receipt of two (2) doses MMR vaccine with the date of the first dose given after 12 months of age. Exemptions are as follows:
 - Born in 1956 or before (must provide a copy of official form of picture ID with birth date documented or birth certificate).
 - Students who are documenting measles, mumps and rubella separately instead of MMR must document:
 - Immunity or one rubella vaccine at 12 months of age or later
 - Immunity of one mumps vaccine if born in 1957 or later
 - Results of serologic testing documenting immunity to measles, mumps and rubella.
 - Healthcare provider documented history of disease. **Self-reported or parent reported disease history is not acceptable.**
 - Healthcare provider documented allergy to any component of the vaccine.
- **Varicella (Chicken Pox) immunization:** Evidence of one of the following

- 2 doses of Varicella vaccine at least 1 month apart if given at age 13 or later dose
- Varicella vaccine if given before age 13
- Positive antibody titer
- Healthcare provider documented history of disease. **Self-reported or parent reported disease history is not acceptable.**
- **Hepatitis B Vaccine is a series of three immunizations.** Documentation of one of the following.
 - Positive antibody titer OR
 - Three doses according to the following schedule:
 - 1st dose: at elected date
 - 2nd dose: 30 days after the first dose
 - 3rd dose: eight- sixteen (8-16) weeks after second dose AND 6 months from first dose
 - Students must have received all three doses prior to the first clinical day of the first clinical course.
 - If the series is delayed between doses, the vaccine should be continued from where it was left off.

NOTE: Students may refuse to accept the Hepatitis B immunizations by signing a declination statement acknowledging the risks of exposure. The form can be obtained from the College of Nursing office.

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

While enrolled in the BSN Program, all students are required to maintain written documentation of annual tuberculosis screening that documents no risk for communicability of tuberculosis. Written documentation must be provided in one of the following ways:

- Initially: A two-step negative PPD must be documented within 12 months of starting clinical BSN courses.
- Documentation of completion of screening tool annually.
- Initial negative chest x-ray (for positive PPD reactions or those who have taken BCG) and then yearly documentation by a physician or nurse practitioner that the student is symptom free from tuberculosis.

Failure to comply will result in unexcused student absences from clinical courses and counted as unsatisfactory clinical performance.

Criminal Background Checks

Tusculum University BSN Program's clinical affiliates require negative criminal background checks of all students prior to students being cleared for clinical experiences at their facilities. Criminal background checks are to be completed through

the university specified vendor 90 days prior to the start of the first clinical course. Students are responsible for the cost of the background check. A student's criminal background check is valid as long as the student is continuously enrolled in the BSN program or until a clinical affiliate changes their clinical clearance requirements. All students must complete the criminal background check even if they are employed at one of the program's clinical affiliates and/or have previously completed a criminal background check. Students will not be allowed to participate in clinical activity for any reason until the clinical affiliate has authorized their presence in the facility. Specific instructions for completing the criminal background check will be provided to admit BSN students prior to enrolling in the first clinical course.

Based upon the result of the criminal background check, the clinical affiliate may accept or deny a student access to their facility. If a clinical affiliate does not grant the student access to complete clinical experiences at their facility, the College is under no obligation to provide alternative experiences. Failure to participate in clinical experiences due to positive background checks will result in the student's inability to meet course requirements and subsequently, result in dismissal from the program.

Nursing students should be aware that clinical facilities have the right and/or responsibility to preclude students with certain criminal histories from their facility. Additionally, the state Board of Nursing may deny licensure based on a student's criminal history. Even if licensure is granted, certain employers may preclude applicants with certain criminal histories from employment.

Drug Screening

All students should comply with the *Alcohol & Controlled Substance Policy* as outlined in the current Tusculum University Student Catalog. As previously noted in the general information section, drug screen standards and protocols must be implemented.

Clinical affiliates of Tusculum University's BSN program require nursing students to have negative drug screenings. For the BSN program, a positive drug screening means one or more of the following: (1) the use of an illegal substance; (2) presence of illegal substance in the blood stream; (3) presence of alcohol in the blood stream; (4) therapeutic level of prescribed drug that students did not disclose use of drug; and/or (5) above therapeutic drug level of prescribed or non-prescribed drugs.

Students who are suspected of violating the alcohol and controlled substance policy of Tusculum University will be disciplined per school policy. Nursing students who are under the influence in the clinical setting will be requested to undergo drug/alcohol screening procedures. The following behaviors, when they cannot be justifiably

explained, are considered to constitute reasonable evidence of “being under the influence”. These behaviors can precipitate a drug screening.

1. Observable lack of motor coordination
2. Incoherent speech
3. Inappropriate decision-making behavior
4. Other concrete physical and/or mental function evidence of substance abuse

If reasonable suspicion occurs that any provision of the substance abuse policy has been violated, the following actions will be taken.

1. The individual will not be allowed to participate in clinical, laboratory or preceptor experiences until an investigation is completed and an appropriate plan of action has been formulated and implemented.
2. If an incident occurs in the campus classroom or lab, the Tusculum University *Alcohol & Controlled Substance Abuse* policy will be implemented.
3. If an incident occurs in an affiliate’s clinical facility and/or property, the affiliate’s substance abuse policy will be activated and enforced. The affiliates policy may require but are not limited to:
 - a. The student will be asked to submit to an **immediate** drug/alcohol screen at his/her expense.
 - b. If a student refuses to submit to the drug/alcohol screen, the student’s refusal will be an admission of guilt.
 - c. Appropriate and necessary measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the student and others (i.e. security or law enforcement agencies may be notified, alternative transportation arranged, etc.).
 - d. The Dean of the Nursing Program will be notified; the dean will notify Student Services. Student Services will conduct an investigation. If found guilty, the students will be dismissed from the BSN program and may be disciplined by the University according to the *Alcohol & Controlled Substance Abuse* policy.
 - e. Any licensed students will be reported to the State Board of Nursing by the Dean of the Nursing Program or a representative of the College of Health Sciences.

BLS Certification

Students are required to provide proof of successful completion of the American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) Healthcare Provider course prior to enrolling in each clinical nursing course each semester. A copy of the front and back of the signed BLS card must be on file in the either Nursing Program or the Registrar’s Office by the beginning of each semester. BLS courses are offered regularly in most

communities and by local healthcare agencies. Only the AHA's BLS card will be accepted.

Students are responsible for maintaining their BLS certification. In the event a certification is scheduled to expire mid-term, students must obtain renewed certification prior to the current certification expiration date and submit a signed copy to the College of BSN, Health Sciences and Human Services office. If the BLS card expires, students will not be allowed to continue in the clinical courses.

Professional Liability Insurance

Liability insurance coverage for BSN students is required. The liability insurance policy does not cover accidental injury to a student that may occur before, during, or after classes, lab, or clinical activities. Students are not covered by the liability policy when they travel to and from clinical sites in private automobiles. Students also need to be aware that liability insurance only provides coverage for liability while practicing as a student in Tusculum University's BSN program activities, and not as an employee of any healthcare institution.

Personal Health Insurance

Students are **required to obtain, carry, and maintain personal health insurance**, either as an individual or family coverage, as students are exposed to a variety of disease processes and hazards during clinical learning experiences. This is a requirement mandated by our clinical partners and they reserve the right to refuse clinical rotation to anyone without health insurance.

Confidentiality and Patient Privacy

BSN students have access to data of a sensitive and private nature about their patients. Students are expected to exercise good judgment in handling such information, while abiding by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Students will be educated and reminded about the principles of confidentiality and HIPAA policies and procedures at each orientation. If mandated by the agency, students will receive a copy of the clinical agency's policy and be required to sign the agency's confidentiality agreement.

Misuse of patient health information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Accessing the medical record information of any patient by someone who is not assigned to care for the patient,

- Discussing a patient's case in a public location,
- Discussing a patient's care with individuals not assigned to care for the patient,
- Removing confidential data from the clinical site in any format, and
- Posting any information on a patient's case, no matter how disguised, to a social media site.

Any student who witnesses or suspects a breach of confidentiality is expected to report the breach to their nursing faculty member. Students who violate the confidentiality policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the College and criminal charges.

Travel

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from clinical sites beginning the fourth semester (Spring semester of Sophomore year) of enrollment in the Nursing program. Tusculum University, the BSN Program, the Dean of the Nursing Program and/or faculty are not responsible for injuries sustained for student travel to and from the clinical agencies, while at the clinical agency or for the diagnosis and/or treatment of any illness or injury contracted while the student is in the clinical agency for clinical experiences.

Clinical Orientation

Every clinical facility has orientation requirements that all students are expected to know and follow, including an orientation for the facility's computerized documentation system. Clinical sites may require an all-day or partial day orientation that could include testing of students' understanding of the topics covered, as well as students' acknowledgment of the importance of being perceived as a professional representative of the clinical site. Some clinical sites may require students to read their employee handbooks and sign acknowledgements they understand the employee handbooks as well as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the federal privacy standards to protect patients' medical records, and other regulations regarding patient confidentiality.

Student Identification Badge

Students must regard their Tusculum University Nursing Program identification badge and/or agency identification badge as equivalent to a personal signature. Lending or using a badge belonging to someone else is prohibited and can result in disciplinary action.

Latex Allergy

Students will frequently be exposed to latex in the clinical setting or required to wear latex gloves when caring for patients/clients. All students should make their clinical faculty aware of any allergies they may have to latex, as special supplies would need to be ordered.

Medical Error/Incident Report Policy

Upon recognition of the error, the student, under the supervision of the clinical faculty member, must complete the clinical agency's Incident Report as per their policy and complete a BSN Program Incident Report. The report is signed by the student and faculty member and submitted to the appropriate agency personnel. The procedure for addressing the incident is as follows:

- The faculty member is accountable for appropriate disposition of the incident reports.
- The faculty member ensures completion and submission of the clinical agency's Incident Report.
- The faculty member submits the BSN Program Incident Report to the lead faculty member in the course.
- The faculty member will notify the Dean of the Nursing Program of the incident within 24 hours.
- The student is expected to contact the Lead faculty member within 24 hours to discuss the implications of the incident.
- After discussion of the incident, disciplinary or remedial action will be taken, if appropriate, by the Lead faculty member.
- The Lead faculty member will submit the College's incident report to the Dean and discuss with the Dean the follow-up actions taken.
- If Tusculum University Code of Conduct policies are implicated, the matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students for appropriate action (Note - students may be held accountable by both the Nursing Program and Tusculum University as they may be dismissed from the program and not the institution [just as they may be admitted to the institution and not the BSN Program]).

Blood Borne Pathogen or Tuberculosis Exposure

Post exposure evaluation and follow-up

1. A student has an ethical duty to report to the faculty member, Undergraduate Academic Director, or Dean any incident during which an exposure or potential exposure has occurred which places him/her at risk for transmission of a blood borne disease.

2. Following an accidental exposure or potential exposure to HBV, HCV, or HIV, CDC guidelines should be followed immediately. The exposed area should be washed thoroughly with soap and water. If mucous membrane exposure has occurred, the area should be flushed with copious amounts of water and/or saline.
3. CDC guidelines as outlined in the Updated U.S. Public Health Service Guideline for the Management of Occupational Exposure to HBV, HCV and HIV and Recommendations for Post Exposure Prophylaxis (CDC, MMWR, Recommendations and Reports, 2001) should be followed to determine risk factors for developing HBV, HVC, or HIV. A copy of this document will be housed in the office of the Undergraduate Academic Director.
4. Following exposure or accidental exposure, the student should be immediately HIV tested to establish sero-negativity. The CDC guidelines should be used to determine the need for follow-up testing for HBV, HCV or HIV.
5. If an exposure or potential exposure occurs, the student should contact their personal health care provider immediately to determine if treatment is recommended. Do not procrastinate.
6. Students are responsible for the cost of post exposure testing and follow-up testing or treatment.
7. Any other requirements of the health care agency in which the exposure occurs must be met.
8. Training records should be maintained with the date of sessions, time and person conducting the training. A copy of the complete regulations is available at: http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10051

Post –exposure Protocol for Blood Borne Pathogens

Faculty and students must report contact with potentially infectious material caused by breakage of intact skin, splash into the eyes or mouth, or exposure of non-intact skin. Potentially infectious agents include blood and blood products, semen, vaginal secretions, body fluids containing visible blood, other normally sterile body fluids (i.e. cerebrospinal fluid) and body organs and tissues other than skin. All body fluids in which it is difficult to determine the infectious nature should be considered contaminated. Applicants and students should review Appendix A, Blood Borne Pathogens and Transmission–Based Precautions.

Student and Faculty Responsibilities

- Immediately notify supervising faculty of the incident.
- Make an immediate report of the incident to the designated agency official and complete any documents required by the agency.

- Receive testing/treatment at the agency or report to the Nursing Program staff who will arrange treatment through the University (note - student assumes financial responsibility for testing and any follow-up treatment).
- Complete, with the supervising faculty, the nursing Program post-incident report form (see forms at end of handbook).

Post-exposure Protocol for Tuberculosis

- Notify the supervising faculty member of a confirmed exposure to Tuberculosis.
- Obtain a PPD skin test for baseline comparison. If the healthcare agency does not provide this service, it can be obtained for a nominal fee at the county health department.
- If the test is positive, seek medical care.
- Obtain a second PPD three months later. If the test is positive, a chest x-ray should be taken. At this time treatment options should be discussed with your physician.
- If the student has a current positive PPD, he or she should not have a PPD performed, but rather, wait three months and have a chest x-ray,
- Complete, with the assistance of the supervising faculty, the post-incident clinical agency and BSN Program reports.
- Student assumes financial responsibility for testing and any follow-up treatment.

Background

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has developed a set of regulations which address duties to protect both faculty and students in schools of nursing from exposure to blood borne pathogens (effective March 6, 1994). Because clinical sites are the primary location where possible exposure to infectious diseases may occur, Tusculum University has adopted the following policy to address this issue for all students and faculty involved in the care of patients in the clinical setting. Those personnel specifically addressed in this policy include those who have potential contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials in the performance of duties necessary to fulfill course objectives in the College of Nursing at Tusculum University. This policy has been developed to fulfill compliance with guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and recommendations set forth by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National League for Nursing, and OSHA.

Definitions

For purposes of clarification for this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

1. Blood: human blood, human blood components, and products made from human blood.

2. Blood-borne pathogens: pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
3. Contaminated: the presence or the reasonably anticipated presence of blood or other potentially infectious material on an item or surface.
4. Exposure incident: a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that results

Removal of a Student from Clinical

A student may be removed from participating in clinical experiences for multiple reasons, at the discretion of the faculty. The reasons for removal from clinical experiences include, but are not limited to:

- The student is unprepared to provide safe and effective care
- The student appears physically and/or psychologically ill
- The student appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- The student does not adhere to the dress code
- The student whose behavior is unprofessional
- Excessively tired
- The student demonstrates a pattern of behavior that is disruptive to others or prevents them from delivering safe patient care
- The student exceeds the scope of RN practice

If a student demonstrates behavior that is unfit for clinical practice, the faculty member will remove the student from the area and document the behavior. The faculty member will ask the student to explain his or her behavior/condition. After the student has explained the behavior/condition, the faculty member will make a determination as to whether the student should be sent home for the day or suspended from clinical activities. If suspended from clinical activities, the student must schedule a meeting with the Program Director or Dean.

Unsatisfactory Clinical Progress

An unsatisfactory clinical progress report may be initiated by a faculty member if the student is not progressing in meeting objectives in the clinical area. The faculty member will meet with the student to develop a remediation plan for satisfactory progress and make recommendations for remediation or correction. Failure of the student to complete the remediation plan and demonstrate appropriate remediation, correction and clinical progress will result in course failure and may result in dismissal from the program.

Student Employment in Healthcare Facility

All nursing students who work in jobs providing care to clients/patients in healthcare facilities that are not related to the nursing courses at Tusculum University work as independent contractors or employees of the healthcare facilities. Nursing students in the registered nurse pre-licensure program must remember they are not allowed to practice nursing activities or skills in individual job without a RN license, even though they have been evaluated to be competent with the skill by Tusculum University nursing faculty. Examples of nursing activities, or skills are administration of medications, starting IVs, completing a head-to-toe assessment, accepting telephone orders from physicians, etc.

Hazardous Chemical Right-to-Know Law

The Tennessee Hazardous Chemical Right-to-Know Law requires employers to provide information on hazardous chemicals to employees who work with such chemicals and to train employees on physical and health hazards. A copy of the Right-to-Know Law is posted in every major clinical facility. Documentation of understanding this law is required to be on file to participate in any clinical course.

Loss of Personal Property

Tusculum University, the clinical agencies, the Dean of the nursing program and/or nursing faculty are not liable for loss of student personal property brought to the clinical agency.

Student Employment Hours

Students should not work after 11:00 pm the night before a clinical assignment. Students presenting to the clinical assignment appearing excessively tired (excessive yawning with inability to concentrate, falling asleep, etc.) will be dismissed from the clinical agency at the discretion of the faculty.

Appendices

Appendix A: Blood Borne Pathogens and Transmission-Based American Nurses Association, 2015

Precautions

Faculty and students, as a result of performing their learning and instructional activities, might engage in activities where exposure to blood and other potentially infectious material may occur. Faculty and students are expected to take necessary precautions to avoid direct contact with body fluids except when necessary. Universal Precautions are to be observed to protect faculty, students and others from contact with potentially infectious materials. These precautions are to be followed at all times and include:

1. Washing hands after touching blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions and contaminated items regardless of whether gloves are worn. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed, between patient contacts and whenever indicated to prevent the transmission of microorganisms to self or patients. Use plain soap for routine hand washing and an antimicrobial agent for specific conditions.
2. Wear clean, non-sterile gloves when touching blood, body fluids, excretions or secretions, contaminated items, mucous membranes or non-intact skin. Change gloves between procedures on the same patient as necessary and remove gloves promptly and dispose of properly after use.
3. Wear mask, eye protection or face shield during procedures that are likely to cause splashes of blood or body fluids. Use protective clothing to protect skin and soiling of clothing.
4. Contaminated needles or other sharps should not be bent, recapped or removed. When applicable, activate safety devices. These items should be placed in puncture-resistant, leak-proof container that has been labeled and color-coded.
5. Handle, transport and process linen soiled with blood and body fluids and other bodily products in a manner that prevents skin and mucous membrane exposure, contamination of clothing and transfer of microorganisms.
6. Eating, drinking, smoking, and applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in areas of likely occupational exposure.
7. Food or drinks should not be kept in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets, desktops or countertops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present. Food and drinks are to be stored and consumed in designated areas only.
8. Use adequate environmental controls to ensure routine cleaning, care and disinfection procedures are followed.

9. The agency should assure that appropriate personal protective equipment is readily available on site or issued to faculty and students. Alternative gloves should be accessible if the individual is allergic to the type normally provided.
10. Training records should be maintained with the date of sessions, time and person conducting the training. A copy of the complete regulations is available at:
http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10051

Forms

Tusculum University Incident Form



Date of Incident _____ Time _____

Name _____

Student ID _____ Phone _____

Date of Incident _____ Clinical Agency _____

Location of the Incident: _____

Type of Exposure: Bloodborne Pathogen _____ Tuberculosis _____

Other _____

Notification of Supervising Faculty: Time _____ Date: _____

Notification of Clinical Agency: Time: _____ Date: _____

Student's Acceptance of Treatment: Yes _____ No _____

Description of Incident:

Description of Treatment Received:

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Supervising Faculty Signature _____ Date _____