



ROBERT E. SMITH  
SCHOOL OF NURSING

## Code of Ethical & Professional Conduct

The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing is a professional program, and as such, the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct are expected. As members of the Nursing Profession, you and I share an obligation to adhere to core values, in essence to do what is right. Delta State University Robert E. Smith School of Nursing believes every nurse recognizes and accepts a specific obligation as a member of the professional nursing community. Our duty is to maintain an environment supportive of personal growth, as well as to ensure safe and effective health care to the public. The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing adheres to the Code of Conduct throughout all educational endeavors and activities. This code is based on the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics (2025) and is an integral part of student nurse development and professional performance.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

- **Be Accountable and Responsible**
- **Demonstrate Professional Behavior**
- **Maintain Academic Honesty**

# **Be Accountable and Responsible**

Nurses are accountable and must accept responsibility for their actions. It is our obligation and duty to adhere to the American Nurses' Association (ANA) Code of Ethics (2025) and the ANA Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (2021), <https://www.nursingworld.org/>.

## **American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics**

### **Nurse to Patient Provision:**

- Provision 1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- Provision 2. A nurses' primary commitment is to the recipient(s) of nursing care, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
- Provision 3. The nurse establishes a trusting relationship and advocates for the rights, health, and safety of recipient(s) of nursing care.

### **Nurse to Nurse Provision:**

- Provision 4. Nurses have authority over nursing practice and are responsible and accountable for their practice consistent with their obligations to promote health, prevent illness, and provide optimal care.
- Provision 5. The nurse has moral duties to self as a person of inherent dignity and worth including an expectation of a safe place to work that fosters flourishing, authenticity of self at work, and self-respect through integrity and professional competence.
- Provision 6. Nurses, through individual and collective effort, establish, maintain, and improve the ethical environment of the work setting that affects nursing care and the well-being of nurses.

### **Nurse to Profession Provision:**

- Provision 7. Nurses advance the profession through multiple approaches to knowledge development, professional standards, and the generation of policies for nursing, health, and social concerns.

### **Nurse to Others Provision:**

- Provision 8. Nurses build collaborative relationships and networks with nurses, other

healthcare and non-healthcare disciplines, and the public to achieve greater ends.

#### **Nurse to Society Provision:**

Provision 9. Nurses and their professional organizations work to enact and resource practices, policies, and legislation to promote social justice, eliminate health inequities, and facilitate human flourishing.

#### **Nurse to Global Community Provision:**

Provision 10. Nursing, through organizations and associations, participates in the global nursing and health community to promote human and environmental health, well-being, and flourishing.

### **Standards of Practice**

- Standard 1. Assessment
- Standard 2. Diagnosis
- Standard 3. Outcomes Identification
- Standard 4. Planning
- Standard 5. Implementation
- Standard 6. Evaluation

### **Standards of Professional Performance**

- Standard 7. Ethics
- Standard 8. Advocacy
- Standard 9. Respectful and Equitable Practice
- Standard 10. Communication
- Standard 11. Collaboration
- Standard 12. Leadership
- Standard 13. Education
- Standard 14. Scholarly Inquiry
- Standard 15. Quality of Practice
- Standard 16. Professional Practice Evaluation
- Standard 17. Resource Stewardship
- Standard 18. Environmental Health

## **Demonstrate Professional Behavior**

Each student will demonstrate professional behaviors as reflected by the Standards of Practice. This includes being punctual for required activities and respectful of others. Students of the DSU Robert E. Smith School of Nursing must fulfill the obligation to establish relationships and deliver nursing services with respect for human needs and values and without prejudice. Furthermore, students will fulfill roles including advocate, direct care provider, and educator while treating colleagues, faculty, physicians, nurses, and assistants with respect and compassion.

While in the role of student nurse, each student will display behaviors indicative of the program they represent. Students are expected to carry themselves in a manner that represents the values and beliefs of the nursing profession and the DSU Robert E. Smith School of Nursing. In order to exhibit the quality and caliber of professionalism deemed appropriate for the DSU student nurse, it is expected that the student will display professional behaviors addressed in this code. Students will not use profanities, or inappropriate gestures nor treat those for whom care is provided in disrespectful ways realizing that diverse care recipients have different values and must be respected. The student will display a caring and compassionate attitude when providing care for any recipient.

Clinical experiences are vital to student nurse education; therefore, students should attend **all** clinical assignments. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to administer safe and appropriate nursing care. Any student reporting to the clinical area under the influence of any substance, whether prescribed or illicit that may interfere with the cognitive and/or physical ability to render safe patient care will be sent home and reprimanded according to school policy.

Students must maintain confidentiality and privacy according to all HIPAA and healthcare policies and regulations. All verbal, electronic, and written information relating to patients and agencies is considered confidential and is not to be copied or discussed with anyone. Examples of misconduct include speaking about patients after hours, taking pictures of patients without their consent, and/or discussing patients on any social network. A breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action, up to and/or including possible dismissal from the DSU Robert E. Smith School of Nursing.

Nursing students must understand the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. These boundaries exist between the student, instructor, agency, and care recipient. Students who give care to recipients must do so in a professional manner because recipients deserve nurses who act in their best interest and who respect their dignity. Boundary violations occur when students confuse the needs of the care recipient with those of the student. These violations usually occur when there is excessive personal disclosure by the student nurse. This could also be considered when a patient tries to give the student payment or gifts for care rendered.

Other examples of serious violations include but are not limited to illegally removing

healthcare agency or care recipient property from the premises, destruction to any healthcare agency or recipient property, falsifying or fabricating clinical experiences, calling in sick for clinical under false pretenses, arriving late to clinical experiences and documenting nursing care that was not performed or in advance of performance is grounds for disciplinary action by the school or even possibly the Board of Nursing.

## **Maintain Academic Honesty**

The DSU nursing student is expected to abide by the DSU Academic Honesty Policy, <https://deltastate.policystat.com/policy/14769733/latest> .

## **Sanctions**

The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing upholds high standards of academic and professional conduct. In accordance with the *Code of Ethical & Professional Conduct*, students who fail to adhere to these standards may be subject to the following sanctions, as deemed appropriate by the disciplinary panel, which may include an instructor, program coordinator, Chair of Nursing, or the Dean:

### **1. Reprimand**

- An official written warning issued to the student. The reprimand will inform the student that the continuation or repetition of the wrongful conduct may result in further disciplinary actions. It serves as an initial corrective measure.

### **2. Probation**

- A written notice will be issued to the student, explaining the serious nature of the violation. The probationary status will outline the terms under which the student must operate to continue their enrollment at the School of Nursing. The student will be monitored, and any subsequent violations during the probationary period may lead to more severe sanctions, such as expulsion.

### **3. Suspension**

- Suspension involves the exclusion of the student from attending classes, participating in any related academic activities, and using privileges within the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and throughout the DSU community. The student may be temporarily banned from accessing campus facilities and services, such as the library and student organizations, for a specified period.

### **Difference between Probation and Suspension:**

- **Probation** is a status that allows the student to continue their academic work under close scrutiny, with clear expectations for future conduct.
- **Suspension** removes the student from the academic environment for a set period, during which the student is prohibited from engaging in classes or activities.

#### **4. Second Offenses**

- In the event of a second violation of the *Code of Ethical & Professional Conduct*, the student may face expulsion from the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing. This applies to students who repeatedly fail to meet academic or behavioral expectations as outlined by the institution.

#### **5. Expulsion**

- Expulsion is the permanent termination of the student's admission and enrollment status at the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing. Expulsion results in the student being permanently barred from continuing their studies at the school.

#### **6. Campus and/or Community Service**

- As an alternative or supplementary sanction, the student may be required to perform a specified period of community service. This service will be provided to a nonprofit community agency or to the student affairs office, as determined by the disciplinary committee. The goal is to promote restorative justice and contribute positively to the community.

#### **7. Restitution**

- Students may be required to reimburse or replace property that has been damaged or lost due to their misconduct. Restitution will be determined based on the extent of the damage or loss, and the student will be given a deadline for full payment or replacement.

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This policy ensures that all students at the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing are held to a high standard of conduct, with consequences designed to be fair, transparent, and proportional to the severity of the violation. In extreme cases, any violation of the *Code of Ethical & Professional Conduct* may lead directly to expulsion from the School of Nursing.

## **Procedure for Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Action**

- An allegation of ethical and professional misconduct may be made by other students, faculty, staff, care recipients, visitors, or any member of an agency that has a verbal or written agreement to provide learning experiences for students.
- The allegation of misconduct should be submitted in written form to the Chair of Nursing (CON). The allegation of misconduct must include:
  - Date, time, location, and description of the incident
  - Names of all parties involved and witnesses
  - Supporting facts and justification for the complaint
  - Brief description of efforts to resolve the complaint (if feasible)
  - Date and signature of the person making the allegation of misconduct
- If the CON is able to determine that the allegations are without merit, the CON may dismiss the charge and shall report to the Dean the facts upon which the decision is based.
- If a charge is believed to have substance, the CON will duly notify the student in writing within 12 working days of the allegation of misconduct. The notice will include a copy of the allegation of misconduct and establish the date, time, and location for a conference between the CON and the student. The student will be asked to bring any supporting documentation to disprove the misconduct allegation.
- The CON may also establish a time to confer with the person making the allegation of misconduct.
- Following the conference between the CON and student, the CON will notify the student in writing within 12 working days of the disciplinary sanction and the student's right to request a hearing. This written request for a hearing must be made within 10 working days of receipt of the letter indicating the disciplinary sanction.
- If a hearing is requested by the student, the CON will appoint a hearing panel of three (3) faculty members within five working days of receipt of the hearing request.
- The hearing panel will select a Chairman who will notify the student in writing of the established date, time, and location of the hearing.
- After hearing statements and reviewing supporting documentation, the hearing panel will make a written recommendation to the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing Dean.
- The Robert E. Smith School of Nursing Dean will review the written recommendation and make a decision. The student will be notified in writing within 12 working days of the recommendation receipt from the hearing panel.
- If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the student is entitled to continue with any grievance by following the appropriate University Grievance Policy (s) as found below:



- 1) **Grievance Policy-Academic- Undergraduate:** The student will begin at this time at step #3 of the policy found on the website under university policies at [Viewing Grievance Policy – Academic – Undergraduate](#)
- 2) **Grievance Policy-Academic- Graduate:** The student will begin at this time at step #3 of the policy found on the website under university policies at [Viewing Grievance Policy – Academic – Graduate](#)
- 3) **Grievance Policy, Non-Academic** found on the website under university policies at [Viewing Student Grievance](#)

**I understand the Delta State University Robert E. Smith School of Nursing Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct is consistent with the ethical obligations of nursing and pledge to uphold the Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct by abstaining from dishonesty, deceit, fraud, or unprofessional behaviors.**

**I understand that my adherence to the Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct is an appropriate requisite for enrollment and participation in this nursing program.**

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**Student Signature**

**Date**