



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 community of nursing. 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 (2015) and is an integral part of student 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 (2015) and the ANA Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (2015), <https://www.nursingworld.org/>.

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

- Provision 1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- Provision 2. The nurses' primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
- Provision 3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health and safety of the patient.
- Provision 4. The nurse has authority, accountability and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to provide optimal patient care.
- Provision 5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
- Provision 6. The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
- Provision 7. The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
- Provision 8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
- Provision 9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

## **Standards of Practice**

- Standard 1. Assessment
- Standard 2. Diagnosis
- Standard 3. Outcomes Identification
- Standard 4. Planning
- Standard 5. Implementation
- Standard 5A. Coordination of Care
- Standard 5B. Health Teaching and Health Promotion
- Standard 6. Evaluation

## **Standards of Professional Performance**

- Standard 7. Ethics
- Standard 8. Culturally Congruent Practice
- Standard 9. Communication
- Standard 10. Collaboration
- Standard 11. Leadership
- Standard 12. Education
- Standard 13. Evidence-based Practice and Research
- Standard 14. Quality of Practice
- Standard 15. Professional Practice Evaluation
- Standard 16. Resource Utilization
- Standard 17. Environmental Health

## Demonstrate Professional Behavior

Each student will demonstrate professional behaviors as reflected by the Standards of Professional Performance and Standards of Care. This includes being punctual for required activities as well as be 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 that are 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 clients have different values and must be respected. The student will display a caring and compassionate attitude when providing care for any patient.

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 health care policies and regulations. All verbal, electronic and written information relating to patients and agencies are considered confidential and are 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 Facebook or other social networks. 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 patient. Students who give care to patients must do so in a professional manner because patients deserve nurses who act in their best interest and who respect their dignity. Boundary violations occur when students confuse the needs of the patient with those of the student. These violations usually occur when there is excessive personal disclosure by the student nurse. This could also be considered as 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 patient property from the premises, destruction to any healthcare agency or patient 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, <http://www.deltastate.edu/policies/policy/university-policies/academics-students/academic-honesty/>.

## **Sanctions**

- Reprimand – official warning in writing that continuation or repetition of wrongful conduct may result in further disciplinary action.
- Probation – written notice explaining the serious nature of the case and outlining the terms of the probationary status.
- Campus and/or Community Service – requirement that services will be offered for a specified period to an appropriate nonprofit community agency and/or to the student affairs office.
- Restitution – reimbursement for damage to or loss of property which occurred as a result of the misconduct.
- Suspension – exclusion from classes, enrollment, and other privileges in the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and throughout the DSU community.
- Expulsion – permanent termination of admission and enrollment status in the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing.
- Second offenses –expulsion from the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing will result for students who are proven to have violated any of the standards set forth in the Code of Ethical & Professional Conduct.

Disciplinary actions, to include expulsion and suspension, shall be included in the student's permanent academic record.

# Procedure for Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Action

- An allegation of ethical and professional misconduct may be made by other students, faculty, staff, clients/patients, 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 #4 of the policy found on the website under university policies at <http://www.deltastate.edu/policies/policy/university-policies/academics-students/grievance-policy-academic-undergraduate/>.

2) **Grievance Policy-Academic- Graduate:** The student will begin at this time at step #4 of the policy found on the website under university policies at <http://www.deltastate.edu/policies/policy/university-policies/academics-students/grievance-policy-academic-graduate/>.

3) **Grievance Policy, Non-Academic** found on the website under university policies at <http://www.deltastate.edu/policies/policy/university-policies/student-affairs/rights-and-responsibilities/grievance-policy-non-academic-issues/>.



**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**