

Delta State University
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 (2001) and is an integral part of student development and professional performance.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- ***Be Accountable And Responsible***
- ***Demonstrate Professional Behavior***
- ***Maintain Academic Honesty***
- ***Dress Appropriately***
- ***Demonstrate Respect***

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 Code of Ethics (2001).

American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.
4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality

- health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration and knowledge development.
 8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
 9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

Standards of Professional Performance

1. Quality of care: The nurse systematically evaluates the quality and effectiveness of nursing practice.
2. Performance Appraisal: The nurse evaluates one's own nursing practice in relation to professional practice standards and relevant statutes and regulations.
3. Education: The nurse acquires and maintains current knowledge and competency in nursing practice.
4. Collegiality: The nurse interacts with, and contributes to the professional development of peers and other health care providers as colleagues.
5. Ethics: The nurse uses ethical principles when making decisions regarding patient care.
6. Collaboration: The nurse collaborates with the patient, family and other health care providers in providing patient care.
7. Research: The nurse uses research findings in practice.

8. Resource Utilization: The nurse considers factors related to safety, effectiveness and cost in planning and delivering patient care

Standards of Care

1. Assessment: The nurse collects patient health data
2. Diagnosis: The nurse analyzes the assessment data in determining nursing diagnosis
3. Outcome Identification: The nurse identifies expected outcomes individualized to the patient
4. Planning: The nurse develops a plan of care that prescribes interventions to attain expected outcomes
5. Implementation: The nurse implements the plan of care in a safe and competent manner within their scope of practice
6. Evaluation: The nurse evaluates the patient's progress towards attainment of outcomes

Demonstrates Professional Behavior

Each student will be expected to demonstrate professional behavior 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” (adapted from Provision 1, Section 1.2 of the American Nurses’ Association *Code of Ethics*). 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 is expected to 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.

Clinical experiences are vital to student nurse education; therefore, students are expected to attend **all** clinical assignments. The student will display a caring and compassionate attitude when providing care for any patient. Students must maintain confidentiality and privacy according to all HIPAA and health care policies and regulations.

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. 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

charting nursing care that was not performed. Documenting 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 required to submit original written work as part of meeting degree requirements. While it is necessary to use other resources to complete these assignments, plagiarism goes against ethical standards. Any sources used for assignments must be properly cited. Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated and may result in the failure of the course or dismissal from the program as deemed by faculty and COAP.

Examples of violations include but are not limited to the following:

1. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid on tests and examinations. Unauthorized aid involves:
 - Providing or developing written or recorded notes of specific exam questions after taking an exam
 - Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance or working in groups while taking online quizzes, exams or other assignments
 - Observing another student's work or revealing one's own work to another student during any exam
 - Obtaining, reproducing and/or distributing a partial or full copy of any assignment or examination without written consent from faculty. Furthermore, a student should not copy any portion of course content presented by another student in course assignments. This is a breach of confidentiality of course content and discourages the student from freely presenting ideas and thoughts

into course discussions that may be used against a student in any way.

Students are required to maintain confidentiality of other students' materials just as they maintain confidentiality of patient records. We encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings.

- Using exam material received from others, without faculty verification that use of the material has been approved
- Using technological devices as a method to retrieve information during or after an examination.

2. Misrepresenting information includes:

- Plagiarism
- Submitting work that was completed by another person or persons
- Altering transcripts or university records
- Documenting something on the patient's record that was not done or done incorrectly.

3. Professional Boundaries

- 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 tried to give the student payment or gifts for care rendered.

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA): 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.

Dress Appropriately

The student's dress and attitudes must reflect professional appearance and behavior.

However, we recognize that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of their personal style and individual preference. Students may freely choose daily apparel that demonstrates individuality, as well as maintain the standards of appropriateness both within the Delta State University Robert E. Smith School of Nursing and the community.

- Attire will be neat, clean, in good condition and appropriate for the environment and activity.
- Shoes will be worn at all times.
- Appropriate undergarments will be worn and not exposed.
- Hair is neat, clean with no un-natural colors (green, purple, blue etc).
- Tattoos are to be covered at all times.

- Unacceptable attire includes but is not limited to: overly tight garments, bare midriff styles, extremely short skirts, halter tops; t-shirt with unacceptable designs and slogans, tank tops; low cut or off shoulder styles, and tights/leggings worn as pants.
- For the clinical setting the student will adhere to the guidelines in the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing Undergraduate and Graduate Student Handbooks.

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 Academic Programs (COAP). 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 COAP is able to determine that the allegations are without merit, the COAP 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 COAP 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 COAP and the student. The student will be asked to bring any supporting documentation to disprove the misconduct allegation.
- The COAP may also establish a time to confer with the person making the allegation of misconduct.
 - Following the conference between the COAP and student, the COAP 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 COAP 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 RESSON Dean.
 - The RESSON 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 <http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/2473.asp?manid={E78680D7-32C6-4D05-AC0F-A6E60F214190}&id={A093D004-4961-49DB-A03C-850E1D8541E7}>
- 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 <http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/2473.asp?manid={E78680D7-32C6-4D05-AC0F-A6E60F214190}&id={8B4E259A-74AB-4061-84C3-702E613617B5}>
- 3.) Grievance Policy, Non-Academic found on the website under DSU Student Handbook found on the website at <http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/368.asp>.

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.

Student Signature

Witness

Date