

**TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING  
PROGRAM STANDARDS**

Upholding the standards of professional nursing is the responsibility of nurse educators. We, the faculty of Tarleton State University, in order to fulfill our obligation to the public, believe that a student of professional nursing requires socialization into the nursing role while engaging in the education process. Professional nursing requires critical thinking, communication and assessment skills and the demonstration of a balance of intelligence, confidence, understanding, and compassion. Membership in the profession requires the development of an appropriate set of values and an ethical framework. The person who seeks licensure to practice as a professional nurse must be able to consistently act in the best interest of patients/clients and the public in any practice setting.

The following standards of professional behavior are adopted by the faculty and will be utilized to monitor a student's socialization process while in the Tarleton State University Department of Nursing program.

This faculty view unprofessional behavior as any activity that would bring discredit to Tarleton State University, the Tarleton State University Department of Nursing, or the profession of nursing. Any faculty member may counsel with any nursing student observed engaged in such behavior and initiate action appropriate to the violation including, but not limited to, course failure or dismissal from the nursing program.

**Standards**

Honesty and ethical behavior  
Accountability  
Confidentiality  
Professional conduct and courtesy  
Safety  
Responsibility within the academic institution and clinical agency  
Competency and growth

**Description of Standards**

**Honesty and Ethical Behavior**

The student must develop the ability to consistently conform his or her conduct to the requirements of the Texas Nurse Practice Act, the Texas Board of Nurses Examiners rules and regulations and generally accepted standards of professional nursing practice including the American Nurses Association Code for Nurses (ANA, 1985). The student is expected to exhibit good professional character which, according to the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners, is an integrated pattern of personal, academic, and occupational behavior which includes, but is not limited to, honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity. The Board indicates that the person with good professional character (Section 213.27, 9/1/99):

- is able to distinguish right from wrong;
- is able to think and act rationally;
- is able to keep promises and honor obligations.
- is accountable for his or her own behavior
- is able to practice nursing in an autonomous role with patients/clients, their families and significant others and members of the public who are or who may become physically, emotionally or financial vulnerable;
- is able to recognize and honor the interpersonal boundaries appropriate to any therapeutic relationship or health care setting; and
- is able to promptly and fully self-disclose facts, circumstances, events, errors and omissions when such disclosure could enhance the health status of patient/clients or the public or could protect patient/clients or the public from unnecessary risk of harm.

### **Accountability**

*Accountability* is the obligation to account for one's actions, accepting responsibility for them, and offer justifiable answers and explanation for those actions. *Accountability* can involve what the student chooses to do (acts of commission) and what the student chooses not to do (acts of omission).

### **Professional Conduct and Courtesy**

Each student represents the University and the Department of Nursing at all times. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect favorably on the University and the Department of Nursing. Acceptable conduct is based on consideration for the rights of others and proper self-respect. The student is expected to display courteous behavior toward whomever they encounter; flexibility; openness to learning; tolerance of diversity of thought and behavior; effective communication; tactful and thoughtful responses to constructive criticism; and active listening.

### **Confidentiality**

*Confidentiality* involves respecting the privacy of others. This highlights the implied trust between nursing and society. The student is expected to safeguard confidential knowledge to the limit of safety and welfare of all persons involved. The guiding principle with respect to divulging confidential knowledge is the person's bona fide "need to know".

### **Safety**

*Safety* means being free from danger, risk, or injury. *Safety* involves protecting oneself and others from harm. Students are expected to evaluate their performance continuously as to the degree to which it preserves or threatens safety. Legal and professional standards of practice provide the framework to learn and judge safe practice.

Unsafe clinical practice is deemed any act of omission or commission, which may result in harm to self or others. Examples of unsafe practice may include, but are not limited to actions that

- violate or threaten the physical, psychological, microbiological, chemical, or thermal safety of the patient/client;

- violate previously mastered principles/learning/objectives in carrying out nursing care skills and/or delegated medical function;
- demonstrate inappropriate independence in action or decisions;
- violate current CDC guidelines for infection control;
- demonstrate non-recognition of own limitations, incompetence and/or legal responsibilities;
- demonstrate disregard of moral and legal responsibility for his/her own actions, thereby violating professional integrity as expressed in the ANA Code for Nurses and the state nurse practice act;
- demonstrate a state of unpreparedness for participation in the assigned clinical setting;
- reflect an impaired condition as determined by clinical faculty.

### **Responsibility Within the Academic Institution and Clinical Agency**

*Responsibility* means reliability and trustworthiness. The student nurse is expected to adhere to policies/procedures and guidelines listed in the TSU Student Handbook, TSU Department of Nursing Student Handbook, Tarleton catalog, and course syllabi. The student nurse is also expected to comply with policies and procedures of the assigned clinical agency.

The following items are examples of student responsibilities. The student is expected to

- comply with required clinical dress code in all clinical settings;
- arrive at clinical on time and prepared to care for the assigned patient/client;
- notify, in a timely manner and according to guidelines, faculty and clinical agency of tardiness or absence;
- provide appropriate documentation of immunizations, CPR, etc;
- complete pre- and co-requisite courses;
- complete course assignments by due date and according to guidelines;
- check bulletin boards and mailbox for program and course information.

### **Competency and Growth**

*Competency* is possessing proper qualifications to perform safely and capably in the professional nurse role. In fulfilling their contract with society, nurses must continually learn and grow in order to maintain competent practice. This requires an ongoing commitment by the nurse to assess his/her practice, to identify areas requiring growth, and to actively engage in the process of change for improvement or maintenance of quality. Competency is integral to safe nursing practice. Students of nursing, likewise, have the obligation to assess their practice, accept educational feedback and strive to incorporate this into competent practice as student nurses. Refusal to participate in this process is an abrogation of professional responsibility at its most basic level.

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