



Department of Nursing
Policy #009

Professionalism

Status:	Approved 7.13.2017 Revised 2.15.2019
Effective:	2.15.2019
Initiated by:	Bylaws and Policy Committee
Relevant WAC/ Standards/References:	WAC 246-840-519 WAC 246-840-700 WAC 246-840-710 ANA Code for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, 2015 NSNA Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct., 2017

Purpose

The education of the students in the Heritage University BSN Program is based on the concept that integrity, sense of responsibility, and self-discipline are inherent to the profession of nursing. The responsibility of the individual student to sustain high ethical standards is parallel to the concept that the professional nurse must be accountable for professional standards in the practice of nursing (American Nurses Association Code for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, 2015). The continuation and enhancement of ethical standards within the academic community and nursing profession are the individual responsibility of each student and faculty member. Mutual respect and trustworthiness between the faculty and students promote optimal learning.

Nursing students at Heritage University are expected to exhibit behavior appropriate to the profession of nursing. They must assume personal responsibility for being in physical and mental condition to provide safe nursing care and for the knowledge and skills necessary to give this care. The purpose of this policy is to provide the student with information to meet these expectations.

Policies and Procedures

The Professionalism policy applies to all students enrolled in the Heritage University BSN Program. In addition, the Professionalism policy covers all student nonacademic and extracurricular activities that have an adverse impact on the university, the BSN Program, faculty, staff, students, patients, clinical staff, or impacts fitness for the profession and eligibility for licensure regardless of whether the activity takes place on or off campus.

Students enrolled in the Heritage University BSN Program must conduct themselves so as to conform to the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) Washington Administrative Code (WAC 246-840-700), Standards of Nursing Conduct or Practice, the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements (2015); and the National Student Nurses' Association Code of Ethics.

Professionalism

Nursing professionalism is comprised of behaviors, practices, and communication styles that demonstrate core values of nurses working to achieve optimal health outcomes in patients, families, and communities. This includes conduct that applies the principles of altruism, excellence, caring, ethics, respect, communication, and accountability. Students learn these principles through self-assessment, self-reflection, responsible learning, accountability, effective communication and continuous professional engagement. Unprofessional behavior may be addressed through the Heritage University Student Code of Conduct.

Safety

Safety is inherent in professionalism. The term patient safety means “the prevention of harm to patients.” It includes human factors, teamwork, communication, patient management and clinical performance.

Expected Student Behaviors

1. **Communication** is the exchange of ideas, thoughts or feelings by verbal and non-verbal actions. Verbal and written communication includes clear, coherent, timely, honest, concise, and patient-centered communication. Students are encouraged to develop pronunciation, pitch and intonation appropriate for the environment. Non-verbal skills include gestures that are appropriate and employ the skill of listening to assimilate information. Cultural awareness builds upon identifying issues to alleviate communication obstacles resulting from health literacy, disparities, authority gradients, cultural differences and language barriers.
2. **Self-Awareness** is the ability to recognize and look at inner thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different feelings, label them appropriately and then use emotional information to guide behavior. Through self-evaluation and validation of feedback students will reflect upon experiences summarizing accurately strengths and learning needs to build confidence with realistic perspectives about capabilities. Students are held accountable to defend their perspective, including unpopular or unsafe practices.
3. **Self-Care** is promoting and maintaining personal well-being. Students enter the nursing program knowing they must take responsibility for their own physical and emotional health. This includes demonstrating sensory capabilities or appropriate compensation and the ability to perform the physical requirements of clinical practice. It is the students' responsibility to acquire adequate rest, nutrition and hydration, and manage personal stress.
4. **Responsible Learning** is demonstrated by taking control and ownership for learning. This is displayed by being engaged in academic tasks, persistent in self-learning, seeking feedback and notifying faculty if not achieving course or program objectives. Efforts are made to follow the agency's clinical policies, procedures and principles by adhering to submission of clinical requirements. Students must practice within their scope of knowledge and skills, and recognize personal limitations while working only under the appropriate supervision.
5. **Professional Image** is the appearance of an individual or profession outside the discipline. Students are guided to uphold a positive professional image by portraying a compassionate demeanor and demonstrating a respect of others with behaviors that are focused on patient care and learning. Students entering the program will be cordial to peers and demonstrate flexibility, professional etiquette and civility. They will adhere to Policy # 039 Dress Code or the agency's policies along with the HU Student Code of Conduct.

Students are accountable to explain and justify their intentions, actions and omissions. Students are guided in their development of professional behaviors, yet are responsible to demonstrate the competencies listed above. Demonstrating professional behavior is required for passing in all didactic/laboratory/clinical practice settings regardless of performance in other areas or grade in the course.

Definitions of Unacceptable Behavior

The following behaviors are examples of violations of the Professionalism Policy. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive of behaviors that violate basic ethical or professional standards expected of Nursing Students. In addition, attempts at misconduct as well as completed acts are violations of the Professionalism Policy.

1. **Plagiarism** Taking credit for someone else's work or ideas regardless of the media, stealing others' results or methods, copying the writing of others without proper citations, quotation marks, or other forms of proper acknowledgment, or otherwise taking credit falsely.
2. **Cheating** Using or attempts to use unauthorized notes, study aids, technology, and/or information from another person on an examination, report, paper, or other evaluative document; unauthorized altering of a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading; and allowing another person to do all or part of one's work and to submit the work under one's own name.
3. **Falsification of data** Dishonesty in reporting results, ranging from sheer fabrication of data, improper adjustment of results, and gross negligence in collecting and analyzing data, to selective reporting or omission of conflicting data for deceptive purposes.
4. **Falsification of data or information to university officials, faculty members, staff, or clinical areas** Dishonesty in reporting either verbally or in written material, false data or information.
5. **Aiding and abetting dishonesty** Providing material, information, or assistance to another person with the knowledge or reasonable expectation that the material, information, or assistance will be used to commit an act that would be prohibited by this policy or that is prohibited by law or another applicable code of conduct. Students are responsible for reporting cheating or dishonesty if they observe a breach therein.
6. **Violating instructions regarding completion of assignments** Although independent study is recognized as a primary method of effective learning, at times students benefit from studying together and discussing home assignments and laboratory experiments. When any material is to be turned in for inspection, grading or evaluation, it is the responsibility of the student to ascertain what cooperation, if any, between them, is permitted by the instructor.
7. **Falsification of academic records and official documents** Without proper authorization, altering documents affecting academic records, forging signatures of authorization, or falsifying information on an official academic document, election form, grade report, letter of permission, petition, clinical record or any other official University document.
8. **Misuse of technology** This includes the unauthorized use of electronic instruments, such as computers, tablets, cell phones, or translators to access or share information; use of electronic instruments during a didactic/laboratory/clinical course that is not related to current course activity; electronic falsification of information/records; posting or blogging Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or other such information on social media/public sites; posting "fake" information on social media/public sites; electronic harassment/cyberbullying/stalking; sexting; and use of or viewing nudity or sexual acts without a person's knowledge or permission.

9. **Providing nursing care in an unsafe or harmful manner** This includes carrying out a procedure without competence or without the guidance of a qualified person; willfully or intentionally doing physical and/or mental harm to a patient; exhibiting careless or negligent behavior in connection with the care of a patient; refusing to assume the assigned and necessary care of a patient and failing to inform the instructor and nursing staff with immediacy so that an alternative measure for that care can be found.
10. **Disrespecting the privacy of a patient or family member** This includes using sufficient information about a patient (e.g. full name, last name, or position) in written assignments and/or patient data of any sort (e.g. computer-generated forms that will be removed from the clinical area) such that the patient could be identified; discussing confidential information in inappropriate areas, such as elevators; discussing confidential information about a patient with third parties who do not have a clear and legitimate need to know; violation of HIPAA; and referencing patients or family members on social networking sites and devices.
11. **Falsifying patient records or fabricating nursing care or patient experiences** This includes fabrication in written materials and verbal reports for the clinical area as well as written material and verbal reports for the BSN Program.
12. **Failing to report omission of or error in treatment or medications** Failure to report the omission or error to the appropriate people, including clinical staff, clinical administration, and BSN Program faculty.
13. **Using drugs and/or alcohol** Using, possessing, selling or distributing drugs (including prescription drugs) or alcohol; illegally using, selling, possessing, or distributing drugs or alcohol; or using prescribed, over the counter, or illicit substances in such a manner as to impair one's judgment or performance as a nursing student, including being in a class or clinical setting under the influence of alcohol, legal or illegal drugs, or prescribed drugs inconsistent with the prescribed use.
14. **Commission of a crime** Engaging in illegal or criminal activity that would impact the student's ability to obtain or maintain a professional license or employment in the nursing profession. The results of criminal proceedings will not be determinative of proceedings under this Professionalism Policy.
15. **Other professional misconduct** Violation of the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015) or NSNA Code of Ethics (2017) is unacceptable. Nursing students are expected to "maintain compassionate and caring relationships with colleagues and others with a commitment to the fair treatment of individuals, to integrity-preserving compromise, and to resolving conflict. This standard of conduct precludes any and all prejudicial actions, any form of harassment or threatening behavior, or disregard for the effect of one's actions on others" (ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, 2015, pg. 9).
16. **Disrespectful verbal and written communication** Students are expected to be respectful and considerate in verbal and written communication with faculty, staff, clinical staff, patients, and other students.
17. **Disruptive behavior** Obstructing or disrupting classes, team projects, talks or other presentations, or other activities or programs of the school or other parts of the University and obstructing access to school community assets or to similar resources in other parts of the University.
18. **Sexual and other unlawful harassment** This includes not only sexual harassment, but also hazing, stalking, repeatedly sending emails, making phone calls or transmitting documents that are uninvited and unwanted, making threats, and any other wrongful conduct that seriously interferes with the work or study of any member of the school community, guest or any person with whom the offender is interacting in connection with any school program or activity.

19. **Obstructing the investigation of a possible violation of this policy** including making dishonest or misleading statements, either orally or in written form, including e-mails; other falsification of information; altering, destroying, or deleting relevant documents, files or e-mails; and any other act that hinders an investigation.

Reporting an Alleged Infraction

All members of the Nursing community – faculty, administrators, staff and students – have a responsibility to report any reasonable suspicion that a student has violated this Professionalism Policy.

All faculty members are required to report all incidents of professional misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, falsification of data, and violation of nursing standards) that occur in their course to the Program Director. It is important that all faculty report all misconduct so that there can be fairness in the application of the Professionalism Policy across the entire student body.

Any questions regarding the meaning of any provision of this Professionalism Policy will be decided by the Director of the BSN Program. The Director's decision as to any questions of interpretation is final.

The Nursing Department Chair/BSN Program Director will contact the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission for direction in any case of ethical, legal or professional policy violation.

Policy Reviewers

Proposed revisions of this policy should be reviewed by:

1. Director of the BSN Program
2. Bylaws and Policy Committee
3. Nursing Faculty Assembly

Forms

There are no forms associated with this policy.

References

American Nurses Association. (2015). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*. Silver Spring, MD: American Nurses Association. Retrieved from <http://www.nursingworld.org/Code-of-Ethics>

Heritage University. (2018). *Heritage University Student Code of Conduct*. Retrieved from <http://catalog.heritage.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=857>

National Student Nurses Association. (2017). *Code of academic and clinical conduct*. Retrieved from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/a229ong58d5jx4p/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf?dl=0>

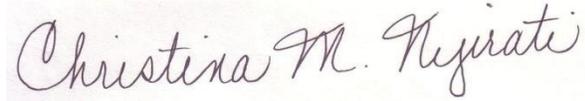
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<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/privacyrule/privrule.txt.txt>

Washington Administrative Code. (*WAC 246-840-700*), *Standards of Nursing Conduct or Practice*.
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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina M. Kujrati". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Signature: _____