



Nursing Department

**Policy #035**

**Medication Administration by Students**

<b>Status:</b>	Initiated 2017-12-14 Revised 2025-06-27; 2019-12-06
<b>Effective:</b>	2025-06-27
<b>Initiated by:</b>	Bylaws, Policies, and Handbooks Committee
<b>WAC:</b>	WAC 246-840-519

**PURPOSE**

Medication administration is a common nursing activity that involves risks to patient safety: “Adverse drugs events [ADEs] are one of the most common preventable adverse events in all settings of care... Each year, ADEs account for nearly 700,000 emergency department visits and 100,000 hospitalizations. Nearly 5% of hospitalized patients experience an ADE, making them one of the most common types of inpatient errors” (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2019, para. 3).

A review of the literature revealed that four factors including math anxiety were identified as having an influence on a student's drug dosage calculation abilities (Williams and Davis, 2016). These findings indicate that it is imperative for students to remediate when they lack the math skills necessary for safe practice. It is equally important that students learn medication safety skills in an environment that fosters trust and minimizes stress. Therefore, to ensure safety for patients and students, the Heritage University Nursing Department (HUND) promotes the progressive skills acquisition necessary for safe medication administration in a safe environment.

**PLAN**

HUND BSN students will be provided with orientation and practice experiences that include demonstration of competency of skills prior to:

1. administering medication
2. utilizing medication distribution systems

Students will demonstrate competency in accessing and administration of medications as well as medication dosage calculation.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

1. The nursing student will follow safe medication practices, use good communication skills with patients, peers, trainers, pharmacists, and physicians to ensure the patient is receiving optimal care regarding medications.
2. The clinical faculty is ultimately responsible for the nursing student's safe medication administration and can and should make assessments to allowable practices of the nursing student while they supervise their clinical learning activities.

3. All sophomore BSN students will retrieve, prepare and administer all medications under the direct supervision of their clinical faculty.
4. Junior students will retrieve, prepare, and administer all medications under the direct supervision of their clinical faculty until it is determined that they can safely administer medications by all routes. Once competency has been established, students may give medications with the clinical faculty or another RN while still requiring direct supervision during retrieval, preparation, and administration.
5. During the senior practicum, the designated preceptor is responsible for the nursing student's safe medication administration. Administration of intermittent IV medications by piggyback setup, a volume-control administration set, or a mini-infusion pump must be administered with direct supervision of the clinical instructor or delegated preceptor until competency has been documented. Once competency has been established, students may administer oral, intradermal, intramuscular, subcutaneous, continuous and intermittent intravenous, dermal, optic, and otic medications independently after double checking the eight rights of medication administration with the preceptor.

Students may administer blood and blood products only under the direct supervision of a clinical faculty member or designated preceptor as allowed by specific agency policy.

### **Medication Administration Procedures**

1. At the conclusion of NURS 300AL students must successfully demonstrate safe medication administration competency via laboratory simulation.
2. Each semester after Sophomore Spring semester, students will be evaluated by HUND clinical faculty for safe medication administration competency. Once the student has been supervised during medication administration by the HUND faculty (for each route), the faculty will determine if supervision can be provided by a staff RN/preceptor. The student will be notified when they may be safely supervised by a staff RN/preceptor for medication administration.
  - a. Clinical faculty reserve the right to temporarily pause students' medication administration activities at any time to reassess and ensure safety and competency
  - b. For medication administration errors or near misses, see Nursing Policy #031 Reporting of Errors and Near Misses
3. Students who miss more than one scheduled semester of clinical nursing coursework for any reason will need to be re-evaluated to determine competency in medication administration. Students might be required to retake courses to ensure competency.
4. Students will verbalize the "Rights" of medication administration to faculty and/or preceptor before entering the patient room to administer prepared medication.
5. Students will verbalize and demonstrate a safe level of knowledge and skill of every medication to be administered including purpose of the medication, route, dosage, indications, incompatibilities, and side effects.
6. Students will **NOT** administer medications to patients until they have verified all medications with the HUND clinical faculty or staff RN/preceptor, and medications are checked against the patient's orders/medication record. Any calculations will be verified by clinical faculty or staff RN/preceptor.
7. Students will **NOT**:
  - a. Administer parenteral cytotoxic drugs
  - b. Set up or manipulate PCA/Epidural pumps
  - c. Access a central line to initiate IV medication drip or collect a blood sample
  - d. Pull cardiac sheaths

- e. Manage IV infusion of heparin, vasoactive drugs, antidysrhythmic drugs, or insulin
- f. Alter IV rates on controllers or IV pumps unless clinical faculty or staff RN/Preceptor are present and providing direct supervision
- g. Titrate any IV medications
- h. Administer any medications not permitted by a clinical partner to be administered by students

### **Medication Distribution Systems Including Automated Drug Distribution Devices (ADDDs)**

Students are expected to be able to safely utilize medication distribution systems including ADDDs. Students will be able to access electronic programs used to support medication administration, including ADDDs and the electronic medication administration record after the student completes required training approved by Heritage University and the clinical facility. This training includes a learning module on use of ADDDs and demonstrated use of an ADDD in the nursing laboratory.

### **Medication Dosage Calculation**

Students will be able to accurately calculate medication dosages for patients across the lifespan. Students take the HESI Dosage Calculations Exam at the conclusion of NURS 300AL. Per Nursing Policy #019 Standardized Testing and Remediation:

*"The mandatory benchmark score for the Dosage Calculations HESI exam is >900. Students who do not meet this benchmark on their first attempt will remediate under the supervision of the Course Head for NURS 300AL and/or the Nursing Student Success Specialist. Once remediation is complete, the students will take a second Dosage Calculations HESI Exam. Students who proceed to their next term without meeting the benchmark score will be permitted to administer medications but must be supervised by the Nursing Clinical Faculty according to Nursing Policy #035 Medication Administration, i.e. they may not receive oversight of medication administration by a nurse employed by the clinical agency. In the Junior Spring term and beyond, students may administer medication under the supervision of nurse employed by the clinical agency."* (2023-11-27, Notes Regarding the HESI Dosage Calculations Exam)

### **Reporting Errors and Near Misses**

Student and faculty responsibilities after an incident vary slightly depending upon whether the incident was a near-miss or an error. See Nursing Policy #031 Reporting of Errors and Near Misses.

### **CITED AND RELATED POLICIES**

#### **Cited**

- Nursing Policy #019 Standardized Testing and Remediation
- Nursing Policy #031 Reporting of Errors and Near Misses
- Nursing Policy #035 Medication Administration

#### **Related**

- Nursing Policy #018 Grading and Evaluation of Student Performance
- Nursing Policy #033 Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Nursing Policy #036 Evaluation and Grading of Student Clinical Competencies
- Nursing Policy #040 Immunization and Other Clinical Requirements

#### **WAC**

Washington State Legislature. (2016). WAC 246-840-519. *Student requirements in all approved nursing education programs.* <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-840-519>

**REFERENCES**

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). (2019). *Medication errors and adverse drug events*. AHRQ. <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer/medication-errors-and-adverse-drug-events>

Williams, B. & Davis, S. (2016). Maths anxiety and medication dosage calculation errors: A scoping review. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 20, 139-146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2016.08.005>

**FORMS**

No forms are associated with this policy.

**POLICY REVIEWERS**

Proposed revisions of this policy should be reviewed by:

- 1) Bylaws, Policies, and Handbooks Committee [initiating committee]
- 2) Nursing Faculty Assembly

Nursing Director Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise M. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".