



MERCYHURST

UNIVERSITY

Department of Nursing

Student Policy Manual

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Preface

The Department of Nursing Student Policy Manual contains policies that are specific to the Department of Nursing. This manual is designed to supplement the Mercyhurst University Student Handbook, Academic Catalog, and Student Conduct Code located on the University Hub. Provisions in the University policies take precedence in the event of discrepancy.

Academic Progression, Probation, and Dismissal

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION for UNDERGRADUATE NURSING PROGRAMS

- ❖ All pre-licensure undergraduate nursing students must earn a minimum of a 3.0 (B) or above in each nursing or clinical nursing course.
- ❖ All post-licensure undergraduate nursing students must earn a minimum of a 2.5 (C+) or above in each nursing course.
- ❖ Undergraduate nursing students (pre- and post-licensure) must earn a minimum of a 2.0 (C) in all cognate courses.
- ❖ All students are expected and encouraged to sustain satisfactory academic progress in their studies at the University as evidenced by minimum grade point average (GPA) of a 3.0.
- ❖ Students interested in accelerating or decelerating their progress in a particular nursing program should meet with their academic advisor. Flexibility between undergraduate nursing programs will be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Program Director or Nursing Department Chair.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION for GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAMS

- ❖ All students are expected and encouraged to sustain satisfactory academic progress in their studies at the University as evidenced by minimum grade point average (GPA) of a 3.0.
- ❖ For further information on satisfactory academic progress for graduate students, please refer to the Academic Affairs section of the Mercyhurst University Graduate Catalog.

PROBATION

If a student fails to meet the academic criteria listed above, they will be placed on an academic probation. Students will be notified of their academic probation through an email to their university account. Students placed on academic probation will be given a Performance Improvement Plan with a goal of returning to good standing in the department. Students may only be placed on academic probation twice throughout their time in the Nursing program.

DISMISSAL

Students who fail to meet the conditions of their Performance Improvement Plan in the timeline set forth or who would qualify for a third probationary process will be dismissed from the Nursing program. Note that dismissal from the program does not imply dismissal from the university; students are encouraged to work with their Academic Support Counselor to identify alternative pathways and degrees in other programs.

Academic Standards

Per the Mercyhurst University Undergraduate Course Catalog:

Mercyhurst University-Wide Grading Scale

Grade	Quality Points	Level of Performance
A	4.0	Exceptional Attainment
B+	3.5	Superior Work
B	3.0	Good Work
C+	2.5	Above Adequate Work
C	2.0	Adequate Work
D+	1.5	Less than Adequate Work
D	1.0	Poor Work
F	0.0	Failure to Meet Course Standards

The faculty in the Department of Nursing use a unified grading scale in the assessment of student achievement in all nursing courses. In order to progress in a pre-licensure nursing program, students must earn a minimum of a (B) in all nursing courses. For additional information, refer to the Mercyhurst University Academic Affairs policies in the undergraduate course catalog.

Department of Nursing Grading Scale:

Grade	Quality Points	Percentage
A	4.0	93-100%
B+	3.5	90-92%
B	3.0	83-89%
C+	2.5	80-82%
C	2.0	73-79%
D+	1.5	70-72%
D	1.0	63-69%
F	0.0	62% or below

Advanced Placement and Articulation Policies

PN ADVANCED PLACEMENT

- ❖ Due to program requirements from the PA State Board of Nursing, there are no advanced placement options for the practical nursing program.
- ❖ Advanced placement for students who have completed nursing courses at other institutions is determined by the Department Chair. Each course is reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriateness of the transfer credit and is based on existing Mercyhurst University Policies.

ASN ADVANCED PLACEMENT

- ❖ Students may transfer in non-nursing course work according to the existing Mercyhurst University policies. All course transfer policies are outlined in the Catalog.
- ❖ Advanced placement for students who have completed nursing courses at other institutions is determined by the Department Chair. Each course is reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriateness of the transfer credit and is based on existing Mercyhurst University Policies.

LPN-ASN ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

- ❖ After completing NURS 190, graduates of state approved and accredited PN programs will be granted equivalencies for NURS 120, NURS 160 and NURS 161 based on the following criteria:
 - 9 credits will be awarded as transfer credits if courses taken in the practical nursing program.
 - Students may need to take additional credits to meet university minimum graduation requirements.
 - Applicants to the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) Degree program at Mercyhurst must meet the requirements of the university as well as the ASN program for admission.
 - Practical Nursing License is in good standing before entering any clinical nursing courses. Licensed Practical Nurse graduates may enter the ASN program in the fall or spring semester.

BSN ADVANCED PLACEMENT

- ❖ Students may transfer in non-nursing course work according to the existing Mercyhurst University policies. All course transfer policies are outlined in the Catalog.
- ❖ Advanced placement for students who have completed nursing courses at other institutions is determined by the Department Chair. Each course is reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriateness of the transfer credit and is based on existing Mercyhurst University Policies.

LPN-BSN ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

- ❖ After completing NURS 190, graduates of state approved and accredited PN programs will be granted equivalencies for NURS 120, NURS 160 and NURS 161 based on the following criteria:
 - 9 credits will be awarded as transfer credits if courses taken in the practical nursing program.
 - Students may need to take additional credits to meet university minimum graduation requirements.
 - Applicants to the BSN program at Mercyhurst must meet the requirements of the university as well as the BSN program for admission.
 - Practical Nursing License is in good standing before entering any clinical nursing courses. Licensed Practical Nurse graduates may enter the BSN program in the fall or spring semester.

RN-BSN ADVANCED PLACEMENT

- ❖ Students may be eligible for credit for life experience for Professional Advancement, Community Health, and Leadership nursing courses in the RN-BSN program. If a student is interested in learning more about this process, they should contact their academic advisor, program director, or department chair. To learn more about this process, refer to the Prior Learning Assessment/Credit for Life Experience section of the most current Mercyhurst University Undergraduate catalog.

MSN ADVANCED PLACEMENT

- ❖ Certain courses may transfer in on a case-by-case basis upon Program Director approval. Refer to the Mercyhurst University Graduate Catalog for further information.

For additional policies related to academic progression, advanced placement, and other academic issues, please refer to the Academic Affairs section of the Mercyhurst University Undergraduate Catalog or Student Handbook.

Admissions Policy

APPLICATION PROCESS

- ❖ All applicants must complete an online application as well as meet the requirements for admission to Mercyhurst University. Specific program requirements for each nursing program are listed below.
- ❖ Inquiries to the Office of Admissions will receive electronic correspondence with program information, financial facts, contact information, and application process.
- ❖ Inquiries to the Department of Nursing will receive electronic correspondence with the program website link that includes prerequisites, curriculum outline, application process, and Admissions contact information.
- ❖ For additional information refer to the Mercyhurst University Admission Policy in the Undergraduate or Graduate Catalog.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR PN

- ❖ Minimum individual TEAS score of 50% or higher
- ❖ High school diploma or GED

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR ASN

HIGH SCHOOL and EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

- ❖ A minimum of a 2.5 GPA (3.0 preferred)
- ❖ High school diploma or GED
- ❖ Minimum individual TEAS score of 66% or higher (67% on reading and math preferred)
- ❖ High school prerequisite courses needed:

Required Courses	Units
English	4
Social Studies	3
Math (including one Algebra)	2
Science with a lab	2

INTERNAL APPLICANTS OR TRANSFER STUDENTS

- ❖ A minimum of 2.5 cumulative GPA (3.0 preferred)

- ❖ Minimum individual TEAS score of 66% or higher (67% on reading and math preferred)
- ❖ High school prerequisite courses needed:

Required Courses	Units
English	4
Social Studies	3
Math (including one Algebra)	2
Science with a lab	2

LPN TO ASN BRIDGE PROGRAM APPLICANTS

- ❖ A minimum of a 2.5 GPA (3.0 preferred)
- ❖ If a graduate of a program other than that of Mercyhurst, minimum individual total TEAS score of 66% or higher (67% or higher in reading and math preferred)
- ❖ Practical Nursing License in good standing in all states in which the student is licensed prior to beginning clinical courses.
- ❖ High school prerequisite courses needed:

Required Courses	Units
English	4
Social Studies	3
Math (including one Algebra)	2
Science with a lab	2

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR BSN

HIGH SCHOOL and EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

- ❖ A minimum of a 3.2 GPA (3.5 preferred for 4-year and required for 3-year accelerated track)
- ❖ High school diploma
- ❖ High school prerequisite courses needed:

Required Courses	Units
English	4
Social Studies	3
Math (including one Algebra)	2
Science with a lab	2

INTERNAL APPLICANTS OR TRANSFER STUDENTS

- ❖ A minimum of 3.2 cumulative GPA

- High school prerequisite courses needed:

Required Courses	Units
English	4
Social Studies	3
Math (including one Algebra)	2
Science with a lab	2

LPN TO BSN BRIDGE PROGRAM APPLICANTS

- ❖ A minimum of a 3.2 GPA (3.5 preferred) or GED
- ❖ Practical Nursing License in good standing in all states in which the student is licensed prior to beginning clinical courses.
- ❖ High school prerequisite courses needed:

Required Courses	Units
English	4
Social Studies	3
Math (including one Algebra)	2
Science with a lab	2

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR RN-BSN

- ❖ An unencumbered RN license (any state)
- ❖ All official transcripts from accredited higher education institutions
- ❖ Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) degree OR diploma program graduate

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR MSN

- ❖ A Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree (must be conferred)
- ❖ An unencumbered RN license (any state)
- ❖ One professional letter of recommendation
- ❖ Personal statement that discusses professional goals in reference to nursing leadership

Attendance Policies

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE (includes HYBRID and ONLINE courses)

All programs within the Department of Nursing have rigorous curricula, therefore classroom attendance and participation are mandatory. Each program expects that students will be on time and plan their schedules in accordance with the course schedules. In the event of an emergency or illness, students are expected to notify the faculty as soon as possible using their university email.

Requests for a planned excused absence from a didactic course are required to be submitted in writing to the course faculty and the Program Director at least two weeks in advance for consideration.

Examinations that are missed due to an excused absence must be made up in two weeks' time and the course faculty has a right to require an alternate testing format for any missed examination. Course work including examinations that are missed due to an unexcused absence will result in a grade of zero. Due to the credit load and time frame of delivery of courses, consequences for unexcused absences will be addressed in each individual course syllabus.

CLINICAL & SIMULATION ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be on time and plan their schedules in accordance with rotations. In the event of an emergency or illness that results in a missed rotation day, students are required to notify their clinical faculty via email as soon as possible. The student should also separately contact their assigned clinical preceptor if they are in a precepted rotation.

Extended absences due to illness or injury must be excused by a health care provider. Extended absences are defined as two or more consecutive days. Missed clinical time must be remediated and extended absence may require repeating the rotation. Students experiencing personal emergencies or needing to take an extended leave from school should meet with the Program Director or Department Chair.

Students who have an unexcused absence while on a clinical rotation will earn an unsatisfactory performance score for that assigned day. Repetitive unexcused absences and tardiness is unprofessional behavior and grounds for disciplinary action, failure of the rotation, and or dismissal from the program.

Requests for a planned excused absence during clinical are required to be submitted in writing to the Program Director at least two weeks in advance for consideration.

Regardless of whether or not the absence is excused or unexcused, the student will need to arrange with their assigned faculty or clinical coordinator to make up missed clinical, simulation, or laboratory experiences within two weeks of the missed day. Students missing more than 3 clinical, simulation, or laboratory experience days during any semester will earn a failing grade and need to repeat the rotation.

Clinical Preceptor Policy

The faculty within the Department of Nursing at Mercyhurst University believe that instruction by practicing practical or registered professional nurses complements the faculty and contributes a significant dimension to the learning experiences of students.

DEFINITIONS

A Preceptor is a licensed nurse who is employed by the facility in which the clinical experience takes place, and who agrees to provide supervision to a student for a specified period of time during the preceptor's scheduled work hours in order to assist the student to meet identified learning objectives.

A preceptorship experience at the undergraduate level is defined as a clinical experience in which a student is participating in the provision of care for one or more clients and a faculty member is not always physically in attendance. The faculty is always accessible by phone and able to be physically present during emergencies as needed. A preceptorship experience at the graduate level involves leadership and must not include direct care for clients.

CLINICAL PRECEPTOR POLICY

Clinical preceptors may be used for supervision of students in community health, leadership/management, independent study, and selected acute care, long-term care, and rehabilitation facility experiences. Clinical experiences for the student nurse may take place using a preceptor located in any agency in which a written clinical affiliation agreement exists between the agency and Mercyhurst University.

PREFERERED REQUIREMENTS FOR CLINICAL PRECEPTOR:

- A minimum of two years clinical experience in specified area or as determined appropriate by clinical site and supervising faculty
- Current unencumbered R.N. license (P.N. license for precepted practical nursing students) in state in which clinical experience will occur
- Comparable or greater educational preparation to that of the student (Bachelor of Science in Nursing or Master's in Nursing preferred)
- Have clinical expertise and competence in the area where serving as a preceptor
- Be physically present in the agency and available to the student at all times
- Be assigned no more than two students
- Be provided with specific written guidelines and student learning outcomes prior to the experience

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT:

- To provide the potential preceptor with a copy of the preceptor packet including objectives for clinical participation.
- To provide a schedule of activities and agreed upon meeting times to the preceptor and supervising faculty.
- To verify with the supervising faculty that both the requested preceptor and agency/facility have been approved before clinical activities begin.
- To work with the approved preceptor to schedule the appropriate number of required clinical hours as defined by the supervising faculty.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLINICAL COORDINATOR:

- To verify that Mercyhurst University has a current clinical affiliation agreement with the preceptor's clinical agency. If no agreement is in place, the Clinical Coordinator or department chair will work with the Dean or Associate Dean of the Zurn College of Natural and Health Sciences to initiate and obtain the required signed clinical affiliation agreement.
- To verify that the student has submitted all required clinical documentation.
- To communicate with the student's supervising faculty and preceptor when all approved contract/agreements are in place and the student is cleared to begin clinical hours.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISING FACULTY:

- To verify that the clinical preceptor meets all requirements including verification of RN licensure (or PN licensure when applicable) in state of preceptorship.
- To provide the student with the specific preceptor and agency/facility selection criteria, as well as course description and objectives. All required forms are to be posted in the LMS (Blackboard) for students to access by a specified time prior to the beginning of each semester.
- To work with the student and the preceptor and facilitate the clinical learning experience.
- To serve as a resource for the student and the preceptor for questions concerning activities and objectives during the clinical experience.
- To notify the Department Chair if problems arise either with the student or the preceptor during the clinical learning experience.
- To submit the following documentation at the conclusion of the semester to be placed in the student's academic file immediately following the posting of grades:
 - Preceptor Packet

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLINICAL PRECEPTOR:

- To work with the student to schedule the appropriate number of required clinical hours as defined by the supervising faculty.
- To be willing to work with the student to facilitate learning.
- To participate in the process of evaluating student performance in collaboration with the supervising faculty and student.

- To notify the appropriate supervising faculty if problems arise during the clinical experience.
- To be supportive of the student/preceptor relationship.

Conduct-related Probation and Dismissal

UNIVERSITY CONDUCT CODE

All nursing students must follow and will be held accountable to the University's Conduct Code which can be found at: <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/handbook>. In the case that a student in the Nursing department is found to be in violation of the University Conduct Code, the Nursing department will fully uphold any sanctions issued as part of that process.

AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS*

In addition to the University Conduct Code, all nursing students must adhere to the standards in the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. A student may be placed on probationary status when program requirements of the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics have been violated. An individualized written plan will be developed to assist the student in meeting the program requirements or code of ethics. This plan will be reviewed with the student by the Nursing Department Chair. Failure to consistently adhere to this written plan will be grounds for dismissal. The length of the probationary status will be determined on an individual basis, based in part on the egregiousness of the ethics violation and on the students' history of prior ethics violations.

DISMISSAL

A severe infraction of any program requirements or violation of the ANA Code of Ethics may result in dismissal from the program. A student's dismissal from the nursing program may also occur for the possession and/or use of alcohol, narcotics, controlled substances, firearms, or other weapons on the University's or affiliating agencies' premises. Each event/violation will be reviewed by the Department Chair. Upon review, the Department Chair, in consultation with the relevant faculty members and program administrator, determines whether the event was unfounded, or whether they will recommend that a student is placed on probation, or dismiss the student from the program. The Dean reviews the recommendation with the Office of Academic Affairs for a final decision. The Department Chair will inform the student of the decision. The potential for a student who is dismissed from the nursing program to be retained by the University in another area of study is pursuant to the Student Conduct Code and is not the decision of the Nursing department.

* American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of ethics for nurses with interpretative statements. Silver Spring, MD: www.Nursesbooks.org.

Confidentiality Policy

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Students must be respectful of patient's privacy and must always maintain confidentiality. Students will be held to the same standards as practicing nurses and are accountable to the ethical standards set forth by the profession in alignment with the HIPAA Privacy Rule. The American Nurses Association (ANA) believes that protection of privacy and confidentiality is essential to maintaining the trusting relationship between health care providers and patients and integral to professional practice (ANA, 2015). ANA supports legislation, policies and standards that protect individually identifiable health information. (ANA, 2015).

Any communication in written, electronic, or verbal form must be maintained in the strictest confidence. Students are not permitted to discuss any privileged patient information outside of the clinical encounter. In reference to academic works in the didactic or clinical phase of the student's education, patient identifiers are not to be used.

SIMULATION EXPERIENCES

Students agree to respect fellow students and protect their privacy by never discussing individual or team simulation performance outside of the simulation debriefing. Students also agree to refrain from ever discussing what occurs during simulation debriefing sessions where team members share their reflections on the experience, including evaluating individual and team performances. A violation is considered unprofessional behavior and as such is subject to disciplinary action.

STUDENT INFORMATION

The department will hold all student information as confidential documents. Institutional affiliates may request student information for clinical experiences. The State Board of Nursing will require student information to ensure eligibility to take the licensure exam.

Criminal Background, Screenings, and Drug and Alcohol Policy

MATRICULATION INTO THE PROGRAM

The Department of Nursing is responsible for ensuring a drug and alcohol-free education environment and establish work readiness among students. Criminal background and screenings are required for matriculating into the program, participating in patient care at clinical sites, and progressing through the program. Prior to the student entering the program and as required for clinical experiences, the student will acquire the following:

1. Pennsylvania Criminal Record check
2. FBI Fingerprint background check
3. PA Child Abuse History clearance check
4. Drug Screening report
 - Students are financially responsible for this process, which may need to be repeated annually or more frequently as required by the program or clinical sites.
 - Original verifications are to be provided to the program and will remain in the student's permanent file.
 - Students will be instructed in the process of obtaining these clearances and screenings by the program.

It is a violation of this policy for any student to use, possess, or sell illegal drugs or lawful drugs (prescribed or over-the-counter) illegally and/or be chemically impaired due to alcohol and/or legal or lawful drugs while on campus, on clinical experience or otherwise in conjunction with the University or its activities. Violations of this policy, including confirmed findings, any time there is concern for chemical impairment or refusal to participate in requirements of this policy, are grounds for denial to matriculate into the program or dismissal from the program.

Adverse results on clearances or screenings at any time can prevent a student from matriculating into the program, being promoted within the program, placed at clinical training sites or recommended for graduation. Adverse results, including felony and misdemeanor convictions, can limit the ability for clinical training experiences or state licensure. If a student is charged with a felony or misdemeanor while in the program of study, the student must inform the Department Chair within 24 hours.

SCREENING DURING PROGRAM

Students suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during didactic or clinical experiences will be handled according to the Student Conduct Code in the Mercyhurst University Student Handbook.

Dress Code and Identification Policy

DRESS CODE

Uniforms or professional attire are required during clinical experiences. In each clinical course, faculty will provide students with specific requirements for the dress code that corresponds with the clinical environment and/or clinical agency dress code.

Students are required to maintain good personal hygiene, this includes cleanliness, lack of offensive body/mouth odor, and cigarette/cigar smoke odor. Students are to avoid excessive use of fragrances and must be sensitive to scented chemicals that may be offensive or cause allergic or other adverse reactions to contacts. Nail polish and artificial nails are not permitted into the clinical setting. Moderate make-up, small post-earrings and neatly trimmed beards/mustaches are permitted in the clinical setting. *Please note: students must also follow the dress code and attire policy of their assigned clinical agency.*

IDENTIFICATION

Students must wear an appropriate identification badge to distinguish themselves as students when attending off-campus activities and clinical experiences. University ID's will be required and must be purchased from the One Card Office on campus. Students will be responsible for the cost of this ID and for any replacements that might be necessary.

Violations of the Dress Code and Identification Policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and with the Professionalism Policy as warranted.

Grievance Policy

For information related to student grievance policies and procedures, refer to the Mercyhurst University Student Handbook located on the University Student Hub.

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Students interact with patients as part of their clinical education and will potentially have exposure to infectious diseases. The department will train students in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration on Universal Precautions standards on the appropriate methods of handling blood, tissue, and bodily fluids and management of communicable diseases. Students must be responsible for taking precautionary measures and employ the precautions with each lab or patient encounter.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration Universal Precautions standards defines universal precautions as an approach to infection control to treat all human blood and certain human body fluids as if they were known to be infectious for HIV, hepatitis B or C, tuberculosis and other bloodborne pathogens.

Bloodborne Pathogen Standards require:

- ❖ Observation of Universal Precautions to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- ❖ Under circumstances in which differentiation between body fluid types is difficult or impossible, all body fluids shall be considered potentially infectious material.
- ❖ Treat all blood and other potentially infectious materials with appropriate precautions such as:
 - Use gloves, masks, and gowns if blood or other potentially infectious material (OPIM) exposure is anticipated.
 - Use engineering and work practice controls to limit exposure.

Student may also come in contact with environmental hazards; this may include preservative chemicals such as formaldehyde in the labs, latex, or other allergens. Women of childbearing years should be apprised of minimizing exposure to infectious diseases, chemical exposures, possible teratogens, and exposure to ionizing radiation. It is imperative that proper precautions be practiced when dealing with these potential hazards.

GUIDELINES FOR EXPOSURE

Any accidental exposure in the didactic and clinical phase of the program should be dealt with immediately. The student is financially responsible for costs incurred secondary to infectious and or environmental hazards. Students are to follow the guidelines as follows:

- ❖ Decontaminate first, thoroughly flush exposure site, if hands are exposed thoroughly wash them.

- ❖ Immediately report the incident to your faculty or preceptor and office/hospital personnel.
- ❖ Seek medical care promptly, per protocol of institution, or at the nearest emergency department.
- ❖ Contact the Department of Nursing promptly after completion of the previous steps.
- ❖ Provide a thorough and detailed report of the incident on the Department of Nursing Incident Report form.

Any adverse outcomes from exposure to infectious disease or environmental hazard that interferes with student learning will be handled on an individual basis and could result in a delay in education or graduation. The following is a valuable resource should there be a need for counseling and questions on exposure protocol:

The National Clinicians' Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Hotline (PEPline) is available 7 days a week, at 1-888-HIV-4911. (Hours of availability on website.) The PEPline provides around-the-clock expert guidance in managing healthcare worker exposures to HIV and hepatitis B and C. Callers receive immediate postexposure prophylaxis recommendations.

Professionalism Policy

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one's own. The sanctity of the patient-provider relationship requires the nurse's dedication to being accountable and reliable to oneself, the patient, and the community. Nurses must know their professional and personal limitations. They must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to diverse patient populations, adherence to legal/regulatory requirements, and practice without impairment. The Department of Nursing expects that students will conduct themselves with these competencies in mind.

Nursing students are required to conform to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct as required of practicing nurses. These include, but are not limited to respect, flexibility and adaptability, emotional resilience and stability, academic integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, accountability, and cultural competency.

CLASSROOM/CLINICAL ETIQUETTE

The classroom will model professionalism during all curricular components to assist students in gaining the tools of professional competence. Students will be responsible for maintaining timely attendance, preparedness, professional documentation, respectful handling of program resources, and active participation in the program. Students are also required to check Mercyhurst University email and are held accountable for the contents of emails issued by the University.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Students must maintain professional behavior with all written and verbal communication and interactions including all classroom/clinical experiences or any representation of the Department of Nursing or the University with the public, peers, professors, patients, and preceptors. Displays of frustration/anger, which may be perceived by others as hurtful or offensive, will not be tolerated. This includes demeaning, offensive (including swearing), argumentative, and threatening language/behavior or language that is insensitive to race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. Students should offer constructive criticism or suggestions in a thoughtful and reasoned manner that fosters respect and trust.

The professional conduct of nursing students is evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the program. Any violations of standards of professional conduct are grounds for disciplinary action including probation and or dismissal from the program. Students will be notified in writing when they have violated the department's standards of professional conduct. Copies of these warnings will be kept in the student's academic file and repeat violations may lead to probation or dismissal from the program.

Readmission Policy

Students who have withdrawn from a nursing program may seek readmission, provided that they left the program in good-standing. Factors that influence whether a student will be considered for readmission into any nursing program include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Apply for admission to the University or meet with program director about transfer into a nursing major from another program
- ❖ Specific reason for the withdrawal
- ❖ Student conduct, academic, and clinical performance during the previous enrollment
- ❖ Attendance patterns
- ❖ Current program requirements
- ❖ Space availability in the program or course

Students who were dismissed from the program as a result of the academic progression and probation policies may apply for readmission under the university's academic forgiveness process. In such cases, the student is eligible for readmission following a minimum of five years after the dismissal.

Students who were dismissed from the program as a result of violations of the conduct or professionalism policies are not eligible for readmission.

Students who are readmitted to the program are expected to follow the university catalog, handbook, and nursing student policies appropriate to the semester of readmission.

Social Media Policy

Students must maintain ethical and professional standards as applied to the use of social media. Students are expected to protect privacy in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule of patients, preceptors, professors, and self at all times and not to publicly display inappropriate unprofessional communications.

1. Students must maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times and must refrain from posting identifiable patient information online to include photos, recordings or any protected patient information in accordance with HIPAA Privacy Rule.
2. When using the Internet for social networking, students should use privacy settings to safeguard personal information and content to the extent possible but should realize that privacy settings are not absolute and that once on the internet, content is likely there permanently.
3. Students are not permitted to post or share course content or any kind, this may include but not limited to recordings, photos, lectures, handouts or assessment instruments.
4. Students should routinely monitor their own internet presence to ensure that the personal and professional information on their own sites and, to the extent possible, content posted about them by others is accurate and appropriate.
5. Students who have interaction with patients on the internet must maintain appropriate boundaries, in accordance with professional ethical guidelines, just as they would in any other context. In maintaining appropriate professional boundaries students should consider separating personal and professional content online.
6. When students see content posted by others that appears unprofessional, they have a responsibility to bring that content to the attention of the Department Chair/Program Director.
7. Students are to be professional in all communications. Cyberbullying of fellow students, faculty, staff, preceptors, or patients will not be tolerated.
8. Students are to not attempt to “friend” or request to personally interact in social media with preceptors or patients.
9. Per University policy, social network sites, other digital platforms, and distribution mechanisms facilitate student communication. Mercyhurst University believes that such sites provide students with opportunities to interact with individuals in innovative and creative ways. It is critical, however, that students are fully aware of the potential negative consequences arising out of irresponsible and inappropriate conduct on these sites. Mercyhurst students are encouraged to exercise good judgment if they choose to engage in online social networking.

10. Students must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputations, may have consequences for their medical careers and undermine public trust in the University, Department and profession.
11. Per University policy, students will be held responsible for any actions that compromise the integrity of the University. For example, photos or statements placed on these social networks that depict harassment (including sexual harassment); vandalism; underage drinking or consumption of alcohol in violation of Mercyhurst University's alcohol policy; hazing; and selling, possessing or using controlled substances can be used in student conduct proceedings and disciplinary actions as defined in the student handbook available at MU handbook, Student Conduct System: <http://handbook.mercyhurst.edu/>.

Student Advisement and Records Policy

In all cases, student records are managed and shared in a way that ensures confidentiality and document security at all times.

ACADEMIC RECORDS

All academic records will be managed in accordance with university policies. The Department of Nursing Chair will assign students an advisor from within the Nursing Department. This advisor assists the student with advising on academics, program nuances, and finding resources, and will have access to the student's academic record through the university's Self-Service platform. Advisees are required to meet with their advisor within the first two weeks of matriculation, once per semester, and as needed. The Student Advisement Policy will be reviewed during orientation. Students are encouraged to contact their advisor, as needed, for assistance with academic progress.

Correspondence with the student from the department and student advising forms will also be kept on file as needed. When applicable, the student file will include remediation efforts and outcomes, terms of probation and incident reports.

Students may request to review their academic file with their advisor but are not privileged to see other student records. The University management of other aspects of the student's record can be found in the current version of the Student Handbook in the following sections: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Health Services, Student Financial Services, and Student Conduct.

MEDICAL RECORDS

The student health record is a confidential document that is not accessible to the department program faculty, department chair/program director, or program staff. Students must give written permission for their immunization record and tuberculosis screening results to be shared with the program by signing the Authorization to Release Immunization Record and Tuberculosis Screening to the Program and Study and the Authorization to Release Information to clinical sites. Students also must give written permission for their health information to be shared by the Cohen Health Center, with clinical sites and by signing the release in the Department of Nursing Student Health Record.

Students are expected to submit all clinical files, including clearances and health records, to the third-party system contracted by the university. MyRecordTracker by Certiphi serves as a record management system that allows for confidential and secure information uploads. By matriculating into any program in the Department of Nursing, the student acknowledges that

they will be required to submit all documentation as required by the university and the clinical sites. The student also acknowledges that the Department of Nursing faculty and staff will have access to a report that indicates whether the student has provided appropriate documentation and is in compliance with the requirements. The Department of Nursing will not share any individual student's medical information or use the information for any reason other than ensure compliance with clinical requirements, department and university requirements, and state and federal laws.

Student files consist of:

- ❖ FBI Fingerprint clearance
- ❖ Criminal background clearance
- ❖ PA Child Abuse Clearance
- ❖ Urine Drug Screen clearance
- ❖ CPR/ACLS certification
- ❖ DON Health Screening Form (including all relevant and required immunizations and titers)

Student Health and Immunization Policy

All students must provide proof of health insurance prior to matriculation. Each student's personal health insurance policy must remain active throughout their participation in the program.

Students are financially responsible for the cost of all health care services they may require while enrolled in the program, including any health care services required as a result of their participation in scheduled program activities (e.g., TB testing, immunizations, treatment of injuries, pathogen exposure evaluation and treatment).

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Nursing requires students to complete clinical experiences in order to earn their degree. Clinical sites may require participating students to have certain vaccinations prior to attending the off-campus experience. These requirements may differ from what the university required for the student to enroll in the university/program. The university does not control these site requirements and they are subject to change throughout a student's matriculation. Students who are unable to show proof of relevant required vaccinations may be prohibited from completing the required experience, which may jeopardize the student's ability to complete the program. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they understand and are able to comply with these requirements prior to enrolling. In situations where exemptions are allowable, the university will process those exemption requests in accordance with the site's directives and applicable federal, state, and local laws.

HEALTH RECORDS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Student Health Record, including the DON Health Screening Form and required immunizations and titers must be completed prior to placement in the student's first clinical site. These forms are necessary for health center access as a patient if an emergency arises and for use in providing clinical affiliates with written proof of immunizations and wellness. Students are financially responsible for this process, and it will need to be repeated annually or more frequently as required by clinical sites.

The University uses a third party to manage the health records of all students to ensure that the student meets the defined requirements. Students who are not in compliance with having a completed Student Health Record may be prohibited from matriculating into the program or participating in clinical experiences, which can delay their education and progression in the program of study. Details about how records are shared can be found in the Student Advisement and Records Policy.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

To be in compliance, students must have completed:

- ❖ Mercyhurst University Health Screening Form prior to matriculation and updated prior to the clinical year of the program. This includes:
 - An annual health screening
 - An annual tuberculosis screening in the form of a 2-step tuberculosis skin test (TST), Quantiferon testing (if applicable) or a chest x-ray (if applicable) performed in accordance with CDC guidelines. Additionally, certain clinical sites may have more stringent requirements. In the event TB testing is positive, a documented evaluation, including chest x-ray and treatment if indicated must be completed in accordance with CDC guidelines. Students who decline recommended treatment may be prohibited from participating in clinical experiences, which can delay their education and progression in the program of study.
- ❖ Pre-Admission Immunization Record prior to matriculation and updated prior to the clinical year of the program. This includes:
 - Nursing students are required to have current immunization status throughout enrollment in the program as recommended for healthcare personnel by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Please refer to the following link for the most current CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>.
 - Immunization verification and laboratory verification of serologic testing for immunity (antibody test results) must be provided for all listed conditions recommended by the CDC for health care personnel. All non-converters may require additional immunizations with follow up titers per CDC recommendations, to include but may not be limited to the following:
 1. Hepatitis B: Documentation of the 3-dose immunization against Hepatitis B. This series must be started prior to matriculation and must be kept on schedule. Following completion of the Hepatitis B series, a positive (immune) titer must be completed.
 2. Mumps: Records of titer validating current immunity and a 2-dose vaccine series being administered on schedule.
 3. Rubeola (measles): Records of titer validating current immunity and a 2-dose vaccine series being administered on schedule.
 4. Rubella: Records of titer validating current immunity and a 2-dose MMR immunization.
 5. Varicella: Records of titer validating current immunity and a 2-dose vaccine series being administered on schedule. Note: History of previous infection is not sufficient evidence of immunity.
 6. Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis: Documentation of a completed primary series with Tdap booster within the last ten years.

7. Influenza: Documentation of influenza vaccination. While enrolled in the program students will be required to obtain annual influenza vaccination.
8. Covid: Documentation of the following:
 - a. 2 doses of Moderna or Pfizer
 - b. 1 dose of Johnson and Johnson

Teach Out Policy

If the Department of Nursing programs were to close or lose accreditation, the following policy will be followed.

- ❖ Recruitment of students will cease.
- ❖ **Prospective Students** who have been admitted and not yet matriculated will be informed of the program planned closure and given a full refund of their deposit.
- ❖ **Currently Enrolled Students** will be informed of the program closure and will be given the opportunity to complete the program on a full-time basis.
- ❖ The program of study will be provided the necessary resources and support to provide student educational experiences as published. Teach out will occur with sufficient faculty and meet all educational standards consistent with program accreditation and Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
- ❖ The program of study will be consistent with curricular structure and schedules of courses as published. The department will continue to meet the published mission, goals and outcomes as published.
- ❖ High priority will be given to assist students in completing the course of study. Students seeking transfer to another institution will be supported.

Testing and Evaluation

TESTING

Written examinations are one method used to determine student progression towards achievement of class, course, and program learning outcomes. Undergraduate nursing program examinations are developed and mapped to the NCLEX test plan and the program curriculum. Faculty will follow the fair testing guidelines established by the National League for Nursing during development, implementation, and evaluation of examinations.

For testing accommodations and services, please refer to the Mercyhurst Disability Support Services section of the Mercyhurst University Student Handbook.

TESTING PROCEDURE

The following testing procedures have been developed based on best practices and closely mimic the testing procedures for the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations.

- ❖ No electronic devices (cell phones, smart pens, Smartwatches, etc.) are permitted during any type of test or evaluation. All devices must be turned off or silenced and stowed away in a designated area.
- ❖ All personal items must be removed from desks and stored in an area of the classroom designated by the faculty. Only materials approved by the faculty such as a provided calculator are permitted to remain on the desk.
- ❖ Each student will be provided a calculator.
- ❖ No re-entry into the testing area is permitted once the student leaves the room. However, faculty have discretion over their classrooms and may choose to allow students to leave and return in certain circumstances such as needing to use the restroom.
- ❖ The time allotted for the exam begins and ends at the faculty's specified time. No extra time will be given for a student who arrives late.
- ❖ No hoods, hats or scarves are permitted to be worn on head except for religious purposes.
- ❖ The faculty controls the options of seating arrangements.
- ❖ Should a student need to communicate with the faculty, the student should remain seated and raise their hand.