Undergraduate Student Handbook

Welcome to USC College of Nursing (CON). We are here to help you be successful in your undergraduate nursing education endeavors. The College of Nursing Undergraduate Student Handbook provides students with current information about curricula, policies, and other important information concerning the undergraduate programs in the College. The Undergraduate Student Handbook is updated annually with periodic updates available on the College of Nursing website and Virtual Communities. It is important that students become familiar with the current Undergraduate Student Handbook. All undergraduate students are required to read and understand the content and are responsible for adhering to the Policies and Procedures stipulated in the Handbook. Students are required to sign a statement annually attesting to the fact that they have read the current Handbook. The College of Nursing reserves the right to make changes to this handbook as necessary. Notifications of changes or additions to the Undergraduate Student Handbook made throughout the year are posted in a timely fashion on the Virtual Community in Blackboard (Bb). Students are responsible for checking the program Bb on a regular basis for all program-related updates and handbook updates.

Communication

The official mode of communication between the College of Nursing and undergraduate students is through university email. Students are required to monitor their university email messages.

Supplemental Regulations

There are several resources available to assist you in meeting your academic and personal goals. Registration at the University of South Carolina assumes the students' acceptance of all published regulations. The academic bulletins are the official documents of record concerning undergraduate and graduate academic programs and regulations. These bulletins are for information purposes only and do not constitute any contractual agreement between a student and the University of South Carolina. The University reserves the right to make changes in curricula, degree requirements, course offerings, or academic regulations at any time when, in the judgment of the faculty, the president, or the Board of Trustees, such changes are in the best interest of the students and the University.

All undergraduate students are also responsible for the regulations listed below:

University of South Carolina Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities on the basis of race, sex, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Questions or concerns regarding the University’s equal opportunity programs should be directed to the Equal Opportunity Programs, 1600 Hampton Street, Suite 805, Columbia, SC 29208 or 803-777-3854 (Voice) or 803-777-5608 (TTY).

DISCLAIMER

The policies and procedures described in this manual are continually revised and updated. The College of Nursing and the University of South Carolina must reserve the right to make changes affecting policies, fees, curriculum, or any other matters announced in this publication. If you have questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

Academic Calendar

- The College of Nursing follows the University Academic Calendar in the Fall and Spring terms.
- The College of Nursing Summer Calendar differs from the traditional University calendar.

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- Diversity and Inclusion
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- Veterans and Military Services
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College of Nursing’s Mission & Policies

College of Nursing Mission and Values

The University of South Carolina College of Nursing provides nationally recognized educational programs and advances science, practice, and policy to optimize health for all.

- View the complete College of Nursing Mission, Vision and Values Statement

Accreditation

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accredits the baccalaureate degree program (http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredit the University. The program is guided by the ANA Standards of Practice and the ANA Code of Ethics.

Important College of Nursing Policies

All students at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing are required to adhere to the following school-wide policies:

Academic Integrity

Carolinian Creed

We oppose intolerance by promoting integrity within our campus community. Our common values are formed upon the foundation of our creed, which emphasizes openness and civility. Carolinian Creed

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct outlines students' responsibilities to themselves and the Carolina community. Student conduct issues are referred to the university-wide process.

Honor Code

Our Honor Code describes the university's expectations for students' academic integrity. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty may receive a zero for their course grade and/or may be removed from further study in the CON.
Ethics for Nursing

Nursing is a profession, and as such, nursing students are expected to behave ethically. Ethical behavior applies to colleagues, peers, supervisors, subordinates, and clients. Click link for complete Code of Ethics for Nurses developed by the American Nurses Association (ANA).

Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statement

1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
2. The nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
4. The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
7. The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

Source: American Nurses Association, August 2015

Alcohol / Drug Policy

Students enrolled in the College of Nursing are subject to the regulations found in the USC Policies and Procedures Manual. See http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf626.pdf and the ethical standards of the Nursing profession as described in the ANA Code of Ethics.
Civility and Professional Conduct

As students’ progress through the curriculum, they are preparing for transition into professional life. Some behaviors expected in the classroom/clinical setting parallel many behaviors expected in the workplace.

Classroom Expectations

- Attends class on time
- Notifies professor when unable to attend class
- Completes reading assignments before class
- Engages in class discussion
- Maintains appropriate demeanor during class
- Remains in classroom until class is dismissed
- Returns from breaks on time
- Stays awake in class
- Refrains from having side conversations
- Attends to speaker during class time
- Allows others to hear and learn
- Refrains from reading newspapers, etc., other than class materials
- Refrains from nonacademic computer use

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing requires all applicants and continuing students in all nursing programs to meet certain standards based on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN) Core Performance Standards. These standards describe requirements in the six dimensions of ability/performance. These are critical thinking and related mental abilities, communication and interpersonal abilities, physical abilities, hearing, vision, and smell.

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing requires all applicants and continuing students in all nursing programs to meet the following standards based on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN) Core Performance Standards.

**Standard 1. Critical Thinking and Related Mental Abilities:** Must have critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not an all-inclusive list): Has the ability to interpret,
investigate, communicate, and comprehend complex situations; identify cause and effect relative to clinical situations under varying degrees of stress; must be able to read and comprehend detailed charts, reports, journal articles, books, etc.; and capable of performing all arithmetic functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, ratios, and simple algebraic equations).

**Standard 2. Communication and Interpersonal Abilities:** Must be able to read, write, speak, and comprehend English with sufficient skill to communicate effectively verbally and non-verbally. Must have interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Has the ability to establish rapport with clients and their families, peers, agency personnel, and faculty; explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching; and document and interpret nursing actions and client responses.

**Standard 3. Physical Activities:** Must have physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces with gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to move around a client’s room, work spaces, treatment areas and administer CPR; calibrate and use equipment; position and transfer clients; capable of pushing up to 200 pounds independently; capable of reaching 18 inches above head without the use of mechanical devises to elevate themselves; capable of sitting, standing, walking for extended periods of time; experience no limitations when bending, stooping, sitting, standing, walking (i.e. uses no mechanical devices to assist themselves which would impede the safety of a client), ability to move to and respond to an emergency situation in a timely manner, and able to document in a clear, legible manner.

**Standard 4. Hearing:** Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to hear auscultatory sounds, monitor alarms and emergency signals; able to tolerate loud noises for extended periods of time. Assistive devices must correct hearing to this degree and must be worn at all times during practicums.

**Standard 5. Visual:** Must have the visual ability sufficient for observation, assessment, and intervention necessary for nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Observe client response, accurately read equipment, gauges, and monitors, vision correctable to 20/40, normal depth perception, and ability to distinguish colors and ability to tolerate offensive visual situations.
**Standard 6. Smell:** Smelling ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Having ability to differentiate between various types of smells, and ability to tolerate offensive odors.

*Standards may be changed at any time.*

**Copyright Policy**

The Nursing Programs seek to aid enrolled students by offering electronic presentations and recordings of lectures to improve student engagement and to better meet individual learning needs. With the growing use of technology, students and faculty have the responsibility to understand and observe copyright law including educational fair use guidelines, obtaining written permission, and to follow the corresponding campus University policy.

As supplemental tools, all material found in lectures is owned by the University of South Carolina College of Nursing or its faculty and is protected by United States Copyright laws.

Lecture material is only available to students enrolled in the course where the content is available, and use is not permitted outside the scope of the course. Recorded lectures will only be posted to Blackboard. Material found in the lectures may not be photocopied, screenshot, duplicated or distributed by any student without the express, written permission from the faculty member who created the material. Video, audio, or photographic recordings of course material are strictly prohibited. Recordings, course material, quizzes, tests and lecture notes may not be reproduced verbatim nor uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Recordings and course material may not be exchanged nor distributed to a third party for compensation. Recordings and course material may not be used for any purpose other than personal study and may not violate any policies herein. An individual may individually print copies of lecture material solely for personal use under the scope of the course.

Duplication or dissemination of lecture materials without authorized use may violate federal or state law and USC University policies.

Failure to adhere to these policies is a violation of the College of Nursing Professionalism Policy and may result in disciplinary action under University guidelines.

**State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and State Board of Nursing Regulation**

Important Information about Programs Leading to Licensure: Each state has its own licensing board with its own Registered Professional Nurse licensure requirements. Consequently, although the baccalaureate degree programs in the College of Nursing at the
University of South Carolina are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE, http://www.aacn.nche.edu/ccne-accreditation/accredited-programs) thereby making BSN graduates eligible to sit for national licensure (NCLEX-RN) thus meeting requirements for RN licensure in the state of South Carolina, we cannot confirm that the program meets all the requirements for professional licensure in another state (e.g., some states have specific topical requirements). For students not living in South Carolina, the following link provides information regarding state licensure specific to individual states throughout the U.S. where a non-resident student lives: http://www.nursinglicensure.org/ for RN licensure.

If a current student is considering relocating to another state after being admitted into the program, the student must contact the program director to discuss how the move may impact their ability to participate in academic courses (distributed learning) and clinical practice (experiential learning) opportunities in a different state.

Student Social Media Policy

As professional nurses, students are responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of patients and research participants. The following guidelines are intended to minimize the risks of using social media:

a. First and foremost, nurses must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times.

b. Nurses are strictly prohibited from transmitting by way of any electronic media any patient-related image. In addition, students/nurses are restricted from transmitting any information that may be reasonably anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentiality or privacy, or otherwise degrade or embarrass the patient.

c. Do not share post or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, about a patient or information gained in the nurse-patient relationship with anyone unless there is a patient care related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so.

d. Do not identify patients by name or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.

e. Do not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if the patient is not identified.

f. Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones. Follow employer policies for taking photographs or video of patients for treatment or other legitimate purposes using employer-provided devices.
g. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Like in-person relationships, the nurse has the obligation to establish, communicate and enforce professional boundaries with patients in the online environment. Use caution when having online social contact with patients or former patients. Online contact with patients or former patients blurs the distinction between a professional and personal relationship. The fact that a patient may initiate contact with the nurse does not permit the nurse to engage in a personal relationship with the patient.

h. Consult employer policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work related postings.

i. Promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy.

j. Be aware of and comply with employer policies regarding use of employer-owned computers, cameras and other electronic devices and use of personal devices in the workplace.

k. Do not make disparaging remarks about employers or co-workers. Do not make threatening, harassing, profane, obscene, sexually explicit, racially derogatory, homophobic or other offensive comments.

l. Do not post content or otherwise speak on behalf of the employer unless authorized to do so and follow all applicable policies of the employer.

*All guidelines apply to students. Student should also not make disparaging remarks related to their clinical site, faculty or school. The College of Nursing has adopted the NCSBN position statement:

https://www.ncsbn.org/NCSBN_SocialMedia.pdf
Degree Requirements

There are differing levels of education in professional nursing including baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels. Each level of professional practice has unique knowledge with a shared core of knowledge that crosses all levels. Baccalaureate nursing education encourages the synthesis of knowledge and skills needed to begin professional nursing practice and to take on beginning leadership roles. The RN to BSN online degree program is designed for registered nurses who want to advance professionally and complete the BSN degree.

Masters nursing education builds on beginning professional practice and prepares graduates for leadership in specialized advanced practice roles. Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) education incorporates elements of masters nursing education and advanced practice and emphasizes research utilization, leadership, and health care policy development. PhD education prepares nurses to conduct independent research, generate theories, critically analyze existing theories relevant to the discipline of nursing, and facilitate the use of new knowledge in nursing practice. Nurses are prepared for myriad roles within the healthcare system because of the comprehensive knowledge they possess.

Undergraduate Nursing Program Requirements

Overview

The baccalaureate program, consisting of pre-nursing lower division and nursing upper division, provides students with essential knowledge and skills. Pre-nursing lower division courses provide a foundation in liberal arts, sciences, and nursing to develop basic skills in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In the upper division, nursing courses combine didactic material with clinical practice to continue the preparation for the practice of professional nursing.

BSN Program (Pre-licensure) Entrance Requirements

**Lower Division.** In order to be admitted into the College of Nursing, freshmen must meet all University and College of Nursing admission requirements. Students who have not successfully completed one high-school unit each of biology and chemistry are required to make up the deficiencies prior to admission. Acceptance into the University with a lower-division classification does not guarantee progression into the upper-division nursing major. Students who consider studying nursing at Carolina need to be aware that all USC undergraduates who seek a nursing degree are first admitted into the College of Nursing’s pre-nursing lower division. This does not guarantee later admission into the upper division. * Students enrolled in the lower division must meet minimum upper division admission standards set forth by the College of Nursing. Once minimum criteria are met, all qualified applicants are placed into an admissions group and are ranked by their
progression grade point averages. Based on the number of available seats and available clinical sites, students are admitted starting at the top of the progression GPA ranked order list. In recent years admission to the upper division has become highly competitive as demand for the program of study has increased and therefore the average acceptable grade point average will change from cohort to cohort.

Transfer students must have a minimum life** 3.00 GPA in all University and college work attempted and must meet freshman requirements if less than 30 semester hours have been completed. Transfer students’ performance in all science and nursing courses taken at other institutions must be reviewed upon admission. Nursing courses will be considered for transfer credit only from accredited nursing programs. To be eligible to apply for the upper division, transfer students must meet the College of Nursing requirements for progression through completion of the lower-division science and nursing courses. All entering students are expected to have basic computer skills.

*Students entering the university and meeting South Carolina Honors College (SCHC) admission criteria have a one-time opportunity, at the point of freshman admission only, to come into the Smart Start Honors College Nursing Program. Students admitted into the Smart Start Honors College Nursing Program are directly admitted into Upper Division of the Nursing Program contingent upon meeting all SCHC and College of Nursing academic standards criteria and completion of all upper division application progression requirements.

** Life GPA includes all grades from USC and non-USC collegiate coursework and constitutes an overall GPA.

End-of-Program Outcomes
Students in the baccalaureate programs:

1. Provide evidence-based clinically competent care across the continuum of care.
2. Demonstrate cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competency in providing nursing care to individuals, families, and groups within a diverse society.
3. Make clinical judgments using reflection, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
4. Use information and health care technologies for effective health care delivery.
5. Exhibit personal professional behavior in all professional activities.
6. Perform health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention care activities for individuals, groups and populations.
7. Work effectively as a member of the interdisciplinary health care team.
8. Assume leadership roles within the scope of professional practice.
9. Perform the professional roles of care provider, coordinator of care, member of a profession, and life-long learner.
Curriculum

The Carolina Core provides the common core of knowledge, skill, and academic experience required for all Carolina undergraduate students. A student's plan of study follows the bulletin under which they are admitted.

Change of Major into Nursing

Any USC-Columbia student interested in changing their major to Pre-Nursing Lower Division within the College of Nursing must participate in the following change of major process and meet minimum academic requirements for consideration. Acceptance into Pre-Nursing Lower Division does not guarantee acceptance into Nursing Upper Division. A separate, departmental, application is required for consideration into Nursing Upper Division. Students accepted as a change of major will receive additional information regarding when and how to apply to Nursing Upper Division.

Students must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements to change their major to nursing:

1. A minimum Institutional of a 3.000
   a. Grade Forgiveness will not be factored into the calculations of your GPAs
2. No more than one below C grade in a BSN required science course
3. Complete a minimum of 12 graded credit hours

IMPORTANT: Due to the capacity limits of the College of Nursing, meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee acceptance.

TIMELINE: For spring semester, all change of major applicants must submit a change of major application by October 1st. For summer/fall semesters, all change of major applicants must submit the change of major application by March 1st. Applications go live on the College of Nursing website each spring and fall semester on the first day of classes. Notifications for both acceptances and denials will be sent via email by the 15th of each of the above months.

ACCEPTED STUDENTS: All accepted change of major applicants are required to attend a College of Nursing New Major Information and Advising Session. This session will provide an overview of the BSN program, the curriculum, application process to Nursing Upper Division and will include a one-on-one advising appointment with one of the College of Nursing academic advisors.

Minors

The College of Nursing does not require a minor. A minor is a series of courses that display a distinct curricular pattern in one discipline that is different from the major. Undergraduate minors normally require a minimum of 18 credit hours of prescribed courses. Undergraduate minors appear on the transcripts, but not on the diplomas.
If time permits or if time is reserved by the student in the planning of their curriculum, a minor is possible. The Academic Bulletin offers a List of Minors: http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=88&navoid=2551

Senior Privilege Enrollment in Graduate Courses

A special provision to earn graduate credit is available for USC undergraduate seniors who have at least 90 semester hours, 3.00 Institutional, and nursing GPAs, and need less than a normal course load to complete the baccalaureate requirements. Under Senior Privilege, enrollment in graduate level coursework (500 or above) is subject to the approval of the graduate program director for the specified course. Courses for graduate credit under senior privilege cannot be used toward undergraduate degree requirements. Completion of graduate courses under senior privilege does not guarantee admission to graduate school. Students need to consult with their advisor for appropriate enrollment forms.

Timeline

- Prerequisite BSN science courses must be completed within 7 years of starting upper division coursework, or 8 years if have continuous fall/spring higher education enrollment. Every attempt at science courses within the last 7 years will be included in progression GPA calculation, or 8 years if have continuous fall/spring higher education enrollment.
- Once a student has begun upper division coursework, they must complete the BSN degree within 5 years.

Overview of RN-BSN

There are three admission options for the RN-BSN program; August, January, and May. Courses are offered in a 7-week online/accelerated format. Students must apply directly to the RN-BSN program for admission to the university. Admission is competitive.

In order to be eligible for the RN-BSN program, students must meet all the admission requirements of the College of Nursing and University. Specific RN-BSN program admission requirements are as follows:

- An Associate Degree in Nursing or Diploma in Nursing from an accredited ACEN (formerly NLNAC) program
- Official Transcripts from all schools attended
- Application
- Application Fee
- English Proficiency Requirement***
- Other Supporting Materials - Criminal Background check and drug screen
- Current unrestricted Registered Nurse (RN) license to practice professional nursing in the United States
- Minimum life GPA of 3.0****
***International applicants must be proficient in the English language. A score of 550 or above on the paper version of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is required. (A score of 210 or higher on the computerized version is required, and a minimum score of 77 on the Internet version is required.) TOEFL scores are not required for international students from countries where the primary language of instruction is English nor from graduates of high schools in the United States.

**** Students with a life GPA between 2.8 – 2.99 may be conditionally admitted, provided they have not completed more than 120 hours of prior collegiate coursework and have met all other admission requirements.

Unless stated otherwise, the policies stated in this handbook for undergraduate students are relevant for students in the RN-BSN Program https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/academic_programs/bs_nursing/rntobsn/index.php

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (RN-BSN Completion) requires a minimum of 120 hours. These credits are distributed between general education requirements, electives, and professional nursing requirements. Lower Division pre-requisite course requirements can be completed before progressing to upper division RN-BSN courses.

Students are required to attend a face-to-face clinical capstone experience at an approved clinical site in their local community or Columbia, SC.

After admission to the RN-BSN program and completion of all BSN degree requirements: Students awarded an Associate Degree in Nursing from an accredited (ACEN, formerly NLNAC) program will be awarded up to 38 credits towards meeting educational competencies for their A.D.N. degree (RN Licensure); OR Students with an Diploma in Nursing from an accredited (ACEN, formerly NLNAC) program will be awarded up to 25 credits towards meeting educational competencies for their Diploma degree (RN Licensure). Additional coursework may be needed to satisfy outstanding credits not met by ADN or Diploma degree. Education competency credits are held and will be awarded upon successful completion of all BSN degree requirements.

Loss of License:
In the event that a student in a post-license program becomes no longer licensed as a registered professional nurse by any license granting authority, they no longer meet the admission criteria of the program and are therefore no longer eligible to progress.

- The student will need to notify the program director immediately of the change in their licensure status.
- An academic record hold will be placed on the student’s records. The hold may be released upon becoming licensed.
The RN to BSN program must be completed in no more than seven years from enrollment, by whatever means, from the first program course.

USC Residency Requirements for BSN Graduates:
The last 25% of a students’ degree must be completed in residence (meaning through USC Columbia coursework or other USC campus), and at least half of the hours in the student’s major and minor courses (if applicable) must be taken at the University, i.e. (122 credits=31 hours). Advanced placement exam credits or transfer credits do not meet this requirement. Students must meet these requirements to be eligible for BSN graduation.
Computer Policy

Computer Requirements
The College of Nursing requires that all students in the Nursing Program have a notebook/laptop computer that meets or exceeds the requirements below. This computer is essential for use in completing research, academic, and communications tasks. You can purchase a new computer or use a computer you already own, provided it meets the minimum specifications below. Writing tablets, iPads, and similar devices currently do not meet the requirements of the standard. The College supports both Mac and PC (Windows) computer platforms for student use. The College relies on a variety of web based applications in the learning environment, and Google Chrome is recommended to access most content.

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<th>Macintosh Minimum Requirements</th>
<th>PC/Windows Minimum Requirements</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>2.0 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo Processor</td>
<td>2.0 GHz Intel Core i3 Processor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>4 GB RAM</td>
<td>4 GB RAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating System</td>
<td>OS X 10.11 (El Capitain), fully updated with firewall enabled</td>
<td>Windows 7 or later, fully updated with firewall enabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Drive (HDD)</td>
<td>128GB Hard Drive</td>
<td>128GB Hard Drive</td>
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<td>Networking Hardware</td>
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Learn more at: https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/ugrad_computer.php
Courses & Registration

Online Courses

Online nursing courses in the undergraduate programs are delivered through Blackboard Course Management System which allows USC faculty to create a secure course web site for class communications, posting assignments, posting readings, linking to complementary web sites, administering exams, and much more. In courses that use Blackboard, the course syllabus will provide basic information about accessing Blackboard https://blackboard.sc.edu. Additional information about Blackboard is available at http://www.uts.sc.edu/academic/blackboard/.

Students access online courses by logging in at https://blackboard.sc.edu.

Courses offered in this format are constructed and conducted differently than traditional classroom courses. Below are some suggestions on how to be successful in online courses:

- Become familiar with Blackboard (Bb), the course software
- Learn how to access Bb using Multifactor authentication
- Read the “How to…” guides that are found in each course. They are well worth your time
- Participate actively in the course

Academic Advising

All undergraduate nursing students are advised by academic advisors in the Office of Academic Affairs. Students must be advised for courses each semester and will not be allowed to register until advisement has occurred. Students may seek advice from their advisor at any time during the semester, especially when wanting to drop a course or alter the planned program of study in any way.

Requests for Approval of Semester Hours Overload

Students must complete a request for approval form (Appendix I) to take more than 18 hours in any semester and more than 7 hours in any summer session. The student must schedule and meet with the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies for approval.

Course Registration

Registering for courses is an important task that all students must complete throughout their time at USC. New and transfer undergraduate Nursing students may not register for nursing courses until they have been admitted to the program, been advised and completed orientation. See link below for Self Service Carolina (SSC) (our registration system).
The University Registrar establishes the official calendars followed by the University of South Carolina system. Access the full current and upcoming semester academic calendars to find key dates and information including holidays, registration dates, payment deadlines, drop or add dates, as well as exams and commencement for each term. Each **part of term** has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in **SSC** [https://my.sc.edu/](https://my.sc.edu/) to determine the part of term for your classes.

**Registration Tips**

**Step 1:** Make note of the courses you are projected to take in the next term. Check your advisement form or DegreeWorks Schedule Planner. If you have questions about the courses you are scheduled to take, contact your academic advisor.

**Step 2:** Check your Registration Time Ticket in SSC - see "Registration" then "Registration Notices and Holds". Make a note of the date/time and set a reminder in your calendar.

What is a Registration Time Ticket? It is the time the Registrar's office has appointed a student to begin registration for the next term.

**Step 3:** Check your student account for holds. See "Registration" then "Registration Notices and Holds." What should you do if you have a hold on your account in SSC? Contact the office that placed the hold on your account and determine what needs to be done to have the hold removed. Ensure your hold is removed before the time on your Registration Time Ticket.

What is an Advisement Hold? Advisement holds are placed on student records by the College of Nursing to ensure students have been advised and when necessary have completed all CastleBranch requirements and that the requirements are up to date. Advisement holds prevent registration. Advisement holds will be removed by staff each semester.

**Step 4:** Upper division and RN-BSN students in NURS 434: Confirm your CastleBranch account is up to date - Sign in to your CastleBranch account and view your "To Do List" - take care of any overdue items before the time on your Registration Time Ticket.

**Step 5:** Register for the classes listed on your advisement form or DegreeWorks Schedule Planner at your designated registration time (See Step 2 above to determine your designated time).

Need help with the Registration Processes in SSC? See the SSC tutorials: [https://tinyurl.com/yyc78wq3](https://tinyurl.com/yyc78wq3)
Course Restrictions

Registration for a clinical nursing course is limited to students admitted to upper division in the College of Nursing and who have a compliant CastleBranch account. Student will not be allowed to register for courses that the prerequisites are not met.

Course Selection and Drop Period

The University of South Carolina Registrar’s web page SSC https://my.sc.edu/enables students to register via the internet and access their personal information such as grades, financial aid, fees, and class schedule. The most up to date information is posted online.

A student may have no more than two attempts at a NURS course. This includes W, WF, and A through F grading. Students can use SSC https://my.sc.edu/ to add, drop, or change a course or section. Any change in enrollment must be recorded with the Registrar’s Office. Students may check the Academic Calendar online at http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/default.stm for the last day to drop a course without a grade of “W” being recorded and for the last day to drop a course or withdraw without a grade of “WF” being recorded. Failure to complete the official course withdrawal process has serious implications for calculation of the final course grade and calculation of grade point averages. Students should discuss any potential changes with their assigned undergraduate advisor prior to making the changes.

For a refund schedule, please see the Tuition Refund section below for more information. Please note that should a student fail to attend classes in a course for which s/he is registered, s/he may not be automatically dropped from the course. Students who fail to drop a course they are not taking, but are still registered for, within the drop/add period may receive a grade of FN in that course.

All health requirements to include background checks and drug screenings must be compliant by the established deadlines or a registration hold for enrollment will be issued. In addition, students who fail to meet the established deadline will be required to meet with the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies (ADUS) for a STAR Counseling Form.
Registration for independent study courses require an independent study contract (see Independent Study Courses).

Requests for Approval of Semester Hours Overload

Students must complete a request for approval form (Appendix I) to take more than 18 hours in any semester and more than 7 hours in any summer session. The student must schedule and meet with the ADUS for approval.

Enrollment Status

Undergraduate students who are enrolled in 12 semester hours or more for the fall, spring, or summer semester are considered full-time for academic purposes. Students who have been verified as learning disabled by the Office of Student Disability Services must be enrolled in 9 semester hours or more for the fall, spring or summer semesters to be considered full-time students with regard to access to University residence halls and eligibility for financial aid, provided this is consistent with their academic advisory plan.

Full-time fees for undergraduate students are calculated on 12 to 16 semester hours.

Full-time benefits for veterans are determined by the Office of Veterans and Military Services https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/veterans_and_military_services/index.php.

Tuition Refund

Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in SSC https://my.sc.edu/ to determine the part of term for your classes.

Withdrawal deadlines should not be used in determining how to receive a 100% refund on tuition. For more details, please review the withdrawal information provided by the University Registrar, or view the Parts of Term Dates and Deadlines located in the Academics section of my.sc.edu.

Independent Study Courses

The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not adequately covered by the regular course structure. Students seeking to enroll in an independent study course should work with a faculty member willing to serve as Instructor of Record. Prior to enrolling in the course, the student and faculty member will meet to develop the learning objectives and course outcomes.
Registration for Independent Study

The **Undergraduate Independent Study Contract (AS-6U)** is required for any graded, for-credit course in which the student is doing independent academic work. This contract is to contain the following information:

- Course Topic
- Course Summary should give insight into the content to be covered within one semester or part of the semester
- Course Objectives
- Textbooks, Reading, or Other Resources to be Used
- Method of Evaluation

This form must be approved by course faculty and ADUS. See additional required approval below. Students send an approved copy of the G-ISC to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course.

Summer Sessions

There are typically three sessions offered each summer. Accelerated courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through July. Non-clinical courses typically are scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through the first of August. Clinical Courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through mid-August. Registration for summer and fall courses occurs simultaneously during the Advance Registration period in the spring semester. Unlike fall and spring registration, summer registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Class Attendance & Absences

The College of Nursing adheres to the University’s attendance policy which states: absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to extract a grade penalty for such absences.

Attendance standards may be higher for lab and clinical experiences with exceptions for true emergencies only. Students are required to attend all lab and clinical components of their coursework with absences permitted up to 10 percent only for certified unavoidable circumstances. Absences from the lab or clinical component of a course will not be excused
except in the case of severe illness of the student with documentation from the provider stating the student should not be in clinical (fever, diarrhea, infections) or in the event of the death/critical illness of an immediate family member, including grandparents. In rare cases, exceptions will be made for absences for academic reasons and may be excused with the joint approval of the course coordinator and the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Make-up time for clinical nursing experiences will be determined by the clinical coordinator of the course. All clinical time must be made up. Faculty may require withdrawal of a student who exceeds the 10 percent clinical absence and is unable to meet the practice and clinical objectives of the course.

RN-BSN students must also comply with the attendance policy. Attendance is evaluated based on active engagement in the online classroom.

Professional Meeting and Conference Attendance

The professional registered nurse is encouraged to remain engaged in professional organizations throughout their career. With this in mind, the College of Nursing is in support of student attending professional meetings. However, students cannot sacrifice valuable learning experiences such as clinical experience, simulation activities and class meetings to attend them.

The College of Nursing makes every effort to allow for such events. However, it is not possible to allow for all of them. In the event of a schedule conflict, resolution must be negotiated with the course faculty and or ADUS. Permissions must be obtained prior to making any travel or registration arrangements. In general, students must be in excellent clinical and academic standing to be permitted to participate in the professional event. Missed exams will be offered in an alternated format and will need to be completed within a 48 hours period of return. No early examinations will be offered. Students will not be exempted from course requirements because they are attending a conference.

Withdrawal from Course and/or from University

A student may have no more than two attempts at a NURS course. This includes W, WF, and A through F grading. Students can drop a course or withdraw with a grade of W or WF via SSC. Deadlines for dropping a course without receiving a W and WF, as well as refund dates, are determined by the part of term to which a course is attached. Every part of term during a semester has a drop/add deadline.

Withdrawals are defined by the time in the semester you wish to withdraw. There are both academic and financial implications associated with the date you drop your course(s). Should you wish to withdraw from a course with a grade of W or WF, a grade of W or WF will be recorded on your transcript. A grade of W will not be calculated in your GPA but will
be recorded on your permanent record. Prior to withdrawing, you are encouraged to view your Concise Student Schedule located on the Registration tab of the Student section found in SSC to identify your part of term, speak with a counselor at the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for questions regarding how dropping some or all your courses will impact your aid (e.g. federal and private loans, grants, scholarships, special status, etc.).

Courses dropped after the WF deadline will be recorded as a WF on your permanent record. The grade of WF is treated as an F in the calculation of your GPA. The WF deadline will vary based on the part of term for your class found in SSC.

Under the University’s withdrawal policy, if a student is experiencing a significant personal hardship that has prevented academic success during a past semester or the Withdrawal Fail (WF) period of a current academic term, the student may be eligible to withdraw from courses for the semester of concern.

Withdrawal from all courses constitutes withdrawal from the University. All full or part-time undergraduate students wishing to withdraw from the University or to discontinue enrollment from all courses for the semester should first consult with their academic advisor. In addition, staff in the Undergraduate Student Ombuds Services can provide assistance.

For information about tuition refunds, please contact the Bursar’s Office.

Leave of Absence or Inactive Status
Students accepted to and/or enrolled in Upper Division who wish to withdraw from the University and anticipate returning should contact the Executive Director of Student Affairs. A space is not guaranteed if the student decides to return to complete the program of study.

An Upper Division student not enrolled for two consecutive semesters in clinical courses must demonstrate clinical competency before progressing. To begin the process, contact the Executive Director of Student Affairs at the College of Nursing.

Transfer Credit
- A maximum of 76 semester hours may be transferred from a two-year junior or technical college. Note: Nursing courses are not accepted.
- A maximum of 76 semester hours may be transferred from a two-year junior or technical college. Note: Nursing courses are not accepted.
- A maximum of 18 semester hours may be taken as a transient student once enrolled at USC. A student must have a minimum 2.000 GPA to take transient coursework.
- The last 25% of a student’s degree must be completed in residence at the University, and at least half of the hours in the student’s major courses and in the student’s minor courses (if applicable) must be taken at the University
Students enrolled at USC who wish to take general education courses at another institution must discuss their options with their advisor. Students taking transient work must complete a Special Enrollment Request Form with their advisor before enrolling in the course. Students must provide a detailed description of the course they wish to take in order to determine its equivalency. Transcripts must be sent from the transient institution to USC immediately after completion of the course. Probation requirements will apply to any transient course work.

Grades, Grade Reports and Transcripts

Grades

**FN** (Failure-Non-Attendance) and **UN** (Unsatisfactory-Non-Attendance) grades are assigned to students who never attended or have stopped attending class but have not officially dropped or withdrawn. Faculty are required to provide a last date of attendance when assigning this grade. The grade and the last date of attendance are used in determining the recalculation of awarded funds for financial aid recipients. Reporting the last date of attendance is critical to avoid potential financial liability for the institution.

FN and UN grades are displayed and calculated as F and U grades on the official transcript.

**WF** is assigned for student withdrawal from a course after the penalty deadline prescribed in the academic and refund calendars on the registrar’s Web site. (See section on “Dropping A Course.”) The grade of WF is treated as an F in the evaluation of suspension conditions and grade point average computation.

**W** is assigned for student withdrawal from a course after the late registration period but before the penalty date. Courses dropped during the late registration period (as published in the academic and refund calendars on the registrar’s Web site) will not be recorded on a student’s permanent record. In exceptional cases, the grade W will be used after the first seven weeks of a semester, primarily in cases of withdrawal from the University or from a course for medical reasons. (See section on “Dropping A Course.”) A grade of W will not enter into the evaluation of suspension conditions or in grade point average computation but will be recorded on a student’s permanent record.

**I**, Incomplete, is assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, in the instructor’s judgment, a student is unable to complete some portion of the assigned work in a course because of an unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. The grade of I is not intended to give students additional time to complete course assignments unless there is some indication that the specified condition or event prevented the student from
completing course assignments on time. By arrangement with the instructor, the student will have up to 12 months in which to complete the work before a permanent grade is recorded. Re-enrolling in the course will not make up an Incomplete. An Assignment of Incomplete Grade form (AS-5) must be completed by the instructor and submitted to the Office of the University Registrar explaining the reason for the I and conditions for make-up. A grade of I is not computed in calculating a student’s grade point average. After 12 months an I that has not been made up is changed to a grade of F or to the back-up grade indicated by the faculty member on the Assignment of Incomplete Grade form.

T, a Graduate School symbol, is assigned to indicate enrollment in Thesis Preparation (799) and Dissertation Preparation (899). Courses with this symbol will be counted as hours attempted and hours earned only. Grade points will not be awarded. For unsatisfactory work the grade of U should be assigned. The grade of I cannot be assigned in courses numbered 799 and 899.

AUD indicates a course was carried on an audit basis. (See section on “Auditing” for more information.)

NR, No Record, is assigned in the event that the grade is not available at the time final grades are submitted. It is a temporary mark on the transcript and must be replaced by a grade. If replacement does not occur before the last week of the spring or fall semester following the term for which the grade was recorded, a grade of F will be assigned. The NR is ignored in computing the GPA.

Grades Reports and Transcripts

Students’ grades are kept confidential in accordance with federal law (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended). Student grade report is viewable within SSC in the Grades section. Final grades are due 72 hours after the exams. If your grade is not posted, contact your instructor.

At any point in the semester, it’s easy to view your USC GPA. Just log in to SSC to view your academic record. If you need an official copy of your grades, order a transcript. Transcripts are maintained by the Office of the Registrar https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/transcripts_and_records/transcripts/index.php, not by the College of Nursing.

Grade Disagreement

The role of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies (ADUS) in matters of grade disagreement is to investigate the processes used by faculty in determining the grade and advise the faculty member in handling any perceived problems with applying
grading processes outlined in the syllabus or any other apparent violations of fairness. The Faculty member ultimately determines the grade that is awarded.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Most assigned textbooks are available in the University Bookstore. The University Bookstore is located on the first floor of the Russell House. Several other bookstores such as the South Carolina Bookstore and Addams University Bookstore, located near campus, also sell required textbooks and academic supplies.

Standardized Assessment Tests

The College of Nursing uses standardized computer tests as one of several methods to evaluate student readiness to progress in certain courses, particularly the clinical courses in upper division. Methods of evaluation in all nursing courses are outlined in the specific course syllabus. Included in the testing package are additional study resources such as website practice tests, remediation lesson plans, and an end of program NCLEX Review Course. The student pays for standardized testing through fees each semester of upper division.

All standardized computer testing is conducted in the College of Nursing for traditional students and those with disabilities accommodation. Students with disabilities accommodation will be provided their full accommodation during these exams.

Examination Procedure

No examination materials (including scratch paper) are to leave the room under any circumstances during the actual examination period or during an examination review.

Book bags are to be placed at the front or side of the classroom away from all students for the duration of the exam.

Cell phones, PDA, IPODS, Computers iPad, watches or any time keeping devices, or similar electronic devices with or without internet connections are to be turned off and stored in book bag during examination or examination review and until exiting the room.

Calculators (when authorized) must not be capable of storing equations, graphs, charts, etc. Only non-programmable calculators are allowed-no cell phones, PDA, or similar devices are to be used as calculators during exams.

Hats are not to be worn during examinations.
Restroom breaks are discouraged. If restroom breaks are needed during examination, only one student at a time will be allowed to leave the exam and a same sex faculty member may accompany the student.

Student are expected to arrive on time for scheduled exams. Arriving late to an exam is considered unprofessional and is considered a violation of the professionalism policy. Grade sanctions for students arriving late to an exam are specified in each course syllabus.

Questions related to exam content are strictly prohibited during the examination. Questions regarding suspected typing error on the test (e.g. omissions, misnumbering, defective exam pages, etc.) are permitted.

Final Exams

The College of Nursing Final exam schedule is prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs and dates and times are communicated by Course Coordinators. No final examination may be held outside of the published final examination dates and times without authorization from the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies. In any course which meets once a week, no quiz, test or examination may be given during the last class meeting prior to the regular final examination period (see USC Undergraduate Bulletin under Academic Regulations and Examination Policies. ATI exams are considered part of the final assessments for the course and can be scheduled during the final exam period. (http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=66&navoid=1813&hl=%22Grading%22&return to=search#Examination_Policies)

Graduating seniors are exempt from this policy. Final exams for graduating seniors are given during the last week of class to facilitate the NCLEX review course.

Course / Faculty Evaluations

At the end of each course, students evaluate the course and its instructor. The results of these evaluations are maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs.
Academic Regulations

Good Standing
A student in good standing is defined as a student who:

- Maintains the proper GPA
- Maintains the proper course load (without incompletes)
- Is not on academic probation
- Does not have two consecutive semesters of non-enrollment
- Is on an approved leave of absence
- Is not on financial hold nor carrying past due balances
- Has completed the immunizations, background check, and drug screening processes with no identified problems (as applicable) See Appendix A, College of Nursing Student Substance Abuse Policy.

A student must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0** to remain in good academic standing and to graduate from the College of Nursing and the University.

Academic Honors
Each semester academic achievement is recognized by the USC President’s Honor List (GPA of 4.0) or the Dean’s List (GPA of 3.5 or higher and 3.25 or higher for freshmen). Alpha Xi is the College’s Chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. Upper division nursing students who achieve academic excellence in the nursing program are considered for membership by invitation.

Academic Standards and Probation

Pre-Nursing Lower Division (LD)
Admission into the Pre-Nursing Lower Division does not guarantee admission into Nursing Upper Division. All students in the Pre-Nursing Lower Division are subject to the following regulations:

**LD Progression with Course of Study:**
- Students must earn a “C” or better in **ALL** courses that are to be used towards BSN degree requirements
- Students must maintain an **INSTITUTIONAL** grade point average (GPA) of 3.000 (on a 4.000 scale)
  - A student is placed on academic probation with the College of Nursing if their INSTITUTIONAL GPA falls below 3.000
– The probationary period lasts for one major semester (Fall/Spring) or 12 credit hours

– If at the end of the probationary period the GPA is not a 3.000 or higher, the student must change their major before the next semester and will not be advised by the College of Nursing

– Not meeting the minimum GPA standards of the College of Nursing may have an effect on a student’s academic standing at the university; see the Academic Bulletin for more information – http://bulletin.sc.edu

• All incomplete grades posted on the transcript must be removed before progression into the upper division can be considered.

• No more than one failing grade (D+, D, or F) in a nursing or required science course

• A student is allowed only one below C grade in a nursing or required science course in Pre-Nursing Lower Division
  – After earning a below C in a required science course a student is required to retake the course the next time it is offered at USC- Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Union or Sumter.
  – After earning a below C in a nursing course a student is required to retake the course the next time it is offered at USC- Columbia

• If a student earns a second below C grade in a nursing or required science course, they are no longer eligible for the nursing program. If staying at USC, they must change their major

• A student may have no more than two attempts at a NURS course. This includes W, WF, and A through F grading.

Progression to Nursing Upper Division

Progression is competitive, based on progression GPA, and limited to a set number of qualified students based on available clinical placements. Progression GPA includes grades on all attempts of courses (or Nursing approved competency equivalents).

Students must submit a completed College of Nursing progression application no later than November 1 of the semester of enrollment in 216. If you are considered an international student and English is your second language, you must submit by November 1, 2019 TOEFL scores or an evaluation by the Department of International Student Services to WMBB 208. (1601 Greene Street Columbia, SC 29208)

The student will select the campus where he/she wishes to be considered for application and to complete their program of study. Once the student is accepted, all course work and clinical work will be completed with the campus where application
was completed, and admission was accepted. There will be no moving between campus cohorts.

All the following requirements must be met prior to selection to Nursing Upper Division:

- Designated (*) courses from the first 3 semesters must be successfully completed with a minimum grade point average of 3.000
- No more than 1 below C grade in a nursing or required science course
- Students must have a C or better in all progression courses in order to have a completed application
- Every attempt at each course, no matter the institution, is included into the Progression GPA calculation
- **Minimum** 3.000 total INSTITUTIONAL GPA
- A completed Parallel Plan must be on file with your nursing advisor as part of the application
- Application opens September 15 and closes November 1 to begin clinical the next year (Summer or Fall)
- **Every student must be prepared for a Summer start**
- Once a student is placed in a cohort, Summer or Fall, the placement cannot be negotiated.

Progression Courses:

- BIOL 243/L*
- BIOL 244/L*
- BIOL 250/L*
- CHEM 102*
- ENGL 101*
- ENGL 102*
- NURS 212*
- NURS 216*
- PSYC 101 OR SOCY 101*
- PSYC 420*
- STAT 112*

Students who are not accepted to the upper division should talk with their advisor regarding the feasibility of reapplication. If the student chooses to reapply to the upper division, the student must submit a new application for the next admission cycle and must compete with a new applicant group.

**Academic Probation and Academic Warning**

Students who have less than a 3.000 Institutional GPA are on probation within the college for one major semester (fall/spring) or 12 credit hours but may continue to take all required
courses. If at the end of the probationary semester their Institutional GPA is still less than 3.000, students must change their major before the next semester and will not be advised by the College of Nursing. Students must contact https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/advising/university_advising_center/index.php

Academic Dismissal

A student will be dismissed from the College of Nursing if they:

- Receive two grades of D+, D, or F in a nursing or required science course.
- Fail a required undergraduate course twice or withdrawing from the course on the first attempt and failing the course on the second attempt or vice versa. A student may only attempt a specific undergraduate course twice in the undergraduate program. An attempt is any grade, W or WF received in a course.
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at end of academic probation.
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at end of major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the Registrar.
- Are banned from a clinical agency because of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior.
- Have a professional (RN) licensure suspension or revocation.
- A student in a post-license program who becomes no longer licensed or has any form of restriction/probation as a registered professional nurse by any license granting authority, no longer meet the admission criteria of the program and are no longer eligible to progress. The student will need to notify the program director immediately of the change in their licensure status. An academic record hold will be placed on the student’s records. The hold may be released upon becoming licensed or restriction/probation removed.

Suspension

Suspension from the College of Nursing and suspension from the University are two different academic regulations. (See Undergraduate Bulletin, Academic Standards Policies)

Appeals for Reinstatement

Appeals for reinstatement from students should be reviewed first by the Executive Director of Student Affairs. (see Student Petitions Committee below).

Grading Policies

- Grades are determined by quality of work, performance on course assignments, examination grades, and class attendance.
- Nursing students must earn a grade of ‘C’ or higher in required science and NURS courses.
• The Academic Bulletin explains the University’s Grading System (http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=66&navoid=1813&hl=%22Grading%22 &returnto=search#Grading_Policies).
• If a student takes a test booklet, a zero (0) will be received on the test and a performance evaluation will be completed and placed in the student’s permanent record.
• Clinical performance is pass/fail.

**College of Nursing grading scale for undergraduate nursing courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>81-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>73-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>69 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Below ‘C’ Rule
Students must earn a minimum grade of C in all required courses in the nursing program. Only one below C grade is allowed in a required science or nursing (NURS) course to remain eligible for the nursing major.

Grade Forgiveness
Grade forgiveness is not recognized by the College of Nursing. All grades on all course attempts will be utilized for admission, probation, and progression. Refer to the University’s Grading Policies for details on Course Grade Forgiveness.

Maximum of two attempts for each course. 
http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=97&navoid=2830#Grading_Policies

CON Policy on Rounding for Undergraduate Courses
• All grades will be recorded to the hundredth (two decimal points).
• Individual grades are not rounded.
• The final grade will be rounded according to the following rubric: .01 to .50 rounds down to the nearest whole number, for example, 79.50 equals 79.
.51 to .99 rounds up to the nearest whole number, for example, 79.51 equals 80.

Course or Clinical Failure

If a required course is failed, it must be repeated at the next available offering and a satisfactory grade must be achieved. The repeated course may not be taken with the Pass/Fail Option. Any courses for which the failed course is a prerequisite may not be taken until a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course has been achieved. However, the failing grade remains on the transcript even though the student has repeated the course and obtained a passing grade or above. The failing grade is still calculated into the cumulative GPA.

Failure to earn a satisfactory evaluation in the clinical component inclusive of the faculty evaluation will result in a course failure regardless of other grades earned in the course. Clinical failure may occur at any time during the semester. Students will receive a “D+,” “D” or “F” in a clinical course if they fail to meet objectives or if they are removed from the clinical setting for unsafe practice or unprofessional activities at any point during the course. Violation(s) of the Nurse Practice Act will be reported to the Board of Nursing.

Unsafe Clinical Practice and Clinical Evaluation

Nursing Department faculty members are academically committed to preparing baccalaureate graduates who are competent in the skills of nursing practice: technical, diagnostic and interpersonal. Faculty members have an ethical and legal responsibility and accountability for the protection of others within the health care and larger community from unsafe, unethical, or illegal nursing practice on the part of University of South Carolina students and graduates. All students are expected to be familiar with the principles of safe, ethical, and legal practice and are expected to perform accordingly. Therefore, students may be disciplined or dismissed from the nursing major for practice or behavior, which threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the safety of a client, family member, authorized representative, student peer, faculty member, healthcare provider, and/or self, or is unethical or illegal. Unacceptable practice may be a one-time event or a series of events. Clinical practice may be considered unsafe when a student fails to use the nursing process effectively by engaging in one or more of the following activities.

Unsafe Clinical Practice List
You understand that should it be determined that if you are considered unsafe and fail to use a nursing process effectively, you will receive an academic penalty (including but not limited to: clinical failure, course failure, suspension, expulsion from the College, or other penalties) and be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity for additional disciplinary action. (Please note that this list is not all-inclusive.)

Unsafe clinical practice is at the discretion of each individual professor:

1. Unacceptable practice is defined as: An act(s) or behavior(s) of the type that violates the Nurse Practice Act. An act(s) or behavior(s) that violates the American Nurse Association (ANA) Code [of Ethics] for Nurses, the ANA Standards of Clinical Practice, or the College of Nursing Core Values.

2. An act(s) or behavior(s) that threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the physical, emotional, mental, or environmental safety of a client, family member or designate, student peer, a faculty member, health care provider, or self.

3. Attending clinical with active infectious disease process or when lab results are in critical range.

4. An act(s) or behavior(s) that is unethical, dishonest or illegal, e.g., lying or deliberately giving inaccurate information.

5. An act(s) or behavior(s) that constitutes nursing practice for which the student is not authorized to perform, or has not been taught, at the time of the incident.

6. Unauthorized entry(s) into the computer or misuse of clinical records or misuse of computer technology to violate patient, faculty or staff rights.”

7. A trend of behavior often characterized by being unprepared or inadequately prepared for clinicals, the classroom or in simulation.

8. Continued inability to perform safely, ethically, or legally without immediate/close instructor supervision (in this case, there may not be a single isolated incident of unacceptable practice, failure to progress).

9. A use of prescribed/non-prescribed or other substances that alter the ability to clinically reason in the classroom, simulation area or clinical environment.

10. Failure to recognize the need for assistance when unfamiliar with advanced practice nursing action.
11. Failure to take advanced practice nursing action when such action is essential to the health and safety of the client.

12. Failure to recognize the influence of own attitudes and behaviors on care of client.

13. Failure to assume responsibility for completing nursing action.

14. Violation of laws or rules relating to patient record confidentiality.

15. Classroom or College behavior that is threatening or potentially harmful towards peers, instructors, advisors or others.

16. Unsatisfactory attendance/tardiness in clinical, simulation, advisement or classroom.

17. Plagiarism of clinical worksheets, exams, written or other required course assignments.

Failure to meet mandatory requirements set forth by the College of Nursing in order to hold students accountable to the above standards, clinical instructors and faculty will give a formal documentation to students who exhibit unsafe practices. This formal documentation will be in the form of a “STAR Counselling Form” that references the student handbook and the exact standard the student failed to display in his/her clinical practice. The documentation of STAR Counselling Form will be delivered in a face-to-face meeting with the clinical course coordinator and a witness. Both student and course coordinator will sign the documentation and the student will receive a copy. This “STAR Counselling Form” will be maintained in the student’s permanent file in the CON from semester to semester regardless of the student’s status (out of sequence, etc.). Students will be dismissed from the nursing program upon issuance of a 3rd “STAR Counselling” during the duration of the program. Any grossly unsafe or negligent clinical event or unethical practice (including but not limited to those covered above) may constitute an automatic course or program failure without the student receiving a counseling or warning. A single incident of unacceptable practice may be grounds for course failure and dismissal from the nursing major.

Students may receive unsatisfactory clinical performance at the discretion of each course coordinator. If a student is removed from the clinical setting for unacceptable practice, the student will not return to that clinical setting unless cleared by the Course Coordinator. Students awarded an "D+", "D", or "F" grade for unsafe practice in clinical will need to repeat all portions of the course.

The Course Coordinator and the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies will determine the consequences of the unacceptable action, in accordance with USC policy. Consequences include:
• Remedial work and/or instruction
• Physical and/or mental evaluation
• Substance screening
• Award of grade of “D+”, “D”, or F” for the course
• Withdrawal from the course
• Immediate dismissal from the nursing major

In the event the student is enrolled in two clinical courses during the semester in which course failure due to unacceptable practice occurs, a determination of safety to practice will be made in the second clinical course by the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the student may not be allowed to continue in the second course.

Incomplete Policy
A student who fails to complete a course within the prescribed period and does not withdraw from the course will receive, at the instructor’s discretion, either a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure). If an I grade is granted but not completed in the time period outlined the grade will revert to a F or faculty determined grade.

Incompletes in Non-Clinical Courses

A grade of incomplete in a non-clinical course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

• The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.

• The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.

• The student and instructor have completed an Assignment of Incomplete Grade Form (AS-5).

• The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. The student has up to 12 months to complete the work unless the instructor has given an earlier deadline.

Any grade of incomplete which remains after one calendar year from date of assignment automatically converts to either an “F” or the backup grade assigned by the instructor.
Statement of Responsibility/Waiver of Liability

Students attending certain events sponsored by the College of Nursing must sign a Statement of Responsibility/Waiver of Liability form.

Degree Completion and Graduation

Application for a Degree

To be eligible for graduation a student must meet all University and College of Nursing standards for receiving a degree. Candidates for degrees must file a formal application during the last semester before graduation prior to the deadline set by the Registrar’s Office. Deadlines are posted for each term on the official academic calendar of the University Registrar. Applications filed after the deadline result will not be accepted and will delay receipt of diploma. At the time of graduation, the student’s cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00.
Student Resources

Chain of Command

Chain of Command is the hierarchy of authority that permits the coordination needed to accomplish goals. The chain of command in academia begins with the faculty of record for a specific course and/or the student's advisor. If the student feels they need to take their concerns further up the chain, the next contact should be the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies or Program Director, the Associate Dean for Academics and finally the Dean of the College of Nursing.

Role of Executive Director of Student Affairs

One of the roles of the Executive Director of Student Affairs is to serve as a student advocate in the College of Nursing. The Executive Director of Student Affairs serves as the initial contact for concerns such as requesting exception to a college policy (petitions) or a grievance. The Executive Director serves as a confidential, informal and independent resource for student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Ms. Cheryl Nelson can be reached at (803) 777-8777 or email cynelson@email.sc.edu.

Role of Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

The Associate Dean for DEI strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of all students and the consideration of their issues in the College of Nursing. This role also serves as a confidential resource for student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Dr. Coretta Jenerette can be reached at (803) 576-8332 or email cjeneret@mailbox.sc.edu.

Role of Undergraduate Student Ombuds Services

Sometimes, things don’t go according to plan. An illness keeps you out of class. A family emergency requires you to be away from campus. You have a concern, but you’re not sure who to tell. Maybe you have a problem you’ve tried to solve, but you’re stumped about what to do next. The undergraduate student ombuds can help.

Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

The USC Division of Student Affairs collaborates with campus and external constituents to provide access, facilitate students’ progress and persistence, advance learning, and shape responsible citizens and future leaders. More information about the offices under the division is available at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/index.php.
Change of Name or Address
A student must notify the Office of the Registrar, and the Office of Student Affairs of any changes in name. Change of name requires presentation of legal documentation. To change directory information, access Self-Service Carolina (https://my.sc.edu/).

Outside Employment
Due to the rigor of upper division course work it is strongly recommended that employment be limited as much as possible so that students may devote ample time for course preparation. Undergraduate students should expect two full days of classes and two full days of clinical per week with additional labs and classes intermittently. Full-time employment is not recommended.

Technology Resource Center (TRC) - STUDENT RESOURCE
The TRC (Room 306) is available to all nursing students, faculty, and staff. There are 50 computers equipped with a wide range of software packages including computer assisted instructional and testing programs. TRC hours are generally from 8 - 5 Monday through Friday, but changes to this schedule are posted outside the entrance to the lab. Occasionally, the TRC will be closed to general student usage due to computer testing sessions, primarily at the end of semesters. Efforts are made to notify students in advance when these testing sessions are needed. The TRC director and helpdesk staff are available to answer questions and assist student and faculty with the use of resources.

Student Organizations
Students are encouraged to actively participate in campus organizations.

- The Student Nurses Association (SNA) at USC is open for membership to any undergraduate nursing student. For more information: https://garnetgate.sa.sc.edu/organization/sna.
- The American Assembly for Men in Nursing (AAMN) is open for membership to any undergraduate nursing student.
- Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc. is a service sorority dedicated to helping our community and building last relationship. It is open to registered nurses and nursing students. For more information: https://garnetgate.sa.sc.edu/organization/chietaphi.
- Nurse Christian Fellowship (NCF)’s purpose is to establish and advance in nursing, within education and practice, witnessing communities of nursing students and nurses who follow Jesus as Savior and Lord: growing in love for God, God’s Word, God’s people of every ethnicity and culture, and God’s purposes in the world. For more information: https://garnetgate.sa.sc.edu/organization/ncf.
- Sigma Theta Tau - Invitation to membership in Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society in Nursing is offered to undergraduate students who demonstrate
academic excellence in the nursing program, leadership in community service, and a potential for scholarly excellence. Events sponsored by the College of Nursing chapter, Alpha Xi, occur throughout the academic year. For more information: https://www.facebook.com/STTIAlphaXi/.

• Columbia Area Black Nurses Association (CABNA) - The Columbia Area Black Nurses Association’s mission is to educate, advocate, and broaden the spectrum of healthcare for the underserved while being of service, providing scholarship, and mentorship for the nursing profession within our communities. Application for membership available at CABNA’s website: https://columbiaareabna.org.
Student Petition and Grievance Policies

Student Petitions Policy

Overview

Students who feel they are entitled to relief from or deviation in the academic regulations of the University or the College of Nursing should apply through the petition process of the Student Petitions Committee of the College.

The purview of the Student Petitions Committee is to address student petitions, in accordance with College and University guidelines. Students will receive an email notification within 24 hours followed by a letter informing them of the Committee’s decision and outlining the required course of action. A copy will be sent to the student’s advisor and Program Director. All matters of academic discipline are acted upon through the Student Petitions Committee of the College of Nursing.

Meetings

The Student Petitions Committee meets three times a year at the close of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and as needed, to rule on specific academic problems.

Petitions

A student must petition the Committee in writing, describing the situation, and may be asked to present his or her case at the Committee meeting. The petition should be submitted to the Executive Director of Student Affairs.

Grievance Policy

Overview

For nonacademic issues, see the current USC Student Handbook, USC Policies and Procedures Manual located at http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php. For academic issues refer to both the current USC Policies and Procedures Manual at the
The undergraduate student academic grievance policy describes the channel of resolution used in the College of Nursing to resolve students’ academic issues or complaints. The channel requires that the student seek resolution with the faculty member alleged to have caused the problem and, if not resolved, the student should initiate resolution through a defined set of procedures.

Students are encouraged to meet with their course faculty if they have academic problems. Further procedures for resolution of differences are outlined in the Student Grievance Policy-Academic of the current USC Policies and Procedures Manual and this College of Nursing Undergraduate Student Handbook. Contact the Executive Director of Student Affairs in the College of Nursing for assistance.

Undergraduate Student Grievance Policy - Academic

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLLEGE OF NURSING

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY - ACADEMIC

The purpose of this policy is to inform students of their rights and responsibilities regarding the academic issues cited below.

1. **Protection of freedom of expression.** Students should be free to take reasoned exceptions to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. They are responsible, however, for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

2. **Protection against improper academic evaluation.** Students should have protection, through orderly procedures, against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
3. **Protection against improper disclosure.** Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, and counselors should be considered as confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments about a student’s ability and character may be disclosed under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge and consent of the student.

**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

If a student perceives that any of the protections described above have been violated, the student should initiate resolution through the following channels and in the sequence indicated.

1. Discuss the issue with the faculty member involved in the alleged violation. The discussion must take place within 30 calendar days after the end of the semester during which the alleged incident occurred. If the complaint is not resolved with the faculty involved, then go to the next step

2. Notify the Executive Director of Student Affairs, who will explain the grievance policy and the student’s rights and responsibilities. The Executive Director of Student Affairs will assist the student in completing a written narrative describing the alleged violation of the protections described above. The narrative must contain the nature of the problem or complaint, reasonable evidence to support the case, background material, and a description of what has been done to resolve the problem.

3. Meet with the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies (ADUS) and submit the written narrative describing the alleged violation. The ADUS will send to the student a written response within 10 regular working days following the meeting. If, after receiving the ADUS response, the complaint is not resolved to the aggrieved student’s satisfaction, the student must notify the ADUS within 10 working days of receiving the letter and request a grievance hearing. The ADUS will appoint an Ad Hoc Grievance Committee of four faculty members, one of whom will serve as chair, and three students to conduct the grievance hearing. The grievance hearing will be held within 10 regular working days of the student’s request. The ADUS will distribute the written narrative of the student’s grievance to the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and the faculty alleged to have caused the violation at the time of appointment to the Ad Hoc Committee.
4. Attend the grievance hearing and present the alleged violation(s) to the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and answer questions. The faculty member(s) who is alleged to have caused the grievance has the right to be present during all presentations of evidence to the Committee. The student and the faculty member may call witnesses. However, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must be notified in writing at least 24 hours before the hearing of the names of all witnesses and the reason each witness has been called.

It is the responsibility of the student and the faculty member, respectively, to arrange for the appearance of witnesses. The ADUS may not attend the grievance hearing.

The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must schedule a hearing; inform the faculty involved in writing and schedule his/her appearances at the hearing; maintain accurate, confidential records of the case; conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner; and inform the student and the faculty member(s) of the decision within two regular working days of the hearing.

**APPEAL**

Undergraduate students may file an appeal of the decision of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee to the Dean of the College of Nursing within ten days of receipt of the finding of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee. The appeal must be filed on grounds that cite procedural error that results in a bias decision; new evidence; or penalty imposed that is not appropriate to the violation. If the Dean finds merit in any of the above claims, the Dean will appoint a new Ad Hoc Grievance Committee who will conduct a new grievance hearing. If the Dean does not find merit to student claims, the finding of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee will be upheld. The decision of the Dean is final.

A faculty member who feels aggrieved as a result of student grievance proceedings has the right to appear before the University Faculty Grievance Committee and present his/her case to the Committee. The process is described in the Faculty Manual.

*Policy may be changed at anytime*
Clinical Policies

Clinical Placement Overview
Students may be assigned to clinical placements within a 75-mile radius and on days, evenings, nights and weekends. However, Capstone clinical placement may exceed a 75-mile radius. The College of Nursing reserves the right to make administrative changes to clinical placements as necessary. Clinical placements are not subject to change related to work activities, school activities, or non-NCAA sanctioned sports.

Clinical Compliance Policy
A big part of your nursing education will be your clinical experiences and our agreements with the facilities where you will be doing your direct clinical hours require records of your immunizations and clearances in order to enter the clinical setting. These requirements include immunizations as well as CPR certification, clear drug screen and background checks, and any other site-specific requirements. Records are to be submitted to and held by our compliance vendor, CastleBranch. Go to http://portal.castlebranch.com/UO26 to place an order. For issues with package ordering, documentation submissions, etc., please contact CastleBranch using the Chat with us feature through your myCB account or call the User Experience Specialists at 888.723.4263

Students must complete clinical requirements by the designated deadline. Failure to provide documentation prohibits release for registration for the semester. Students are responsible for keeping their health requirements up-to-date through the end of the semester. Failure to correctly submit all requirements prior to the first day of class may result in STAR counseling and a clinical day failure. Failure to complete requirements by designed deadline could impact continued enrollment.

All students at University of South Carolina College of Nursing in either direct or indirect clinical coursework must meet the requirements of the clinical compliance policy in order to continue clinical coursework. Failure to do so may result in being dropped from coursework.

If at any time after the initial background check and drug screen have been completed there is a change in the student’s status, it is the student’s responsibility to immediately report the circumstances to the assistant dean. Failure to report can result in immediate dismissal from the program.

It may seem redundant, but because of HIPAA regulations, we must use different systems and Student Health Services and the College of Nursing cannot share your information with each other.

Due to the demands of our clinical agencies, requirements are subject to change.
Clinical Compliance Requirements

As a part of the compliance process all students must submit proof of the following immunizations. Influenza, Tuberculosis test, HIPAA and OSHA must be completed and submitted every year. Certain programs or clinical sites may have additional requirements that students may need to complete and submit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MMR (Measles – Mumps – Rubella)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Titers for all three-confirming immunity. A positive IgG (not IgM) antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, the negative or equivocal titer result must be accompanied by a booster injection. An additional titer is not required after a booster injection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• * MMR vaccine and its component vaccines should not be administered to women known to be pregnant. Because a risk to the fetus from administration of these live virus vaccines can occur, women should avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination with MMR or other measles, mumps, or rubella-containing vaccines.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Hepatitis B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A positive surface antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, Hepatitis B vaccines and a 2nd titer are required. Full immunization consists of three Hepatitis B vaccinations administered over a 6-month period to be followed by a 2nd titer given 1-2 months after the 3rd vaccination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alternatively, the Heplisav B vaccination series only requires 2 vaccinations one month apart followed by a repeat Hepatitis B titer. Students must begin the vaccination series prior to clinical course registration. Evidence of a positive titer must be provided prior to next semester’s course registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the post-vaccination titer is negative or equivocal, then one will be considered as a non-responder, not expected to convert and documented as not immune to the Hepatitis B virus.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Varicella (Chicken Pox)</th>
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• A positive IgG (not IgM) antibody titer (lab report required) indicates immunity. If a titer is negative or equivocal, the negative or equivocal titer result must be accompanied by a booster injection.
• *Simply having had the disease is not enough, you must receive a titer and that titer must be positive for immunity.

**Tdap (Tetanus - Diphtheria - Pertussis)**

• Tdap within the past ten years

**Tuberculosis Test**

One of the following is required:

• Negative two-step PPD skin test (Mantoux) administered 1-3 weeks apart within the past 12 months **OR**
• Negative two-step skin test administered 1-3 weeks apart and all subsequent 1 step skin tests with the most recent 1 step test being administered within the past 12 months **OR**
• Negative QuantiFERON Gold Blood Test administered within the past 12 months **OR**
• Negative T-Spot Blood Test administered within the past 12 months.
• If result is positive, a clear chest x-ray report must be submitted following last positive test result, administered within the past 12 months along with a physician clearance documented on letterhead.

The renewal date will be set for 1 year, requiring one of the following:

• Negative one-step test **OR**
• Negative QuantiFERON Gold Blood Test **OR**
• Negative T-Spot Blood Test

**Influenza (Flu Shot)**
One of the following is required:

- Documentation of a flu shot administered during the current flu season  
  **OR**  
- declination waiver, which must be completed on a school form

Due by November 1 (must be completed after seasonal vaccines are available)

### Criminal Background Check

Prior to the start of upper division, students are required to undergo a background check through the approved College of Nursing vendor. Additional screening may be required by clinical agencies or following a student’s break in enrollment. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for background checks.

Criminal Background Checks include the screenings listed below but additional checks may be required depending on agency placements or other requirements. The following will be searched: 7-year County Criminal Search, National Sex Offender Registry, Nationwide Healthcare Fraud and Abuse Scan (FACIS level 3), I.S. Patriot Act Search, Residence History and Social Security Alert.

A 7-year background check is conducted unless the background check indicates further background investigation is needed to confirm a clean check, which means the background check may go back further in years. This will incur additional expense to the student as well as any check of any other registry or records required by law, accrediting agency, or specific agency.

### 12 Panel Drug Screen

Prior to the start of upper division, students are required to undergo a drug screening through the approved College of Nursing vendor. Students may be subject to random checks throughout the program. Additionally, other screening may be required by clinical agencies or due to student break in enrollment. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for drug screenings.

Drug screens include but may not be limited to 9 panel + MDMA + Oxy Test screening for amphetamines, cocaine, marijuana, barbiturates, benzodiazepine,
methamphetamine, methadone, opiates, oxycodone, phencyclidine, propoxyphene, and MDMA.

**HIPAA and OSHA**

All students must document their knowledge of protection against bloodborne disease annually. The documentation must be submitted to CastleBranch before the student is permitted to register for clinical courses, attend classes, or begin practicums.

Annual compliance of eLearning modules is required for HIPPA and OSHA training. Go to portal.castlebranch.com/UO26 to order modules. Code: UP68el for annual renewal.

**CPR Certification**

In addition to the immunizations, background checks and drug screens, all students must be certified in BLS CPR by one of the following agencies in order to enter the clinical setting.

- **American Heart Association** (preferred) **OR**
  - American Red Cross

**Nursing Licensure (RN-BSN)**

All USC College of Nursing RN-BSN undergraduate students must have a SC Registered Nurse unencumbered licensure or be eligible for a SC unencumbered licensure when admitted and must maintain current unencumbered licensure throughout the program. Students must have a current RN licensure for the state in which precepted clinical experiences occur. USC must have state authorization for the student to engage in clinical in that state. Unencumbered SC licensure is required if the precepted clinical experience occurs in SC unless licensed in a Compact state.
Student Name Badges

All students completing a clinical experience must purchase a name badge as authorized by the College of Nursing. The first and last legal name is required on the name badge along with the identification “UofSC” BSN Student. Other unique identifying tags may be required per clinical site. Information on how to order nametags is provided at upper division orientation.

Authorization for Release of Records and Information/Participant Clinical Education Experience Agreement

All students will be required to sign and upload into CastleBranch an Authorization for Release of Records and Information and Participant Clinical Education Experience Agreement.

Handbook Acknowledgment

All students are required to read the Undergraduate Student Handbook annually. Students will sign and upload into CastleBranch a Handbook Acknowledgement form found at https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/handbook_signature.pdf.

Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct Acknowledgment

All students are required to read the Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct annually. Student will sign and upload into CastleBranch an Academic Bulletin(s) and Code of Conduct Acknowledgement. The form is downloaded from CastleBranch.

Professional Liability Insurance

Nursing students do not have to obtain professional liability insurance before entering their first clinical. Students are assessed a malpractice fee associated with specific clinical
courses. The University insurance policy covers them during all course-related clinical experiences. However, students contemplating clinical employment must obtain their own professional liability coverage, as the University’s policy does not cover students in employment related situations.

Additional information regarding all program fees can be found at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/bursar/tuition_and_required_fees/usc_columbia_fees_academic/department_fees/index.php.

Guidance for All Clinical Experiences

Uniforms: During clinical practice, undergraduate students are required to wear a clean, pressed, and approved uniform. Details of specific style numbers, brands and location of uniform vendor are shared during upper division orientation. All articles must be ordered prior to entry into clinical nursing courses. Uniforms may only be worn to clinical, lab and/or social events sanctioned by the College of Nursing. Failure to comply will result in a meeting with the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies.

Equipment Kit: Approved equipment must be purchased prior to NURS 311/312 classes. Students receive information regarding the required purchases as they progress into the upper division.

Clinical Experiences Attendance

Students are expected to attend ALL clinical nursing activities with absences permitted up to 10 percent only if certified as unavoidable because of sickness or other causes determined acceptable by the course coordinator. Make-up time for missed clinical nursing experiences will be determined at the discretion of the faculty and availability of clinical facilities. Faculty may require withdrawal of a student who has missed enough practice to prevent completion of clinical objectives. Students must provide a note from their healthcare provider documenting the need to miss clinical or simulation lab experiences. See Class Attendance for additional information.

Promptness Expectation

Students will be provided individual start times based on the culture of the unit. Students are expected to be on the unit and ready to work at this assigned start time.
1) Arrival at the clinical site no later than the appointed time is mandatory.
   a) Students arriving late, but prior to the beginning of pre-clinical conference may
      complete clinical but will need to receive verbal and written counseling from their
      clinical instructor for the first offense, dismissal for the second.
   b) Students arriving after the beginning of pre-clinical activities will not be permitted to
      complete the clinical day and must leave the clinical setting. This will result in an
      unsatisfactory grade for the day.
      i) If eligible, the student must attend the clinical make-up day scheduled by the
         clinical coordinator.
      ii) If not eligible for a make-up date, the absence will result in course failure.
   c) No call/no show for a clinical day without notifying the clinical instructor or course
      coordinator is considered unprofessional behavior.
      i) Any instance will result in a STAR counseling form, clinical day failure, and
         meeting with the assistant dean unless unforeseen health issues prevented
         communication.
      ii) Subsequent instances will result in program dismissal.

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Student Medication Error Policy

Performance Outcome: Medications are accurately dispensed in a safe and timely manner. Students will receive the appropriate didactic and clinical instructions according to course objectives:

1. The nursing student will report all medication errors immediately to the clinical instructor
   and/or preceptor.
2. The patient's condition will be assessed, and the error will be reported to the charge
   nurse and/or nurse manager.
3. The student making the error or the one discovering an error will complete required
   documentation, with faculty assistance, according to hospital protocol.
4. Errors in documentation of medications will be considered unsatisfactory student
   performance and will be reflected on the clinical evaluation form. Examples include (but
   are not limited to):
   a. Failure to complete documentation of medication administration
   b. Failure to have a co-signature on narcotic waste
   c. Failure to document a reason for omitting a medication
   d. Failure to acquire and communicate appropriate assessment data as indicated by the
      healthcare institution policy
5. Students will be counseled after each medication error. Two or more medication errors will result in clinical failure for the course. Examples of medication errors include (but are not limited to):
   a. Not following all rights of medication administration
   b. Inability to calculate correct dosage
   c. Omission of an ordered medication
   d. Duplication of medication that has already been given
   e. Administration of a discontinued medication
   f. Leaving medication at bedside without an order (unless per hospital policy)
   g. Failure to check healthcare provider orders, take an apical pulse, B/P, check lab values or other appropriate assessment data prior to giving medication
6. Medication errors that endanger the patient’s life or actually cause patient harm can be grounds for immediate termination from the course.

Note: Students will still be held accountable for medication errors even if an instructor or staff nurse prevents the error from occurring.

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**Clinical Behaviors**

- Prepares adequately for nursing responsibilities
- Attends clinical/lab on time
- Stays awake during clinical hours
- A student will verbally notify their clinical instructor at least 1 hour prior to the absence and notify the course coordinator within 24 hours. Faculty may require withdrawal of any student who has missed enough practice to prevent completion of clinical objectives.
- Wears correct professional attire including name badge at all times
- Maintains appropriate demeanor during clinical
- Shows respect for patients and staff
- Keeps a positive attitude toward learning
- Upholds confidentiality
- Stays in clinical setting until clinical group is dismissed
- Informs faculty and/or nurse when leaving the unit for any reason
- Returns from breaks on time
- Identifies own learning goals
- Uses clinical time to maximize learning
- Participates verbally in clinical conferences
- Seeks instructor’s help and supervision appropriately
- Seeks help appropriately to manage stress that may affect performance
- Identifies own strengths and limitations
- Completes all clinical work by specified date
- Electronic devices of any kind are not to be brought into the clinical area unless under the direction of your faculty member. This includes but is not limited to I-watches, phones, iPod, iPad, tablets, etc.

Misuse of Telephones and/or other Communication Technology: No student shall misuse or abuse, or assist in the misuse or abuse of communication equipment at the University. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, using any form of communication equipment to harass or threaten any person or persons, or using any form of communication equipment to disrupt the normal operations or activities or any person, organization, or the University. Communication equipment includes, but is not limited to, electronic mail, pagers, voice mail, computers, printer, etc. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off or to silent operation during class/clinical and may not be used during class/clinical except in extreme circumstances.

Dress Code for Clinical Courses

*(Approved by College of Nursing Faculty):* By choosing to be an undergraduate student in the College of Nursing at the University of South Carolina, each student accepts the responsibility to present and maintain a professional image by complying with the dress code policy. The dress code is designed to protect the personal safety of patients, as well as students, while in the clinical area; project the professional image of nursing; and portray the proud heritage of USC nurses. Although this dress code is congruent with the majority of health care agencies, some agencies have dress codes that are more restrictive and should then be followed. College of Nursing faculty reserve the right to ask students to leave the clinical area if their attire is deemed inappropriate or student’s lack of appropriate equipment to carry out the clinical duties.

**Hair**

- Shoulder length or longer hair must be pulled back and secured.
- Ornate hair decorations are inappropriate.
- Hair must conform to natural hair colors and non-extreme styles.
- Moustaches and beards must be neatly groomed and relatively close to the face to avoid contaminating the work environment.
Body Piercing and Other Jewelry

- Body piercing jewelry may not be worn in clinical. No more than one small, stud-style earring per ear may be worn.
- Religious jewelry may be worn inside the uniform. Ring bands may be worn but rings with large stones may not.

Tattoos

- Tattoos must be covered during clinical experiences.
- If the tattoo is in an area that cannot be covered by clothing, it must be covered by a bandage.

Personal Hygiene

- Students are required to maintain high standards of personal cleanliness.
- Non-scented makeup and hair products may be worn. No perfumes or colognes may be worn.
- Makeup must conform to general body tones avoiding extreme colors
- Nails must be clean, well kept, without nail polish or designs, and no longer than the tip of the finger. Artificial nails may not be worn.

Professional Uniform Attire

Anytime students are in a healthcare setting during scheduled clinical time, the following must apply:
- Approved uniforms are required.
- All uniforms must be neat, clean, opaque, wrinkle free, and properly fitting with appropriate undergarments.
• If desired, students may wear black, grey, or white unadorned t-shirts under their scrub tops. Hoodies are not acceptable.
• A white lab coat with College of Nursing identification may be worn over the uniform.
• Opaque white stockings or socks must be worn, when in uniform, at all times.
• Black uniform or athletic shoes are required. All shoes must be enclosed, flat-heeled, non-canvas, non-mesh, and kept clean.

Professional Casual Attire

Anytime students are in a healthcare setting during scheduled clinical time, the following must apply:
• All clothing must be neat, clean, opaque, wrinkle free, and properly fitting with appropriate undergarments.
• Many community agencies require the student to wear professional casual attire covered by a lab coat. Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, shorts, denim jeans, see through blouses, halter dresses, athletic attire (sweatshirts/hoodies, sweatpants, and jogging suites), tight knit clothing, leggings, imprinted t-shirts and any type of attire which is low-cut or where the midriff is exposed may not be worn. Extreme styles should be avoided.
• Students are required to wear stockings or socks at all times.
• Black uniform or athletic shoes are required. All shoes must be enclosed, flat-heeled, non-canvas, non-mesh, and kept clean.

Travel to Clinical Sites

Students are responsible for transportation to sites for their practicum experiences each semester and for covering the cost of travel. It is the obligation of students to provide their own vehicle collision and/or bodily injury liability insurance for their personal vehicles. Neither the College of Nursing nor the University of South Carolina is responsible for any vehicle occurrences or transportation.

Clinical Simulation Laboratory (CSL)

The Clinical Simulation Lab (CSL) is located on the first floor of the College of Nursing in the Williams-Brice building. This state-of-the-art facility is designed to replicate realistic practice environments where healthcare students develop clinical decision-making skills and enhance technical skill acquisition. Students function within their full scope of practice while receiving real-time feedback and guidance from expert clinical educators. All simulation-based learning experiences adhere to the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation
Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol (Reviewed April 2019)

Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol

This protocol applies to all USC Columbia campus employees, student employees and all other USC students who have an exposure to a potentially infectious biological material. A potentially infectious material or biological hazard may include an incident involving a microorganism (e.g. bacterial agent, viral agent, and fungal agent), human-derived material, biological toxin, or an incident involving recombinant DNA research. Exposures through sexual contact are not included in this protocol.

Procedures for needle sticks or other exposure to a potentially infectious material:

- Report the incident immediately to the supervisor and clinical faculty to authorize medical evaluation. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring students are offered immediate medical care, appropriate diagnostics and treatment.
  - Percutaneous Exposure (e.g., needle stick, cut, animal bite) – Immediately wash or flush the exposed area with soap and water for 10 minutes.
  - Mucous Membrane Exposure (i.e., eyes, nose or mouth) – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush eyes (holding open) using the eyewash station for 10 minutes.

- The student or supervisor should immediately notify the appropriate entity within the health care institution where the exposure occurs, in order to initiate testing of the “source patient” for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infection. It is important for rapid HIV testing to be completed with results available within a few hours. Each institution has its own procedures for obtaining “source patient” testing, and supervising faculty should know these procedures. If there is uncertainty about whom to contact within the host institution, instructions should be obtained from one or more of the following:
  - Employee health office
  - Charge nurse for the floor or unit where the exposure occurred
  - Infection control nurse
- Administrative officer of the day
- Clinic director (for outpatient sites)

- Once the necessary “source patient” testing has been ordered, seek medical treatment as soon as possible after the incident (see below for specific instructions)

- Notify Executive Director of Student Affairs of incident at 803-608-7770 between the hours of 9am-9pm. Leave a message with return phone number if no answer. If no response within one hour, call the Office of Academic Affairs at 803-777-7412.

- Call CompEndium for non-emergency injuries. In an emergency, visit a local emergency room or call 911. Follow these five important steps to report your injury:
  - Immediately report the injury to your supervisor. You and your supervisor call CompEndium together at 877-709-2667 to report the injury.
  - Follow CompEndium’s Nurse Case Manager’s instructions for any authorized treatment and further reporting.
  - Complete an [Employee Injury Report][pdf] and have your supervisor complete a [Supervisor's Report][pdf]. Fax both reports to CompEndium at 877-710-2667 and to (803 777-0616, ATTN: Executive Director of Student Affairs.)
  - If the treating physician does not release you to return to work, be sure to complete the Benefits Election section at the bottom of the Employee Injury Report. Meet with your department HR Contact for an explanation of your options or call the Benefits Office at 803-777-6650 for assistance.
  - Report the injury to CompEndium Services within 10 days of the date of injury.

All exposure incidents in the clinical agencies and the client-simulated laboratory (CSL) shall be reported, investigated, and documented. If an exposure occurs and there is no faculty present, the student must notify faculty and/or the Office of Academic Affairs as soon as possible.

Workers’ Compensation covers the following populations who experience a bloodborne pathogen exposure while working or at clinical if, appropriate reports are filed:
• All university employees and apprenticeship students in the Colleges of Education, Exercise Science, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and Social Work.

• Work study students and graduate assistants who are exposed while on the job.

Students who suffer a Non-Job Related/Non-clinical related Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure during an enrolled academic session:

• Should report to Student Health Services (SHS) for initial evaluation and referral. If SHS is closed, students may seek care at the Prisma Health Richland Hospital – Palmetto Health Emergency Department. If away from Columbia area, the student should report to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Evaluation and Review

The ADUS is responsible for annually reviewing this policy and procedures and its effectiveness and for updating the program as needed.
Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is charged based on the number of credit hours taken in a given semester. You will also be charged a Health Professions Fee and Technology Fee each semester, and in some semesters may be charged additional fees (such as laboratory fee and malpractice insurance fee) that are associated with certain courses.

Please see the Courses and Registration section of this handbook for Tuition Refund policies.

Financial Assistance

The USC Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship help you evaluate your costs and determine what type of financial aid support you need — loans, scholarships, grants or student employment. To be fully considered for all financial aid resources, you must complete a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid each year and all of your paperwork must be received before the April 1 annual priority deadline. You may contact the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships directly with any financial aid questions: uscfaid@mailbox.sc.edu or 803-777-8134.

The College of Nursing has one undergraduate scholarship application that is used for consideration for all eligible departmental scholarships in the college. Each year, the online scholarship application will be available on our website in December and the application will be due no later than March 15th of the following year. College of Nursing award decisions are expected to be finalized and announced late July/early August of each year.

In addition, as external scholarships are announced, this information is shared with students via Blackboard in the appropriate communities under Fellowship and External Scholarship Opportunities. Deadlines for other sources of funding vary.

Funded Research Opportunities

Opportunities to participate on funded research programs may be available to full-time graduate students. This experience can be a valuable addition to a student’s studies. For further information the student may consult the Office of Research at (803) 777-6488 (Gene Brown).

External Scholarship Opportunities

We encourage all students to seek outside funding opportunities. Many nursing societies and private organizations offer a variety of grants that are open to students
who are not eligible for traditional need-based financial aid. This list is not all inclusive.

**American Association of College of Nursing:**
https://www.aacnnursing.org/Students/Financial-Aid

**40 Nursing Scholarships for All Kinds of Students**
This comprehensive resource is provided through allnursingschools.com. Choosing a career in nursing means you’ll be entering a meaningful field that has a positive outlook for job growth as well as increasing opportunities for advancement. However, it can take years of costly education to qualify as a nursing professional and figuring out how you’ll pay for school can be an overwhelming task.

**50 Great Scholarships for Nursing Students**
This scholarship resource is provided through healthcare-administration-degree.net

**Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses Foundation (AMSN)**
This program is available to students in LPN-to-RN, RN-to-BSN, RN-to-MSN, BSN-to-MSN, or MSN-to-Doctorate programs. Applicants must be a member of AMSN.

**Action Behavior Center ABA Therapy Scholarship**
ABA Therapy Scholarship for undergraduate students pursuing a degree in some field relating to research on autism spectrum disorder or clinical therapy positions (psychology, applied behavior analysis, education, or a variety of natural or applied sciences). $1,000 awarded semi-annually.

**After College**
A searchable database of internships. For more help on finding internships that are right for you, we urge you to meet with your academic mentors, who are there to help guide you through the process.

**Additional Scholarship Search Resources:**
- College Board Scholarship Search
Student Records

Confidentiality of Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), passed by Congress in 1974, requires educational institutions to provide students access to their educational records, to allow students to correct inaccurate or misleading information in these records, and to limit the release of information to third parties. Additional information is available online.
Graduation

Requirements
In order to be eligible for graduation, students must meet all course requirements, be in good academic standing, meet all program requirements, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 on all work attempted at USC. All failing and Incomplete grades must be cleared or completed by graduation day or the student’s name will be removed from the graduation list. All University balances must be paid in full.

Procedures
The graduation application is the first step you will need to take in order to graduate from your academic program. Review the application and award processes here to better understand what happens once you submit your application.

Graduation with Honors
Graduation with Honors will be based on a student’s Total Institutional GPA. Honors designators are determined at the time of graduation and may not be applied retroactively.

To graduate with such honors, a student must have earned at least 60 credit hours applicable toward the degree in residence at the University, 30 credit hours for an associate degree.

Levels of Honor
The following designations indicate a consistently high level of academic achievement at USC.

Baccalaureate Degree Designations
Summa Cum Laude: a cumulative GPA of 3.95-4.00
Magna Cum Laude: a cumulative GPA of 3.75-3.949
Cum Laude: a cumulative GPA of 3.50-3.749

With Honors from South Carolina Honors College
Any student who completes the requirements of the Honors College, regardless of the major or undergraduate degree, is awarded that degree “With Honors from South Carolina Honors College.”

With Distinction
Any student who earns an undergraduate degree and completes the appropriate requirements will be awarded graduation “With Distinction in [that major].” For
details, refer to the degree requirements of specific majors in the Undergraduate Academic Bulletin.

Ceremonies
Commencement exercises are held for degree candidates in both Fall and Spring each year. The President of the University of South Carolina presides over commencement. To honor their commitment, each degree candidate is recognized by name and congratulated by the dean of the graduate’s college or school. Click here for additional information regarding commencement.

In addition, the College of Nursing celebrates the accomplishments of the graduating class with a special Convocation ceremony in both fall and Spring each year.

Students who are on schedule to be candidates for graduation or who have already graduated may request to participate in commencement exercises for a term other than their actual graduation term. In order to be considered to walk either early or late, students must submit the form found at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/Registrar/forms/early_late.php.

Diplomas
Students with outstanding University balances, incompletes, “NR” or uncleared “F” grades at the time of graduation will not be able to obtain their diplomas nor will they be able to obtain any official transcripts or other University information until the balances are paid in full.

Have a question about your degree or diploma? Review frequently asked questions to find answers at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/Registrar/graduation/degree_diploma_faq/index.php

Graduation Awards
Students are encouraged to nominate themselves or others for the College of Nursing Student Awards. More information about the nomination process will be disseminated to students during the academic year.

NCLEX-RN Testing
Professional licensure is required to practice nursing as a Registered Nurse (RN). The RN licensure examination, called the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and known generally as the "State Board Exam," is administered via
computer at many conveniently located test centers across the United States and its territories.

During their last semester, seniors receive information about applying for the NCLEX-RN. For more information, call 803-896-4550. SC Board of Nursing, https://llr.sc.gov/nurse/

The Dean of the College of Nursing will complete a certificate of endorsement for all graduating seniors and forward these to the South Carolina State Board of Nursing after graduation. Students who wish to obtain licensure outside South Carolina must contact the board responsible for licensure of RNs in that state. If a letter of endorsement is required for any state, other than South Carolina, a written request must be made to the Executive Director of Student Affairs. Students are encouraged to seek out pertinent information early in their senior year in order to meet required deadlines.

When the State Board of Nursing for South Carolina determines eligibility of applicants (usually within 30 days of graduation), an Authorization to Test form will be sent to applicants. Applicants schedule an appointment for the test and must bring the Authorization to Test form and acceptable forms of identification to the NCLEX administration.

Immigration/Legal Standards

Progression through the BSN curriculum does not guarantee eligibility to sit for the NCLEX-RN. If you have ever been convicted of a crime (excluding minor traffic violations) that involved paying a fine, forfeiting a bond, a suspended sentence, or receiving a pardon, you must notify the State Board of Nursing. Failure to report a past conviction is grounds for disciplinary action. NCLEX-RN applicants who have past criminal convictions must undergo Disciplinary Review by the State Board of Nursing prior to taking the NCLEX-RN. Contact the State Board of Nursing in the state where licensure is being sought for current, specific policies and procedures applicable to your situation.

Alumni

Upon graduation, students of the College become alumni of the University of South Carolina. The College's alumni family is a major support system for the College and alumni donors help to support several scholarships annually. Alumni are electronically sent copies of USC College of Nursing Gamecock CONnection and invited to attend annual alumni events and celebrations. All graduates are encouraged to notify the alumni office or the My Carolina Alumni Association of address changes. Contact us at sc.edu/nursing/alumni.
Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLLEGE OF NURSING
Student Substance Abuse Internal Policy

Purpose
The College of Nursing recognizes the importance of educating its students about the problems of substance abuse. Unfortunately, this significant health risk is prevalent among healthcare providers. Aside from impacting the personal and psychological integrity of the abusers, substance abuse may significantly impact the ability of healthcare providers to administer safe, competent patient care. In severe cases, substance abuse by a healthcare provider can lead to malpractice lawsuits and even criminal prosecution. Recognizing that substance abuse is both a disease and a professional hazard, the University of South Carolina has resources available for students experiencing substance abuse issues.

The College of Nursing has established this policy to clarify procedures for students who are found to have abused controlled or illegal substances and/or alcohol. This policy impacts the student’s ability to maintain personal and professional integrity and facilitates the student’s success both clinically and didactically. It promotes a healthy learning environment for the student. In the clinical setting, this policy enhances patient safety. It also fosters the development of professional nurses who are well educated about the prevalence of substance abuse and its potential to lead to adverse patient outcomes.

Policy
This policy applies to all students who have matriculated into a College of Nursing academic program(s).

Any unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, diversion, or improper use of any substances by any student in the College of Nursing may constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program(s). In addition, no student may consume or be under the influence of or be in the possession of alcohol at any time the student is in the classroom and/or performing clinical duties. Improper use of alcohol may also constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program. Students must comply with all local, state, or federal laws and regulations controlling the possession, manufacture, use, or distribution of controlled or illegal substances and alcohol. Students must also adhere to all University of South Carolina policies regarding alcohol and/or drug use. Specific policies of note include: STAF 3.02, Alcohol Policy and Guidelines for the University Community; STAF 3.18, Drug Policy for University Students; STAF 3.19, Overdose Medical Treatment; STAF 6.26, and Student Code of Conduct. These policies can be found at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/policiesandprocedures/universypolicies/policies_and_procedures_manual/index.php.
In addition, there are circumstances in which students may need to take over the counter or prescribed medications that have the potential to impair their performance or personal behavior. Documentation from treating provider should indicate diagnosis and anticipated length of medication administration. As such, all students are responsible for being aware of the effect these medications may have on performance and must notify their Program Director, Course Coordinator or Instructor within 72 hours prior to clinical attendance or drug testing about the use of any medication that could impair performance or has the potential to influence a drug screen.

Failure or refusal to comply with the substance abuse policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to comply with this policy. In addition, failure or refusal to comply with any aspect of the substance abuse policy may be reported to the University’s Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action in accordance with the University’s Student Conduct Policy.

Procedures

I. Drug Testing

Many clinical training sites, or institutions in which human research is being conducted, require that students undergo drug testing, like what is required of their employees, prior to placement at the sites. Therefore, all students involved in clinical practice settings, whether for clinical education purposes or for the recruitment of research subjects and/or the collection of research data, will be required to undergo drug testing prior to engaging with clinical sites.

In addition, during enrollment in a College of Nursing program(s), a student may be required to undergo drug or alcohol testing for cause when the university faculty and/or administrator(s) determines there is reasonable suspicion that the student is impaired due to illegal drug or alcohol use, or the use or misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications. Testing for cause may be based upon, but not limited to the following examples: unusual or aberrant behavior or patterns of abnormal or erratic behavior; physical symptoms of impairment; arrest or conviction for a drug or alcohol related offense; evidence of drug tampering, drug diversion, or misappropriation; direct observation of drug use or discrepant drug counts; alterations in student clinical and/or didactic performance that may not be attributed to other causes; following a work-related injury or illness when there is any evidence (direct or circumstantial) that it may have been related to use of a controlled substance; observation of poor judgment or careless acts which caused or had the potential to cause patient injury, jeopardize the safety of self or others, or resulted in damage to equipment.

II: Reporting

A faculty or staff member who suspects possible substance abuse by a student must report the suspicious behavior to the Program Director or Course Coordinator who will then
immediately contact the appropriate Assistant Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies, Executive Director of Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Academics. In the absence of the Program Director or Course Coordinator, the faculty or staff member observing the behavior should contact the appropriate Assistant Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies, Executive Director of Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Academics. Any faculty or staff member with evidence that an enrolled student has engaged in clinical care of patients and families or participated in classroom work while impaired may also report their observations to the University’s Office of Student Conduct.

A student who suspects possible substance abuse or a violation of this policy by another student has the responsibility to report this information. A report can be made to the student’s academic advisor, and/or Instructor, Course Coordinator, or Program Director. The appropriate Assistant Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies, Executive Director of Student Affairs, or the Associate Dean for Academics should be notified by the advisor, course instructor, course coordinator and/or program director. The identity of the individual making the report will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible consistent with the need to investigate the report and subject to legal requirements.

Any student arrested or convicted of violating any federal, state, or local law pertaining to the manufacture, possession, sale, use, or distribution of a drug or alcohol or misuse of prescribed medications must report this event to the appropriate Assistant Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies, Executive Director of Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Academics within three days of the event and prior to any clinical contact with patients and families. If the student holds a nursing license, the student should also contact their governing Board of Nursing for guidance in reporting an arrest and/or conviction.

III: Testing Procedure

Drug and alcohol testing required by the College of Nursing will be conducted utilizing the following measures:

A. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for testing.
B. The student must be tested at a facility approved by the College.
C. The student must fully comply with the testing facility’s methods and procedures for collecting samples.
D. The drug test shall screen for the use of the controlled substances (examples listed in Appendix 1).
E. The student must disclose any prescribed or over-the-counter medications, as well as any dietary habits that could modify testing results.
F. If the accuracy of a positive test is disputed by the student, the student may request a retesting of samples by the facility; however, the cost of the additional testing would be paid by the student. Testing done outside the appropriate window of time will not be considered valid.
G. Substance abuse is verified if either: (i) the positive test result is not disputed, or (ii) if the student-requested retest of the initial sample is positive.
H. If the test is inconclusive, the screening will be treated as positive until definitive analysis by alternate testing is accomplished. Alternate testing will be conducted at
the same facility as the inconclusive test results and will be at the student’s expense. During this time the student will not be permitted to have any contact with clinical settings but may be allowed to attend classes, pending the approval of the appropriate Assistant Dean.

I. The testing facility will publish a final report of the test results (positive, negative, or inconclusive) to the College of Nursing.

J. A student who is required to and submits to drug and/or alcohol screening will be expected to authorize the release of the results to the College and other relevant University offices.

K. If a student refuses to release his/her drug test results to the College and other relevant University offices, the test will be treated as positive.

All interim actions up to or including a student to undergo drug or alcohol testing, refrain from contact with clinical settings, or to refrain from class attendance will be determined by the appropriate Assistant Dean in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academics, relevant Program Director, Course Coordinator or Instructor and relevant University experts. In drug or alcohol testing for cause cases, the cost of any required drug or alcohol testing will be the responsibility of the student at a facility chosen by the College of Nursing. A student who refuses to submit to testing or who refuses to release the results of drug or alcohol testing will be regarded as having voluntarily relinquished his/her clinical responsibilities and may be suspended from the program(s) until further investigation is completed. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to submit to testing and may result in an inference of impairment and/or a violation of this policy.

Confidentiality

The requirement that a student be tested, as well as the test results, will remain confidential and disclosed only to those individuals within University of South Carolina or an affiliated clinical site with a need to know or as required by law. Upon written request, students will be provided a copy of test results. All students who hold a nursing license and who are suspected of substance abuse will be asked to self-report to her/his respective State Board of Nursing. If the student refuses to self-report, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies, Executive Director of Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Academics will consult with the appropriate Program Director, Course Coordinator or Instructor, and other relevant University officials with a need to know. If a health or safety emergency exists which puts the student or others at imminent risk of harm, then the College of Nursing may choose to report the student to the appropriate State Board of Nursing.

IV. Voluntary Self-Disclosure

Students who voluntarily self-disclose a substance or alcohol abuse problem to a faculty member, staff member, Program Director, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies or the Associate Dean for Academics, prior to a positive drug/alcohol test result, and who are willing to enter into and complete an appropriate program of treatment may be granted a medical leave of absence while she/ he undergoes treatment. In consultation with her/his health care provider and University providers (Counseling and Psychiatry-Student
Health Services and/or Substance Abuse Prevention and Education (SAPE)), a treatment program will be identified, and the student will be assisted with entrance. The student must sign appropriate HIPAA Authorization forms permitting designated University providers (Counseling and Psychiatry-Student Health Services and/or SAPE) to communicate with the student’s private providers about her/his recovery status with the College of Nursing.

V. Treatment and Counseling Resources

Students who are concerned that they may have a substance or alcohol abuse problem are encouraged to seek appropriate assessment, treatment, and counseling from qualified health care professionals. The following is a list of resources and facilities that provide treatment and counseling services to students:

- Alcoholics Anonymous [www.alcoholic-anonymous.org/](http://www.alcoholic-anonymous.org/)
- American Society of Addictive Medicine [https://www.asam.org/resources](https://www.asam.org/resources)
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Education [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/substance_abuse_prevention_and_education/](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/substance_abuse_prevention_and_education/)
- USC Counseling and Psychiatry [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/medical-services/counseling-and-psychiatry/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/medical-services/counseling-and-psychiatry/index.php)
- USC Student Health Services [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/index.php)

VI. Reentry into the Academic and Clinical Environment

Return from a medical leave of absence due to voluntary disclosure of a substance abuse problem will be considered by the appropriate Assistant Dean and approval of the Associate Dean for Academics following successful treatment and sustained progress in addition to other conditions that may be stipulated in the leave of absence agreement. The conditions will be appropriately individualized considering the situation and needs of the student. All required University and College documents must be completed, including a plan for successful return to course and clinical work that is approved by the student's health care provider, relevant University experts (Counseling and Psychiatry and Student Health Services) and the College of Nursing. Factors that have been identified as helpful for reentry into practice include 12-step program participation, random drug screening, and sponsorship in a support group. The student must also provide medical clearance from the appropriate individual coordinating therapeutic intervention and evidence of an unencumbered nursing license (if a RN-BSN or graduate student). Re-entry to the College of Nursing will be determined in consultation with the Counseling and Psychiatry and Student Health Services offices. A student in recovery who is permitted to reenter the College of Nursing must comply with all the conditions of return delineated as part of the program reentry agreement.
Depending upon the length of absence from the program, the student may be required to restart the clinical and/or didactic components of their plan of study. Alternatively, the student may only be required to repeat specific semesters of clinical and didactic study, based on the decision of the appropriate Assistant Dean in consultation with the relevant Program Director or Course Coordinator. A student recovering from substance abuse will be monitored closely, particularly in clinical practice. Frequent monitoring to ensure the student remains substance free will be required.

Reentry can be difficult for students, especially those who have just started their educational program and have limited time invested in the program. Reentry after relapse into substance abuse is not advised for any student. Reentry into a nursing program’s curriculum after a period of absence, no matter what the reason, can be a stressful time of readjustment. A student who has been in rehabilitation for substance abuse requires the same period of adjustment as a person who has been away from clinical and didactic arena for any other reason. A student in recovery who is reentering the program will be encouraged not to resume their course of study too hastily, but instead allow themselves time to develop appropriate support systems to facilitate the reentry.
Appendix 1

Amphetamine (methamphetamine)
Barbiturates
Benzodiazepine
Cocaine
Marijuana
Methadone
Opiates (codeine & morphine)
Phencyclidine
Propoxyphene
MDMA
Oxy (2 categories)

Revised Jan 2020