

## BSN Undergraduate Student Handbook (AY

### 2025-2026) PREFACE

Welcome to the University of South Carolina (USC) College of Nursing (CON). We are here to help you be successful in your undergraduate nursing education endeavors. The College of Nursing BSN Undergraduate Student Handbook provides students with current information about curricula, policies, and other vital information concerning the undergraduate program. Note: A pronoun of “they” shall be interpreted to include members of both sexes.

BSN students are expected to read the contents of this handbook thoroughly and are responsible for adhering to the outlined policies and procedures. Annually, students are required to sign an attestation they have read and understand the current published handbook.

#### Disclaimer

The policies and procedures described in this handbook are continually revised and updated on the CON website. The CON and USC must reserve the right to make changes affecting policies, fees, curriculum, or any other matters announced in this handbook. Notifications of changes or additions to the BSN Undergraduate Student Handbook made throughout the year are posted in a prompt fashion on the CON website and Virtual Communities in Blackboard (Bb). Students are responsible for checking the program Bb on a regular basis for all program-related updates and handbook updates. If you have questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact the [Office of Academic Affairs](#).

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## University of South Carolina, College of Nursing Overview

### Dean's Welcome

[https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/nursing/about/messagedean.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/about/messagedean.php)

### Accreditation

USC (Columbia, Aiken, Beaufort, Upstate, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union) is accredited by the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#) as a degree-granting institution at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, professional and doctoral levels.

#### BSN Accreditation and NCLEX

The USC CON offers a four-year undergraduate program residing on the Columbia, West Columbia, and Lancaster campuses leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) (pre-licensure) and a post-licensure RN-BSN program. The baccalaureate degree programs in nursing are approved by the State Board of Nursing for South Carolina. Upon successful completion of the BSN (pre-licensure) program, graduates are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN).

The baccalaureate degree programs in nursing at the University of South Carolina are accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#) through 2031.

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

Please review SARA and State Board of Nursing Information at [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/nursing/academic\\_programs/accreditation.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/academic_programs/accreditation.php). Additionally, if a current RN-BSN (post-licensure) student is considering relocating to another state after being admitted into the RN-BSN program, or is working as a travel nurse in another state, the student must contact the program director to discuss how working in another state could impact their ability to participate in academic courses, distributed learning, and clinical practice (experiential learning) opportunities in a different state.

### Offices

#### Dean's Office

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**Office of Academic Affairs**

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**College of Nursing Leadership Team**

[https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/nursing/about/leadership\\_team.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/about/leadership_team.php)

**University Bulletins and Policies and Procedures**

There are multiple resources available to aid you in meeting your academic and personal goals. Registration at USC 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 USC. 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:

2025-2026 Undergraduate Studies Bulletin

<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/>

2025-2026 Policies and Regulations

<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/policies-regulations/>

USC Policies and Procedures Manual

<http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php>

**Academic Calendar**

- The CON follows the University Academic Calendar ([https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/registrar/academic\\_calendars/](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/academic_calendars/)) in the Fall and Spring terms.

- The CON Summer Calendar differs from the traditional University calendar. 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 are scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through July. Clinical courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through August. Registration for summer courses occurs during the Advance Registration period in the spring semester, while fall course registration may occur as late as July
- Consult the appropriate academic calendar for information regarding the academic year (e.g., semester beginning and ending dates, registration windows, holiday, etc.

## USC College of Nursing Strategic Plan

### Mission

The University of South Carolina College of Nursing prepares graduates who care, inspire, and lead to advance science, practice, and policy to optimize health for all.

### Vision

To be a preeminent College of Nursing that pioneers innovation, leadership, and inclusive excellence, and service with local, national, and global impact.

### Values

Diversity, Inclusivity, Commitment, Caring, Integrity, Respect, Professionalism

At USC CON, we value each student, staff, and faculty. We want everyone to feel welcome, included, and have a sense of belonging. We aim to cultivate and support the values of the College of Nursing: inclusivity, commitment, caring, integrity, respect, diversity, and professionalism. We believe that upholding our values is necessary to achieve academic and institutional excellence. All members of the CON community not only matter, but their unique perspectives are the core of our strength and success.

## University of South Carolina Harassment and Discrimination Policies

USC follows the lead of the state and federal government when maintaining the laws and regulations concerning discrimination and harassment. Questions or concerns regarding the University's equal opportunity programs should be directed to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, 901 Sumter Street, James F. Byrnes Building, Suite 401, Columbia, SC 29201, or 803-777-3854 (Voice), fax 803-777-2296, e-mail: [civilrights@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:civilrights@mailbox.sc.edu), [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/civil\\_rights\\_title\\_ix/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/civil_rights_title_ix/index.php).

## Statement of Academic Responsibility

It is the responsibility of every student at the USC CON to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this rule or who knowingly assists another to violate this rule shall be subject to discipline.

## Academic Integrity

All students at the USC CON must adhere to the following school-wide policies:

### 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. [https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_affairs/our\\_initiatives/involvement\\_and\\_leadership/carolinian\\_creed/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_initiatives/involvement_and_leadership/carolinian_creed/index.php)

### Code of Conduct

Our [Code of Conduct](http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf626.pdf) (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf626.pdf>) outlines students' responsibilities to themselves and the Carolina community.

### USC Honor Code

All USC students are responsible for adhering to the [Carolinian Creed](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_initiatives/involvement_and_leadership/carolinian_creed/index.php) ([https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_affairs/our\\_initiatives/involvement\\_and\\_leadership/carolinian\\_creed/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_initiatives/involvement_and_leadership/carolinian_creed/index.php))

Honor Code violations include:

- Plagiarism: "Use of work or ideas without proper acknowledgement of source."
- Cheating: "Improper collaboration or unauthorized assistance on connection with any academic work."
- Cheating: "Using, possessing or distributing the contents of any examination (e.g., unauthorized access to test/quiz information, unauthorized duplication of test/quiz materials) without authorization."
- Falsification: "Misrepresenting or misleading others with respect to academic work."
- Complicity: "Assisting or attempting to assist another in any violation of the Honor Code."

For more detailed information, please review the

[USC Policy on Academic Responsibility – The Honor Code](http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf) (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf>).

The [Office of Academic Integrity](https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/) (<https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/>) provides resources to faculty and students for combating and preventing

cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and complicity. Be aware that USC faculty are bound to report any violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Academic Integrity.

When a violation of academic integrity occurs:

- Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity decides non-academic (University) sanctions.
- In addition to university sanctions, the academic unit makes decisions about academic (course) sanctions.
- At the CON, academic penalties range from a 0 (zero) for an assignment to dismissal from the program, depending on the severity of the violation.

### Artificial Intelligence Statement

It is important to the CON that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of the student's work and understanding. Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence options to complete academic work jeopardizes the faculty's ability to evaluate the student's understanding of the course content and robs the student of the ability to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter.

Suspensions of unauthorized use of artificial intelligence aids will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity as alleged violations of Cheating, defined as "unauthorized assistance in connection with any academic work" and/or Falsification, which includes "Misrepresenting or misleading others with respect to academic work or misrepresenting facts for an academic advantage."

### Student Code of Conduct on Disruptive Activity

USC strives to maintain an educational community that fosters the development of students who are ethical, civil, and responsible persons. Policies that address student conduct can be found at the [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity page \(http://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_conduct\\_and\\_academic\\_integrity/index.php\)](http://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_conduct_and_academic_integrity/index.php).

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

- a. Notify professor when unable to send assignment on time prior to the deadline.
- b. Complete reading all assignments.
- c. Engage in class discussion.
- d. Maintain appropriate and professional demeanor during online class activity.
- e. Refrain from the use of online discussion forums for posting of non-academic material (e.g., advertisements for jobs, products, or services).

## 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 <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/> for the complete Code of Ethics for Nurses developed by the American Nurses Association (ANA). The Code of Ethics serves as a guide for ethical behavior in the nursing profession. As such, students should adhere to the Code of Ethics, the Carolinian Creed, USC Code of Conduct, and Honor Code.

## Copyright Policy

The CON seeks 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 laws 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 USC CON 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 Bb. 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 prohibited unless otherwise authorized. 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 violates the CON Professionalism Policy and may result in disciplinary action under university guidelines.

## Dispute Resolution

Recognizing that disputes or concerns will arise, USC CON's basic guideline is that any dispute should be resolved at the lowest level possible. Your course instructor(s), advisor,

program director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Associate Dean for Academics, Interim Associate Dean for Access and Community Engagement, and Dean are resources available to you. See [Student Grievance Policy](#) or [Student Petition Policy](#).

## Academic Programs

### Undergraduate Nursing Program Requirements

There are differing levels of education in professional nursing including baccalaureate, master, 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.

Individual program policies may supersede this policy due to national accreditation regulations. Check with your Program Director to determine any additional requirements:

### BSN Requirements

#### BSN 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. A detailed description of the courses required is found in the [\*\*USC Undergraduate Studies Bulletin\*\*](#).

#### BSN Learning Outcomes

1. Provide evidence-based, culturally sensitive, clinically competent care across the continuum of care.
2. Use information and health care technologies to assist in making clinical judgments using reflection, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills for effective health care delivery.
3. Exhibit professional behavior while working as a member of an interprofessional healthcare team and in all other settings.
4. Perform the professional roles of care provider, care coordinator, leader, member of a profession, and life-long learner.

#### Carolina Core



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. Visit the [Carolina Core website](#) for more information.

## BSN Curriculum

1. The BSN curriculum provides for eight semesters of study in general education and professional nursing. Upon admission, students are assigned an advisor to guide planning throughout the program.
2. Computer skills are required throughout the curriculum. Skills required for class assignments and clinical practice include word processing, computerized assisted instruction, e-mail, Web access, Internet searches, database searches, computerized patient documentation, and computerized medical equipment.
3. The upper division focuses on clinical practice and requires **full-time study**. Clinical practice is supported by concurrent classroom study. Students practice in a variety of settings such as hospitals, extended-care facilities, nursing homes, clinics, schools, and other community agencies.
4. The BSN degree requires a minimum of 120 hours. These credits are distributed between general education requirements and electives, and professional nursing requirements. All lower-division requirements must be completed before progressing to upper-division courses. Upper-division courses must be taken in sequence.

## Smart Start Program

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 enroll in the Smart Start Nursing Program, a partnership between the CON and the SCHC. Students admitted to the Smart Start Program will be directly admitted into Upper Division nursing contingent upon meeting all SCHC and CON academic standards criteria and completion of all upper division application progression requirements.

Smart Start students who are not successful with meeting upper division application requirements will lose their direct admit status but will remain eligible for admission under the competitive upper division admissions process.

## BSN Time Limitations

### Effective Fall 2020 and After

- 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.
- Every attempt at science courses within the last 7 years will be included in the progression GPA calculation.

## Minors

The CON 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 typically require a minimum of 18 credit hours of prescribed courses. Undergraduate minors appear on transcripts, but not on diplomas.

If time permits or if time is reserved by the student in the planning of their curriculum, a minor is possible. For a list of undergraduate minors visit **Programs A-Z**.

## 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, 3.000 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.

## USC Residency Requirements for BSN Graduates

The last 25% of a student's 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., 120 credits = 30 hours. Advanced placement exam credits or transfer credits do not meet this requirement. Students must meet these requirements to be eligible for BSN graduation. For additional information visit [In-Residence Requirement \(https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text\)](https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text)

## 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.

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

### 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 as the "State Board Exam," is administered via computer at many conveniently located test centers across the United States and its territories.

Graduates of the BSN (pre-licensure) program are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) to obtain a registered nurse license.

The CON will complete a certificate of endorsement for all graduating seniors and forward these to the SC State Board of Nursing after graduation. If a letter of endorsement is required for any state, other than South Carolina, a written request must be made to the CON. Students desiring to request testing accommodations for the NCLEX should submit a copy of their accommodation letter to the CON.

### BSN Academic Progression Requirements

#### Pre-Nursing Lower Division

Acceptance into the University with a lower division classification does not guarantee progression into the upper division nursing major. All students in the lower division in the baccalaureate program are subject to the following regulations:

- CON LD (pre-nursing) students must maintain an institutional GPA of 3.0. Lower division students with an institutional GPA below 3.0 will be placed on probation for the following major semester or 12 credit hours but may continue to take required courses. If a lower division student maintains a below 3.0 institutional GPA for two consecutive major semesters (fall or spring), the student would then be dismissed from the CON and would be required to change their major.

- Failure to meet the minimum GPA standards of the CON may influence a student's academic standing at the University.
- See [Academic Probation](#).
- All incomplete grades posted on the transcript must be removed before progression into the upper division can be considered.
- 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. Any science course that needs to be repeated must be taken within the USC System. All nursing courses that need to be repeated must be taken at USC Columbia.
- The BSN program recognizes the University grade forgiveness policy.
- If a student earns a second below C grade in a BSN degree required NURS or science course, they are no longer eligible for the nursing program. [See Academic Dismissal](#).

### Upper Division

A minimum grade of **C** is required in each nursing course. No more than 1 failed attempt at a NURS course is allowed in order for a student to remain eligible for the nursing major. All students must maintain a 3.000 minimum institutional GPA to maintain good standing in the nursing program. Grades are reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who have less than a 3.000 institutional GPA in all coursework are placed on probation within the college for the following semester but may continue to take all required courses. See [Academic Probation](#).

If at the end of the probationary semester their institutional GPA is still less than 3.000, students are administratively removed from the nursing major. [See Academic Dismissal](#).

Students must have a completed application on file, provide evidence of successful completion of remaining lower division coursework, be admitted to the upper division, have completed all required clinical healthcare information, and confirmed acceptance of their seat prior to registering for their first upper division nursing courses (300 level).

Smart Start Nursing Program students should see previous section for [progression requirements](#).

To be eligible for graduation, College of Nursing students must earn a "C "or better grade for each BSN required course and must have a minimum 3.0 institutional GPA.

### Upper Division Progression Process

Students enrolled in the lower division must meet minimum upper division admission standards set forth by the College of Nursing to be eligible to apply to upper division. Students who wish to apply to upper division nursing must have a completed parallel plan on file with their nursing advisor and submit a completed CON Upper Division

Application by the stated fall application process for the following summer or fall semester in which registration is desired. Once minimum criteria are met, all qualified applicants are placed into an applicant group and are evaluated, using the same criteria, by their progression grade point averages and interview criteria for a total evaluation metric. Based on the number of available seats and available clinical sites, students are admitted based on results of the total evaluation metrics. In recent years, admission to the upper division has become highly competitive as demand for the program of study has increased.

Progression into upper division nursing for lower division (pre-nursing) students occurs in the summer and fall. Students should be prepared to start upper division in the summer term. There is no guarantee students will be placed in their term of preference. In addition, students are encouraged to investigate their financial aid/scholarship/funding sources in preparation for their upper division start. Once selection has been made there will be no changes to the cohorts. GPA standing does not factor into the term.

**Criteria to apply for Nursing Upper Division:** Enrollment in upper division is competitive and limited. The following criteria are used for admission consideration to the upper division nursing course sequence through a competitive selection process:

- A progression GPA (which consists of all designated (\*) courses above) of 3.000 or higher.
- Institutional GPA of 3.000 or higher.
- Grade forgiveness will not be recognized in the GPA calculation.
- A grade of “C” or better is required in all designated (\*) courses by the end of the term in which application is made to upper division.
- A completed Parallel Plan on file with your nursing advisor by the application deadline.
- Completion of all designated (\*) general education and pre-nursing lower division courses by the end of the term in which application is made to upper division.
- An application must be submitted by the published deadline.
- Completion of interview process.

RN-BSN Overview

The RN to BSN online degree program is designed for registered nurses who want to advance professionally. The program aims to enhance leadership skills, professional knowledge, and marketability. Students must apply directly to the RN-BSN program for admission to the university. Admission is competitive, based on GPA, RN licensure, and degree completion from an ACEN accredited institution. Courses are offered in a 7-week online/accelerated format.

### RN-BSN Learning Outcomes

1. Provide evidence-based, culturally sensitive, clinically competent care across the continuum of care.
2. Use information and health care technologies to assist in making clinical judgments using reflection, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills for effective health care delivery.
3. Exhibit professional behavior while working as a member of an interprofessional healthcare team and in all other settings.
4. Perform the professional roles of care provider, care coordinator, leader, member of a profession, and life-long learner.

### RN-BSN Curriculum

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (RN-BSN Completion) requires a minimum of 120 hours. Carolina Core and College General Education total requirements must equal 60 or more credit hours, depending on language placement test and use at most of two overlay courses in Carolina Core. Minimum hours equal 31. Pre-requisite course requirements may be required to be completed before progressing to RN-BSN courses.

### RN-BSN Progression Requirements

Only one RN-BSN nursing course may be repeated once to earn a grade of **C** or better to remain eligible for the nursing major. A minimum grade of **C** is required in all other nursing courses. All students must maintain a 3.000 minimum institutional GPA to maintain good standing in the nursing program. Grades are reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who have less than a 3.000 institutional GPA are placed on probation within the college for one semester 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 are administratively removed from the RN-BSN program.

### RN-BSN Clinical Capstone Experience

Students are required to attend a face-to-face clinical capstone experience at an approved clinical site in their local community or in the greater Columbia area of South Carolina.

### RN-BSN Time Limitations

Effective Fall 2020 and After: Prerequisite BSN science courses cannot be older than 7 years as of starting upper division coursework. Once a student has begun upper division coursework, they must complete the BSN degree within 5 years. Every attempt at science courses within the last 7 years will be included in the progression GPA calculation.

### Loss of RN License

If 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 re-licensed.

### RN-BSN Licensure Exam Credit

After admission to the RN-BSN program and completion of all BSN degree requirements: Students awarded an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) from an accredited (ACEN, formerly NLNAC) program or Students with a Diploma in Nursing from an accredited (ACEN, formerly NLNAC) program will be awarded up to 38 credits towards meeting educational competencies for their degree (RN Licensure). Number of credits awarded will be determined after careful review of the student transcript and program of study requirements (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.

## Academic Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures listed should not be viewed as a replacement for the [2025-2026 Undergraduate Studies Bulletin](#). As appropriate, the undergraduate programs within the CON may develop their own policies and procedures to augment the Undergraduate Studies Bulletin.

### Organization of this Section

Information relevant to all programs is included in all handbooks, supplemented by program specific information. Wherever possible, students are also referred to electronic references via hyperlinks.

### Confidentiality and Release of Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as amended, sets forth requirements regarding the privacy of student records and affords students certain



rights with respect to their education records. A full explanation is available on the [Office of the University Registrar website](#).

## Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing sets forth its essential eligibility requirements for its nursing program by citing the core performance standards. The standards describe requirements in six dimensions of ability/performance (see below). An example would be if a student's condition requires that they use a crutch, walker, cane, or arm cast, they will not be allowed to participate in clinical activity until the student submits a statement from their provider of care stating they may resume all activities without any assistive devices.

## 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 devices 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 always be worn 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.

\*\*For any injury or illness that occurs while enrolled in the CON, please refer to [Medical Clearance for Absences from Class Due to Injury or Illness](#) or [Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol](#)

## Misuse of Telephone 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 of 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.

## Student Grievance Policy

### Overview

For nonacademic issues, see [STAF 6.27, Student Grievance Policy, Non-Academic](#). For academic issues refer to both [STAF 6.30, Academic Grievance Policy](#) and the College of Nursing policy below.

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 concerns. Further procedures for resolution of differences are outlined in the Academic Grievance Policy of the current [USC Policies and Procedures Manual](#) and this College of Nursing BSN Undergraduate Student Handbook. Contact the Assistant Dean for 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 prejudice 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 Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, who will explain the grievance policy and the student's rights and responsibilities. The Assistant Dean for 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 Interim Associate Dean for Academics and submit the written narrative describing the alleged violation. The written narrative must be submitted no later than one semester after the alleged violation has occurred. The Associate Dean for Academics will send to the student a written response within 10 regular working days following the meeting. If, after receiving the Associate Dean for Academics response, the complaint is not resolved to the aggrieved student's satisfaction, the student must notify the Associate Dean for Academics within 10 working days of receiving the letter and request a grievance hearing. The Associate Dean for Academics 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 Associate Dean for Academics 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.
5. It is the responsibility of the student and the faculty member, respectively, to arrange for the appearance of witnesses. The Associate Dean for Academics may not attend the grievance hearing.
6. The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must schedule a hearing; inform the faculty involved in writing and schedule their 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 because of student grievance proceedings has the right to appear before the University Faculty Grievance Committee and present their case to the Committee. The process is described in the Faculty Manual.

\*Policy may be changed at any time; revised 2.3.2023

## Student Petition 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 e-mail 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.

### Petition Process

A student must petition the committee in writing, describing the situation, and may be asked to present their case at the committee meeting. The petition form is obtained from and submitted to the Access and Community Engagement Coordinator.

A student may submit a petition for the following reasons. This list is not all inclusive.

- Continuance of Probation Status (Institutional GPA below 3.000 as required by the terms of your probationary semester)
- Waiver of undergraduate rule - inability to continue in College of Nursing if 2 or more below "C" grades in required science and/or nursing courses.

- Waiver of undergraduate rule – a student may attempt each NURS course twice in the undergraduate program and a grade of W (withdrawal) in any undergraduate course will constitute an attempt.

Student should explain any extenuating circumstances - whatever they might be - i.e., finances, anxiety, family, illness, etc. that caused you to not be successful, and even more importantly a plan for success if allowed to continue in the program. Please attach supporting documentation if available.

#### Course Failure due to Clinical Failure

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.

Failure to achieve a **C** or greater will result in repeating the entire course including clinical hours. A student who is failing a clinical course for unsafe practice may not withdraw from the course. In the event of a failure for unsafe clinical practice, the BSN Program Director will define the conditions under which the student may repeat the course.

#### Star Counseling Form

The STAR Counseling form will be used when students do not meet mandatory requirements set forth by the CON. The faculty will provide formal documentation to students who exhibit unprofessional behavior or unsafe practices. This formal documentation will be in the form of a “STAR Counseling Form” that references the student handbook and the exact standard the student failed to display in their course or clinical practice. The faculty will use the STAR Counseling Form during the meeting (in-person or virtual) between the faculty and student. Both student and faculty will sign the document and the student will receive a copy. This “STAR Counseling Form” will be maintained in the student’s permanent file in the CON from semester to semester regardless of the student’s status. The STAR Counseling form does not prevent the faculty from reporting students to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Office.

STAR Counseling forms are also used when students fail to meet the established deadline for health requirements and mandatory events.

#### 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, unless the

student is enrolling into the upper division summer semester. The student **must schedule and meet** with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs for approval.

#### 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 BSN Program Director. 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 BSN Program Director.

#### Dropping Courses and Withdrawal

All 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.

#### Free Drop/Add Period

During the Free Drop/Add period, undergraduate students can add and remove courses from their schedule through Self Service Carolina. For each course, the Free Drop/Add period begins during the official first day of the course and extends to a minimum of 6% of the Part of Term<sup>1</sup> in which the course is scheduled. Courses removed during the Free Drop/Add period will not be recorded on a student's transcript. Details regarding Free Drop/Add dates can be found on the **Self Service Carolina log-in page** under the "Academics" sections.

Students are prevented from dropping or adding courses during the Free Drop/Add Period if they have an active registration hold on their record.

<sup>1</sup>Part of Term: Each course is associated with a specific part of the term for the semester or a specific date range in which the course is held. For example, Part of Term can refer to Full Term courses that run the full major semester (fall or spring) or Half Term courses that run only half of a major semester. Each Part of Term has specific drop/add, withdrawal, and withdrawal fail dates. Details regarding Part of Term dates can be found on the Self-Service Carolina log-in page under the "Academics" sections.

#### Course Withdrawal Period

During the Withdrawal Period, undergraduate students can withdraw from a course with no grade penalty through Self Service Carolina. For each course, the Withdrawal Period begins after the Free Drop/Add Period and extends to a minimum of 72% of the Part of Term\* in which the course is scheduled. Courses

from which a student withdraws during this period are recorded on a student's transcript as a **W**; however, the semester hours will not be calculated in the computation of grade point average, count towards earned hours, or count towards graded hours. Courses that have a recorded grade of **W** will count towards attempted hours. Details regarding course Withdrawal dates can be found on the Self-Service Carolina log-in page under the "Academics" sections.

Students are prevented from withdrawing from courses during the Withdrawal Period if they have an active registration hold on their record.

### Course Withdrawal Fail Period

During the Withdrawal Fail Period, undergraduate students can withdraw from a course with a penalty grade through Self Service Carolina. For each course, the Withdrawal Fail Period begins after the Withdrawal Period and extends through the official last day of class for the part of term in which the course is scheduled. Courses from which a student withdraws with a grade of **WF** during this period are treated as an F in the evaluation of academic standing, computation of grade point average, and graded hours. Details regarding course Withdrawal Fail dates can be found on the [Self Service Carolina log-in page](#) under the "Academics" sections.

Students are prevented from withdrawing from courses during the Withdrawal Fail Period if they have an active registration hold on their record.

### Hardship Withdrawal

During and after the Withdrawal Fail Period, it may be necessary for a student to withdraw from all courses for the semester due to a significant personal hardship (e.g., medical or family emergency, prolonged illness, other medical or traumatic event). In these situations, students can petition for a Hardship Withdrawal from courses through the Office of the Dean of Students or the Hardship Withdrawal Committee. See [Hardship Withdrawal](#) for more information.

Information regarding the University's Withdrawal Refund Appeals procedures can be found in the Fees and Refunds section of the bulletin.

### 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. If the course is not listed on the USC Course Equivalency Table as a direct equivalent, students may complete an [Undergraduate Course Evaluation Request Form](#). The University Registrar will ultimately determine if the course is equivalent. Transcripts must be sent from the transient institution to USC immediately after completion of the course.

### Independent Study Courses

The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not covered by the regular course structure. The experience shall involve an academic product that is consistent with the student's program of study. 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. A syllabus is required to be completed and approved.

Prior to enrolling in an undergraduate independent study course, a student must complete an Undergraduate Independent Study Contract (AS-6U). 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

Course faculty and BSN Program Director must approve this form. Students then present their approved copy to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course. Only students who take independent study as part of their major or minor or cognate program may receive grade-point credit for independent study. All other students will receive Pass-Fail credit. Students who take independent study on a Pass-Fail basis cannot later receive grade points, even if the student transfers to another major, minor, or cognate otherwise qualifying the course work as appropriate for grade points. This ruling is not reversible by petition.

### Attendance Policies

USC expects its students to commit to their education by attending class and participating in course activities. In assessing student attendance and participation, the University aims to ensure the highest academic standards while recognizing that events occur beyond the personal control of students or faculty. Different courses and academic programs demand different approaches to assessing student attendance and participation.

### University and College Attendance Policy

The CON attendance policy for classroom didactic instruction is as follows:

Absence from more than 15 percent of the scheduled hours that a class meets for instructional purposes is excessive. The instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for absences beyond this threshold. Faculty members are not required to track students who miss only part of a class session. Tardy arrival to (or early departure from) a class meeting may be counted as absence for the entire class duration.

### University and College Attendance Policy for Online Undergraduate Courses

Students are expected to log into the course at least two (2) times weekly to read announcements, access course content in Course Weekly Guides, participate in interactive online learning activities. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason by the instructor for requesting the student to withdraw from the course.

### Clinical Attendance Policy

- Students are expected to attend ALL clinical nursing activities with absences permitted up to 10 percent of clinical hours 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.
- 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.
- Students must provide a note from their healthcare provider documenting the need to miss clinical, simulation, or lab experiences.
- Faculty may require withdrawal of a student who has missed enough practice to prevent completion of clinical objectives.

### Clinical Late Attendance Policy

A student will notify their Clinical Instructor verbally at least 1 hour prior to the absence and notify the Course Coordinators within 24 hours. Faculty may require withdrawal of any student who has missed sufficient clinical/practice to prevent completion of clinical objectives. Late arrival at clinical is not acceptable.



- First offense within a course: Student will receive a warning.
- Second offense within a course: Student will be sent home and receive a Clinical Day Failure to be made up as indicated by the Course Coordinators (only if student has no other absences).
- Third offense within a course: Student will be sent home and receive a second Clinical Day Failure.

A single Clinical Day Failure must be made up and will require an individual counseling form. A second Clinical Day Failure (for any reason) may constitute a course failure.

### Extrinsic Experiences Attendance Policy

Extrinsic Experiences are mandatory. Extrinsic Experiences include experiential clinical learning activities in a community setting or organization under the supervision of a clinical instructor, preceptor, registered nurse, or/and organization designee. Extrinsic Experiences are in addition to assigned acute clinical experiences. Students are expected to follow the policies and expectations as outlined for clinical experiences in the Undergraduate Student Handbook.

### Professional Meeting and Conference Attendance Policy

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

The CON makes every effort to allow for such events. However, it is not possible to allow all of them. In the event of a schedule conflict, resolution must be negotiated with the course faculty and or BSN Program Director. 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 may be offered in an alternate format and will need to be completed within a 48-hour period of return. Early examinations may not be offered. Students will not be exempted from course requirements because they are attending a conference.

### Statement of Responsibility/Waiver of Liability

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

### Religious Observance and Holidays

USC is required by law to excuse absences from class for observance of a religious practice, holiday or holy day, if the instructor of the class is provided written notification by the student of their intent to observe such religious practice, holiday or holy day no later than the end of the second week of regularly scheduled classes in a full fall or

spring semester term, and within twice the length of the drop/add period for any other term. Change/Drop dates can be found at <https://mysc.edu/codes/partofterms/index>.

## Grading Policies

- Grades are determined by quality of work, performance on course assignments, examination grades and class attendance.
- 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.
- 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. For letter grade definitions, see 2025-2026 Undergraduate Bulletin, [Grading Policies](#)

## Grading Scale

A = 92-100  
B+ = 90-91  
B = 83-89  
C+ = 81-82  
C = 75-80  
D+ = 73-74  
D = 70-72  
F = 69 or lower

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is tabulated at the end of each semester. The University of South Carolina grades on a standard 4.00 grading system.

## Grade Rounding Policy

The following policy is in place to promote quality learning outcomes and fairness to all students.

## Rounding Policy

- All grades will be recorded to the hundredth (two decimal points).
- Individual grades are not rounded.
- No extra credit or curve grades will be given for NURS courses.  
Once a 75.00 is achieved, the final course 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.

A minimum average of 75.00 is required to pass the course. Final grades earned between 74.51-74.99 will not round up to the nearest whole number, 75.00 or C, for a passing course grade.

### Grade Disagreement

The role of the BSN Program Director in matters of grade disagreement is to investigate the processes used by faculty in determining the grade and advise the faculty member in managing any perceived problems with applying grading processes outlined in the syllabus or any other apparent violations of fairness. The faculty member determines the grade that is awarded.

### Grade Forgiveness

Grade forgiveness is recognized by the BSN program. Refer to the University's Grading Policies for details on **Course Grade Forgiveness**.

### Incomplete Policy

The grade of I (incomplete) is assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, in the instructor's judgment, a student is prevented from completing a portion of the assigned work in a course because of an illness, accident, verified disability, family emergency, or some other unforeseen circumstance.

Re-enrolling in a course will not make up an incomplete grade. A grade of "I" is not computed in the calculation of a student's cumulative grade point average until the make-up grade is posted. After 12 months an "I" (incomplete) grade that has not been replaced with a letter grade is changed permanently to a grade of "F" or to the backup grade indicated by the faculty member on the Assignment of Incomplete Grade form.

### Incomplete 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.

## Standardized Assessment Tests

The CON 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 with their full accommodation during these exams.

## Examination Policies

1. No examination materials (including scratch paper) are to leave an examination room under any circumstances during the actual examination period or during an examination review.
2. All exams must be completed by the due date/time. Failure to complete any exam by the due date/time will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. In case of emergencies and/or extenuating circumstances, please notify the faculty in advance.
  - Students are required to make up a missed exam within 7 days of the original exam date or within 7 days of receiving appropriate clearance and faculty approval to return to class, or resolution of an emergent situation. If the exam is not completed within the 7-day time period, the course faculty may enact a grade penalty.
3. Discussion or reproduction of any online assessment (e.g., exams or quizzes) in any form is a violation of academic integrity and, if it happens, it will be reported.
4. Book bags are to be placed at the front or side of the classroom away from all students for the duration of the exam.
5. Cell phones, PDA, IPODS, Computer 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 exam or exam review and until exiting the room.
6. 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.
7. Hats are not to be worn during examinations.

## Testing Material Requirements

- Dry erase board (9 X 14 or smaller)

- Dry erase marker
- Dry erase board eraser for all exams

Scratch paper will not be distributed for testing purposes.

### Proctored Examination Options

Most exams will be proctored by course faculty in person. However, should a need arise, there are 5 additional options for taking proctored exams:

- Students may take proctored exams in the Office of Distributed Learning Testing Center on the Columbia Campus. The center, which is located at **1716 College Street**, has 9 computers/testing workstations. The center is open Monday –Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- The USC System offers a number of [approved testing sites](#). To schedule an exam, students must inform Distributed Learning of their preferred testing site, and then contact the site coordinator ***at least one week before each exam*** to schedule an appointment. No fee. Off-Campus Sites: Students may use a proctor from any accredited college or university that has testing services available. Most institutions have testing facilities or testing services offered through their online program. Students will need to complete a [Proctor Request Form \[PDF\]](#) for approval to take exams at an off-campus testing location.
- [Student Disability Resource Center](#) provides alternative testing accommodations. SDRC Test Proctoring Suite is located at 1705 College Street, Close-Hipp, Suite 203. No fee.
- The secure online test proctoring service, ProctorU, allows students to take exams at times and locations that are convenient to them. ProctorU's services are accessed using a computer equipped with a webcam and internet connection. ProctorU verifies the student's identity, records the testing session, and has every testing session reviewed by a certified proctor to ensure integrity. An \$8-14 fee for online proctoring, depending on the length of the exam, is paid by students directly to ProctorU during their exam. Instructors must register for an exam to use this option.
- Monitor, by Respondus provides automated exam proctoring and enables students to take assessments within Blackboard. Monitor records each student's session for later review and applies monitoring algorithms to notify instructors of the timestamp of any suspicious activity for their review. This product is integrated in Blackboard, and available for use at no cost to students, instructors, or academic departments.

More information for students about test proctoring can be found on the USC Distributed Learning [Test Proctoring page](#).

### ATI Exams Policy

The ATI exam will be administered during the course semester or during the final exam week. Exam policies apply to the ATI exam. The ATI is worth 10% of the course grade based on the ATI information found in the student handbook and will be calculated into the 75.00% average that is required to pass the Exams/Assessments portion of the course.

The recorded grade for the ATI will be attained in the following manner:

A student scoring in Proficiency Level 3 will earn 6 out of 10 points available for the ATI

A student scoring in Proficiency Level 2 will earn 5 points out of 10 points available for the ATI

A student scoring in Proficiency Level 1 will earn 4 points out of 10 points available for the ATI

A student scoring below Proficiency Level 1 will earn 3 points out of 10 points available 60 (F) for the ATI

In order to attain points to reach the total 10 points possible, which includes completion of practice tests, focused reviews, learning templates, and remediation refer to the below chart.

ATI Policies for Clinical Courses (312, 411, 412, 422, 424, 425, 431)

ATI Points Table		
Item	Possible Points	Earned Points
Completed Practice A Test	0.5 points	
Completed Practice A Test Remediation	0.5 points	
Completed Practice B Test	0.5 points	
Completed Practice B Test Remediation	0.5 points	
Level 3 Scored	6 points	
Level 2 Scored	5 points	
Level 1 Scored	4 points	
Below Level 1 Scored	3 points	
Completed Post-ATI Proctored Exam Remediation	2 points	
Total Points Earned	Points out of 10	___/10

**ATI may test material not presented in class. Therefore, students are responsible for any and all information presented in the ATI Review Module Manual.**

**ATI Practice Test Policy:**

- Open practice tests 2 weeks prior to the scheduled ATI exam
- Practice tests will have 48 hours between attempts
- After completing the first attempt of Practice Test A
  - Students should complete a 1-hour focused review and complete 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest major content areas of student's choosing. A remediation quiz will be generated when Major Content Area's that include 5 or more items and a score of less than 75% is earned
- After completing the first attempt of Practice Test B
  - Students should complete a 1-hour focused review and complete 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest major content areas of student's choosing. A remediation quiz will be generated when Major Content Area's that include 5 or more items and a score of less than 75% is earned
- Students should submit the following to each course LMS site:
  - Practice Test A transcript
  - Practice Test A focused review (1-hour)
  - 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates based on lowest major content areas of student's choosing from Practice Test A
  - Practice Test B transcript
  - Practice Test B focused review (1-hour)
  - 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates based on lowest major content areas of student's choosing from Practice Test A
- *\*\*For NURS 412: A pre-test will at the beginning of semester for baseline assessment\*\**

**Proctored ATI Exam Scheduling Policy:**

- No retakes
- Students should complete the Proctored ATI Exam during one of the following:
  1. Last week of the semester
  2. During finals week, but the ATI exam must be scheduled prior to the final exam in the course

**Proctored ATI Remediation Policy:**

- Remediation will be due within 72 hours of completing the Proctored ATI exam
  1. Student scoring a **Level 3 will be required to complete** a 1-hour focused review, complete 2 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing



2. Student scoring a **Level 2 will be required to complete** a 2-hour focused review, complete 3 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing
3. Student scoring a **Level 1 will be required to complete** a 3-hour focused review, complete 4 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing
4. Student scoring a **Below Level 1 will be required to complete** a 4-hour focused review, complete 5 handwritten Active Learning Templates in the lowest Major Content Areas of student's choosing

### **ATI Policy for NURS 435**

**ATI Predictor Grading: (This policy is specific to 435)** The grade in the course will be a combination of earned points for Level on Pre- and Post-Predictor and earned points for timely completion of Focused Review. Out of 10 points available, students will earn 6 to 8 points for their highest level on the Comprehensive ATI- whichever a student earns a higher level on, the Pre-Predictor or Post-Predictor Level, will be the recorded 6 to 8 points. These max 8 points can increase with a higher Post-Predictor than Pre-Predictor but will not decrease if the student earns a lower Post-Predictor level. Levels for this exam are based on ATI's levels for the "percent chance of passing NCLEX" score.

Regardless of Level earned, all students will complete focused review to strengthen areas for continued growth after both the Pre-Predictor (1 point of the 10 potential max) and Post- Predictor (1 point of the 10 potential max). Focused Review (time spent in review-based on level earned-plus 2 templates) must be completed as part of successful completion for this mandatory course component. Proof of each Focused Review must be turned in fully complete (hours on review based on level earned for that predictor attempt and 2 templates) and on time to earn 1 point of the 10 max points (1 point for Pre-Predictor review; 1 point for Post-Predictor review). Focused Review that is turned in late without extenuating circumstances will incur a deduction (see Late Assignment Policy). Focused review that is incomplete or not fully addressing requirement will incur a deduction.

### **ATI Scoring Table for NURS 435**



## ATI SCORING TABLE & EXAMPLES

ATI PRELIMINARY PREDICTOR EXAM				ATI POST PREDICTOR EXAM				Highest Number of Total Points Possible
Level Achieved	Points Earned	Required Focused Review After the Preliminary Predictor Exam	Points Earned for Focused Review Completion	Level Achieved	Points Earned (*Student keeps their best score from Column A or B)	Required Focused Review After the Post Predictor Exam	Points Earned for Focused Review Completion	
	<b>*A</b>				<b>*B</b>			
<b>Level 3</b> (95% or higher chance of passing NCLEX)	8	1 hour & 2 templates	1	<b>Level 3</b> (95% or higher chance of passing NCLEX)	8	1 hour & 2 templates	1	10
<b>Level 2</b> (90-94% chance of passing NCLEX)	7	2 hours & 2 templates	1	<b>Level 2</b> (90-94% chance of passing NCLEX)	7	2 hours & 2 templates	1	9
<b>Level 1</b> (85-89% chance of passing NCLEX)	6.5	3 hours & 2 templates	1	<b>Level 1</b> (85-89% chance of passing NCLEX)	6.5	3 hours & 2 templates	1	8.5
<b>Below Level 1</b> (84% or lower chance of passing NCLEX)	6	4 hours & 2 templates	1	<b>Below Level 1</b> (84% or lower chance of passing NCLEX)	6	4 hours & 2 templates	1	8

### Medication Quiz Policy

There will be a Medication Calculation Quiz during the first week of the course. Students should refer to the student handbook for detailed information regarding the medication calculation quiz policy and required procedures.

1. The required passing score for the Medication Calculation Quiz is 90%.
2. The student will take the Medication Calculation Quiz as scheduled by the course coordinator.
3. The student will have no more than 3 attempts TOTAL to pass the Medication Calculation Quiz.
4. Failure to pass at 90% or greater will require a second attempt with time to be set by the course faculty.
5. There should be a minimum of **48 hours before the 2nd attempt** to allow for remediation. The student must abide by the medication calculation policies and procedures as outlined in the student handbook.
6. If the second attempt is successful, the grade from the first attempt will be recorded in Blackboard.
7. Failure to achieve a 90% or greater on the second attempt will result in a clinical /lab day failure.
8. Prior to the third attempt, remediation will be required. Information regarding remediation and the medication calculation policies and procedures can be found in the student handbook. The retest schedule will be determined by the

course coordinator. If the student is successful at 90% or greater, the grade from the first medication calculation test will be recorded in Blackboard.

9. If the third attempt is below 90, this will result in a 2nd clinical /lab day failure. Two clinical day failures will result in course failure.

### Final Examination

The CON Final exam schedule is prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs and Program Directors, and dates and times are communicated by faculty. No final examination may be held outside of the published final examination dates and times without authorization from the BSN Program Director. 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.

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.

## CON Policies and Procedures Specific to Undergraduate Nursing Programs

### Organization of this Section

Information relevant to all programs is included in all handbooks, supplemented by program specific information. Wherever possible, students are also referred to electronic references via hyperlinks.

### Communication between the College of Nursing and Undergraduate students

The official mode of communication between the CON and undergraduate students is through university e-mail. All students matriculated in the CON are assigned a USC e-mail account upon acceptance of an admission offer. Students must monitor their university e-mail account regularly and are responsible for responding promptly to requests made by e-mail. No other e-mail account may be used for official communication with the school.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

USC is committed to ensuring that every student has equal access to all aspects of the USC experience. Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) coordinates efforts to ensure that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations and serves as consultants to faculty, staff, and campus partners. SDRC information can be viewed [here](#). Please contact SDRC with any questions at (803) 777-6142, e-mail: [sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu)

### Student Absence and Reporting Policies

## Excused Absences

- Students are expected to attend all clinical activities, including simulation, lab, and extrinsic activities. Absences will be considered only if certified as unavoidable because of sickness or other causes, such as accident or death of immediate family member, and student provides documentation (such as doctor's excuse for illness, etc.).
- A clinical absence is permitted if the absence is certified as unavoidable (i.e., sickness, emergency, family emergency) and documentation of the event is provided.
- Students enrolled in full semester clinical courses can have no more than two unavoidable clinical absences during the semester. Students enrolled in 7-week semester clinicals can have no more than one unavoidable clinical absence during the semester.
- All missed clinical, lab, simulation, or extrinsic experiences must be made up.

## Unexcused Absences

- Avoidable absences are not permitted and considered unexcused.
- Unexcused or avoidable clinical absences will result in a clinical day failure and STAR counseling form for each missed clinical experience.
- Two clinical day failures or absences in a full semester clinical course or One clinical day failure or absences in a 7-week semester clinical course may result in course failure and requires review by the program director.

## Absence Reporting Policy

Step One: If missing simulation/lab, &/or clinical:

- Notify course faculty via email for each simulation, lab, or clinical day absence.

Step Two: If missing simulation, lab, &/or clinical:

- Notify clinical instructor via their preferred contact method for each simulation, lab, or clinical day absence.

## Special Circumstances for Injuries

- **Concussion:** get accommodations information at [https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_disability\\_resource\\_center/temporary\\_conditions\\_and\\_injuries/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_disability_resource_center/temporary_conditions_and_injuries/index.php) Once provided, the University will communicate for students with all faculty.
- **For hand/shoulder injury:**
  - Students cannot be in clinical with a cast.
  - Students cannot have any restrictions in the clinical setting.
  - Students must be weight-bearing.

- **For foot injury:**
  - If Students obtained a boot, the boot cannot have an exposed toe. Must have an approved medical toe cap.
  - Students cannot be on crutches or utilize a knee scooter in clinical.
  - Students must be weight-bearing.
- **Covid Vaccine Policy** – No mandatory covid testing is required.

## Student Substance Use Disorders (SUD) Policy

### Purpose

The CON recognizes the importance of educating its students about the problems of substance use disorders (SUD). Unfortunately, this significant health risk is prevalent among healthcare providers. Aside from impacting the personal and psychological integrity of the individuals with SUD, Substance use disorders might significantly alter the ability of healthcare providers to administer safe, competent patient care. In extreme cases, SUD by a healthcare provider can lead to malpractice lawsuits and even criminal prosecution. Recognizing that SUD is both a brain disease and a professional hazard, USC has resources available for students experiencing SUD issues.

The CON has established this policy to clarify procedures for students who are found to have misused controlled or illegal substances and/or alcohol. This policy addresses the student's ability to maintain personal and professional integrity and facilitates the student's success both clinically and didactically. 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 SUD and its potential to lead to adverse patient outcomes.

### Policy

This policy applies to all students who have matriculated into CON 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 are accountable for their ingestion of substances, regardless of whether aware or unaware of the contents of which they ingested (including orally, inhaled, vaped, or other means). The College of Nursing will deal

with student claims of unintentional intoxication on a case-by-case basis considering all facts and circumstances. 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 **Policies and Procedures Manual**.

In addition, there are circumstances in which students might need to take over the counter or prescribed medications that have the potential to impair their professional performance in the clinical setting 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 required drug screening about the use of any medication that could impair performance or has the potential to influence a drug screen result.

Failure or refusal to comply with the SUD policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any drug screen or to alter the results of a drug screen will be considered a refusal to comply with this policy. In addition, failure, or refusal to comply with any aspect of the SUD 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 Screens

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

In addition, during enrollment in a CON program(s), a student may be required to undergo drug or alcohol testing for cause when the university faculty and/or administrator(s) determine 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. Drug screening based on reasonable suspicion may be requested in the following scenarios, but will not be limited to these examples: when: 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. Drug screening may also be required following a work-related injury or illness if requested by the facility or third-party payor such as an insurance company.

## II. Reporting

A faculty or staff member who suspects substance misuse by a student must report the suspicions along with relevant supporting information to the Program Director or faculty who will then immediately contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academics. In the absence of the Program Director, the faculty member observing the behavior should contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academics. Any faculty member with evidence that an enrolled student has engaged in clinical care of patients and families or participated in classroom activities while impaired must report their observations to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academics.

A student who suspects substance misuse or a violation of this policy by another student has the responsibility to report this information. A report needs to be made to the student's academic advisor, and/or Instructor, Course Coordinator, or Program Director. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and 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 Assistant Dean for 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. Drug Screening Procedure

Drug and alcohol screening required by the CON will be conducted utilizing the following measures:

- a. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for drug screens.
- b. The student must be screened at a facility approved by the College.



- c. The student must fully comply with the approved facility's drug screening standards, methods, and procedures for collecting samples.
- d. The drug screen 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 screening results.
- f. If the accuracy of a positive drug screen is disputed by the student, the student may request a retesting of the initial samples by the facility; however, the student will cover the cost of the additional drug screens. Drug screens done outside the appropriate window of time will not be considered valid.
- g. Substance use disorder 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 drug screen 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 drug screen results and will be at the student's expense. During this time, the student will not be permitted to have any contact with their clinical sites, but may be allowed to attend classes, pending the approval of the appropriate Assistant Dean.
- i. The approved drug screening 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 submit 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 the drug screen results to the College and other relevant University offices, the test will be presumed positive and treated as a positive screening result for the purpose of this policy.

Admission to the program will be withdrawn for a student screening positive. All interim actions up to or including: (1) a student undergoing a drug or alcohol screening, (2) a student refraining from contact with clinical sites, and/or (3) a student refraining 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 the case of drug or alcohol screening based on reasonable suspicion, the cost of any required drug or alcohol testing will be the responsibility of the student at a facility approved by the College of Nursing. A student who refuses to submit to a drug screen or who refuses to release the results of drug or alcohol screen will be regarded as having voluntarily relinquished their clinical responsibilities and can be suspended from the program(s) until further investigation is completed. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any drug screen or to alter the results of a drug screen will be considered a refusal to submit to testing and may result in an inference of impairment and/or a violation of this policy.

#### IV. Confidentiality



The requirement that a student be screened, as well as the drug screen results, will remain confidential and disclosed only to those individuals within the 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 with a copy of the drug screen results. All students who hold a nursing license and who are suspected of SUD will be asked to self-report to their respective State Board of Nursing. If the student refuses to self-report, the Assistant Dean for 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.

## V. Self-Disclosure

Students who self-disclose a substance or alcohol use problem to a faculty member, staff member, Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or the Associate Dean for Academics **prior** to or following a positive drug/alcohol screen result, and who are willing to enter and complete an appropriate program of treatment may be granted a medical leave of absence while they undergo treatment. In consultation with their 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 health care providers about their recovery status with the College of Nursing.

## VI. Treatment and Counseling Resources

Students who are concerned that they may have a substance or alcohol use problem are encouraged to seek appropriate assessment, treatment, and counseling from qualified health care professionals. The following websites reflect some treatment resources, counseling services, and mutual support programs that are available to students:

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [American Society of Addictive Medicine](#)
- [Mental Health at USC](#)
- [Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- [National Directory of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment Programs](#)
- [USC Substance Abuse Prevention and Education](#)
- [USC University Health Services](#)

## VII. Reentry into the Academic and Clinical Environment

Return from a medical leave of absence due to disclosure of a substance use problem will be considered by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and approval of the Associate Dean for Academics following successful treatment and sustained progress in recovery efforts in addition to other conditions that may be stipulated in the leave of absence agreement. The leave of absence will be a minimum of one calendar year from the time of the positive drug screen with a longer period if determined as needed by your healthcare professionals. Time of re-entry would also be contingent on space available in the program of study. 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 the academic and clinical environment include 12-step program participation, random drug screenings, 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 from SUD 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 Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in consultation with the relevant Program Director or Course Coordinator. A student recovering from SUD 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 for those who have just started their educational program and have limited time invested in the program. Reentry after relapse into SUD 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 SUD 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 January 2021

## Student Use of Social Media Guidelines

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 always maintain patient privacy and confidentiality.
- b. Nurses are 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 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:

NCSBN (2011) White Paper: A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media  
[https://www.ncsbn.org/NCSBN\\_SocialMedia.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/NCSBN_SocialMedia.pdf).

### Student Social Media Takeover Guidelines

**Please refer to the below guidelines when participating in any social media takeover- Instagram, TikTok, etc.**

#### **Takeover at the Clinical Setting**

- You may record/take pictures before entering and after exiting the clinical building or facility.
  - No pictures or videos while inside the clinical building or facility. The CON phone policy will be enforced while in clinical.
  - You may talk about your experiences such as the highlights of your day, what you learned, your feelings, what skills you performed, etc.
  - Do not state which hospital you were at or your exact location within the hospital- you may say what unit you were on
    - Example: my clinical was on a med surgical unit today...

#### **Takeover at the College**

- You may record/take photos before and after class.
- If you record/take photos of classmates, please inform them their photo will be on the CON social media so those who do not want to be featured can decline.
- Do not speak about specific test questions, simulation experiences or other academically confidential experiences. It is best to obtain permission from the faculty if during a class.
- Simulation lab
  - No photos or video during a simulation
  - You may take staged photos with manikins during a break, before/after class.
  - Patient confidentiality rules apply in simulation. If you choose to photograph with a manikin, please do not take photos with a manikin that is being used that day as a patient.

- See Lonnie Rosier or Shannon Gooding to assist with any pictures of manikins.

### Takeover General Reminders

- While in uniform remember to respect the Core Values of Nursing
- Follow all HIPAA best practices.
- Have FUN! Make us PROUD!

**What makes a good Takeover?** At the USC CON, takeovers usually focus on a unique event or experience in a student's life. Content should build community among current nursing students and provide prospective students an authentic experience of Gamecock life such as diverse, interactive narratives based on their passion for and participation in university organizations, events, and academics. Examples include:

- Day in the life of a Gamecock nursing student
- Highlights of a class, clinical, or experiential learning experience
- Special event such as organizations, internships, scholarship, convocation, or commencement
- Other events as identified by the student or CON.

These guidelines will help you create a successful Takeover story:

### Takeover Do's:

- **Start the takeover with a video or picture of yourself. Introduce who you are and that you are taking over the CON social media Instagram.**
- **Introduce yourself** at events and announce that you are snapping, so those who do not want to be featured can say, "no" or decline.
- **Be friendly and gracious.** Respect people's boundaries and thank participants.
- **Be positive.** Represent the University and CON, and its students, faculty, staff, and larger community in a positive light.
- **Do over.** If a subject stumbles or says something offensive. Ask nicely to reshoot the picture/video without the profanity, etc. If they resist, thank them for their time and move on.
- **Take us through your typical day.** Are you involved in any organizations, clubs, committees, etc.? Where is your favorite place to eat on campus? Where do you hang out/study between classes? Do you ever attend events on campus? Do you venture into the city?
- **Shoot vertically.**
- **Adhere to** the University [Student Code of Conduct](#), and University laws and policies.

- **No alcohol, drugs, profanity, nudity, harassment, political campaigning, or degradation in posts. You must follow all copyright and hosting/posting laws/regulations.**
- **Ask permission.** When featuring specific individuals, get their verbal consent before recording them. If the situation demands recording them first, then ask for consent after. When in a public place or not focusing on a specific person or group of people, you do not need to get consent. When in doubt, ask permission.

### Takeover Don'ts:

- **When in doubt, do not.** If you feel a picture/video is questionable in content, talk with one of the administrators about your concerns.
- **Do not use social media while driving.** This is illegal and extremely dangerous.
- **Do not be disappointed or upset if an administrator does not use your story.** They are the curators. You might not be aware of other issues happening behind the scenes.
- **Do not be afraid to ask questions** of the administrators. We are here to help.

### Technology

Information regarding the Computer Standards, Computer Purchasing through USC, and Software used in the Nursing Curriculum can be found at [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/nursing/internal/current\\_students/technology/index.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/technology/index.php).

## Student Progression with Course of Study

### 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. Advisors are the principal source of assistance to students in planning an academic program, seeking advice, and dealing with problems as they arise. However, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with the advisor. Faculty and staff will make every effort to help students but cannot be expected to be responsible for problems not brought to their attention in a timely manner.

Enrollment in clinical and other special courses is contingent upon a student fulfilling additional requirements by stated deadlines (i.e., prerequisites, immunization and other health requirements, health agency requirements).

## Academic Standard for Progression

### 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.

A student must maintain an institutional grade point average (GPA) of 3.000 to remain in good academic standing to graduate from the College of Nursing.

### Academic Honors

Each semester academic achievement is recognized by the USC President's Honor List (GPA of 4.000 earned on a minimum of 12 credited semester hours) or the Dean's List (GPA of 3.500 or higher).

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.

### Graduating 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 Honors

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**.

#### Academic Probation

A student will be placed on probation if they

- Has an institutional GPA of less than 3.00 (B) at the end of any 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](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/advising/university_advising_center/index.php).
- Has an institutional GPA of less than 3.00 due to conversion of grades of incomplete at end of semester in which the grade is posted. Student is allowed one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the University Registrar receive the Incomplete conversion grade to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above.
- Has one below C grade in a required science or nursing (NURS) course.
- See **CON Graduate Pass/Fail Spring 2020 policy** (CON Graduate S+/S/U for Spring 2020 Full-Term and B Term Courses Only).

#### Academic Standard for Graduation

At the time of graduation, the student’s institutional grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00 (B) on a 4.000 scale.

#### Academic Dismissal

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

- Receive two grades of D+, D, or F in a BSN degree required NURS or science course.\*
- Fail a required undergraduate course twice or withdraw from the course on the first attempt and fail 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 or W received in a course. \*

- Have a grade of 'U' in two courses\*
- Have an institutional GPA of less than 3.00 at end of academic probation.
- Have an institutional GPA of less than 3.00 at end of major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the University Registrar receive the Incomplete conversion grade.
- Have a positive drug screening.
- Are banned from a clinical agency because of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior.
- Have a professional (RN or APRN) 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. If at any time after the initial background 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 appropriate Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or Associate Dean for Academics. Failure to report can result in immediate dismissal from the program.

## 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 Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. (See [Student Petition Policy](#)).

## Academic Forgiveness

The **Academic Forgiveness Policy** is outlined in the Undergraduate Student Bulletin in the Academic Regulations section.

## Course Enrollment Status and Load

### Course Format Definition

Online nursing courses in the undergraduate programs are delivered through Blackboard Learning Management System which allows USC faculty to create a secure course website for class communications, posting assignments, posting readings, linking to complementary websites, administering exams, and much more. In courses that use Blackboard, the course syllabus will provide basic information

about accessing [Blackboard](#). Additional information about Blackboard is available at [Getting Assistance](#).

Students access online courses at [Blackboard Access](#). Courses offered in this format are constructed and conducted differently than traditional classroom courses. Below are 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.

### Course Attempts

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

### Course Load

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 [Student Disability Resource Center](#) 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](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/veterans_and_military_services/index.php).

### Common Verification Requests

The University of South Carolina (Columbia, Aiken, Beaufort, Upstate, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) as a degree-granting institution at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, professional and doctoral levels.

USC will provide enrollment verification or a transcript to fulfill a verification request. Currently enrolled students can obtain a verification of enrollment through the National Student Clearinghouse at no charge through their Self-Service Carolina account.

USC will also provide a student with an official transcript for a fee. An official transcript is a complete record of a student's enrollment history, including all University of South Carolina campuses and can be used to verify credit hours completed by a student. A transcript can be used to verify a student's degree awarded, enrollment history, GPA, good standing, or eligibility to return to USC.

- **Degree Verification**
- Enrollment Verification for Current Students
- Enrollment Verification for Current Students for Past Academic Terms
- Enrollment Verification for Alumni for Past Academic Terms
- **Enrollment Verifications for Third Parties**
- Academic Good Standing/Eligible to Return to USC
- Good Standing Auto Insurance
- **Insurance Forms**
- **Loan Deferments**

## 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. Access our registration system at [Self Service Carolina \(SSC\)](#).

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 to determine the [part of term](#) for your classes.

## Course Selection and Drop Period

The University Registrar's web page [SSC](#) 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.

Students can use SSC to add, drop, or change a course or section. Any change in enrollment must be recorded with the University Registrar. Students may check the [Academic Calendar](#) online 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. Please note a "W" does constitute an attempt of a course. 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 program director and assigned student graduate advisor prior to making the changes.

For a refund schedule, please see the [Tuition Refund](#) section for more information. Please note that should a student fail to attend classes in a course for which they are registered, they 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.

### Course/Faculty Evaluations

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

### Textbooks

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

## Degree Completion and Graduation

### Application for Degree

The graduation application is the first step you will need to take to graduate from your academic program. To be eligible for graduation a student must meet all University and College of Nursing standards to receive a degree. Candidates for degrees must file a formal application during the last semester before graduation prior to the deadline set by the University Registrar. 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 institutional grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00.

Review the application and award processes on the University [Registrar's website](#) to better understand what happens once you submit your application.

### Graduation Requirements

All degree requirements are expected to be completed within a four-year or less period after admission to BSN degree. Candidates who are unable to meet this requirement must petition for an extension to the BSN Program Director. Any additional requirements in effect at the time of re-evaluation must be completed.

All failing ("F"), and Incomplete grades must be cleared or completed by graduation day or the student's name will be removed from the graduation list. A cumulative GPA of 3.000 is required. All University balances must be paid in full. At the time of

graduation, the student's institutional grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.000.

### 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. Visit the **Registrar's website** for additional information regarding commencement.

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

### 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.

### 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.

### Alumni

Upon graduation, students at 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 student 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 [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/nursing/alumni/](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/alumni/).

## Admission Information

### Change of Program or Major

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:

- A minimum Institutional of a 3.500
- No more than one below C grade in a BSN required science course
- 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 the following application by October 1<sup>st</sup>. For fall, all change of major applicants must submit the following application by July 1<sup>st</sup>. For summer semesters, all change of major applicants must submit the following application by March 1<sup>st</sup>. **Notifications for both acceptances and denials will be sent via email withing 14 business days of the application close date.**

**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. Students are required to submit a [statement of understanding](#) at the end of this appointment as a declaration that they are committed to entering our program and adhering to our standards.

### Clinical Education Policies

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 and/or indirect clinical hours require records of your immunizations and clearances to enter the clinical setting. These requirements include positive titers for MMR, Hep B, and Varicella, immunizations, as well as CPR certification, drug screen and background checks, and any other site-specific requirements. It may seem redundant, but due to HIPPA regulations, we must use different systems and University Health Services and the CON cannot share your information with each other. **Due to the demands of our clinical partners, requirements are subject to change.**

#### Clinical Compliance Requirements

##### Criminal Background Check and Drug Screen

Students must undergo a background check and drug screen by designated deadline through the approved College of Nursing vendor. 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 in each course requirements have not been met. Failure to complete requirements by designated deadline could impact continued enrollment.

Negative dilute results for drug screen will require a new drug screen to be completed. Additional screening may be required by clinical agencies or following a student's break in enrollment. Students who are not enrolled in one or more semesters must have a re-check of their background check and drug screen completed prior to re-enrollment. Students may be subject to random checks throughout the program. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred for criminal background checks and drug screenings.

The CON may withdraw an offer of admission to anyone determined to have a criminal history that poses a threat to the institution's community. Depending on the information appearing on the criminal history record, it is possible that the student may not be able to participate in a clinical site practicum, which will prevent progression in the program.

If at any time after the initial background and drug screen have been completed, and there is a change in the student's status, it is the student's responsibility to immediately report the circumstances to the appropriate Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or Associate Dean for Academics. Failure to report can result in immediate dismissal from the program.

### Health Requirements

As a part of the compliance process all students must submit proof of the immunizations on the CON Health Requirements Checklist. 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.

Records are to be submitted to and held by the CON compliance vendor. Students must complete clinical requirements by the designated deadline. All students at USC CON in either direct or indirect clinical coursework must meet the requirements of the clinical compliance policy to continue clinical coursework. Failure to do so may result in being dropped from coursework.

### 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. Go to [department fees](#) for additional information.

#### CON Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccine Policies established by Clinical Organizations

Clinical organizations may have COVID-19 vaccination requirements that differ from and are beyond the control of the University's and College's vaccination policies. For any College of Nursing student whose academic progress depends on clinical placements, failure to meet COVID-19 vaccination requirements established by external organizations could mean the student will be unable to finish the degree as previously advised. Updated guidelines are posted in courses each semester.

#### FIT Testing

Students in Upper Division will be required to attend a mandatory FIT testing clinic.

#### Clinical Safety and Performance

##### Dress Code for Clinical Courses

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. Student placement will not be made or changed to accommodate dress code adherence. Exceptions may include medical and religious practices. College of Nursing faculty reserve the right to ask students to leave the clinical area if their attire is deemed inappropriate or if student's lack of appropriate equipment to carry out their clinical duties.

#### Hair

- Shoulder-length or longer hair must be pulled back and secured so as not to contaminate the work environment.
- Hair accessories must be secure and conform to USC (white, grey, black, or garnet) or neutral color schemes. Accessories should not impact safety, infection control, or interfere with client care.
- Hairstyles must be clean and neatly groomed and may include natural hair or protective hairstyles such as wigs, braids, twists, or locks. Hair colors must be consistent with colors natural to humans.

- Face should be clean-shaven except for wearing short-length mustaches to comply with N95 fit testing requirements. N95 fit testing is mandatory and conducted annually for readiness to provide care to patients with a medical condition that requires droplet precautions. Exceptions are allowed for religious or medical reasons.

#### Body Piercing and Other Jewelry

- Body piercings and other jewelry that interfere with the safe delivery of patient care pose a risk to patients or create an infection control hazard are not permitted.
- One necklace that must be tucked inside the uniform top.
- Bracelets are not to be worn.
- Excessive jewelry, such as dangling or heavy chains or multiple rings is not acceptable as it presents a safety hazard.
- A maximum of two small, stud-style earrings per ear may be worn.
- Tongue and dental jewelry are not permitted.
- Nose piercings are limited to a single, non-protruding stud.
- All other body piercings (gauged ears, lips, eyebrows, etc.) should be plugged with non-detectable coverings. Clinical faculty and facility leadership also have the discretion to require that a student cover/remove any piercings that could be considered offensive and potentially harmful (e.g., impede job performance or present an infection control risk). Some clinical facilities do not allow nose piercings. In these cases, piercings should be plugged with undetectable coverings.
- 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 or makeup can be used if it provides complete and undetectable coverage of the tattoo.

#### Personal Hygiene

- Students are required to maintain high standards of personal cleanliness. Odors that are disruptive or offensive to others or may exacerbate allergies are unacceptable in the clinical environment.
  - For example: Smoke, body odor, scented soaps, lotions, hair products, perfumes, and colognes.
- Makeup, if worn, should not be distracting or extreme. Glitter, sequins, and artificial eyelashes that inhibit vision or impede proper fit for personal protective equipment are prohibited.
- Nails must be clean, well kept, and must be short (no longer than ¼ inch beyond the tip of the finger). Artificial nails including extenders, acrylic, silk wrap,

overlays and/or tips, and decorative fingernails are prohibited. Clear and neutral colors may be worn.

#### Professional Uniform Attire

Anytime students are participating in a scheduled clinical experience, the following must apply:

- Approved uniforms are required.
- All uniforms must be neat, clean, opaque, wrinkle-free, and properly fit with appropriate undergarments.
- If desired, students may wear black, grey, or white unadorned t-shirts under their scrub tops. Hoodies are not acceptable. Approved CON pullover sweater is allowed.
- 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 professional healthcare shoes or athletic shoes are required. All shoes must be enclosed, flat-heeled, non-canvas, non-mesh, and kept clean.

#### Professional Casual Attire

Whenever students are participating in a scheduled clinical attire, the following must apply:

- All clothing must be neat, clean, opaque, wrinkle free, and properly fit 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 (hats/caps, sweatshirts/hoodies, sweatpants, and jogging suites), sunglasses, 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.
- Students are required to wear opaque stockings or socks at all times.
- Black professional healthcare shoes or athletic shoes are required. All shoes must be enclosed, flat-heeled, non-canvas, non-mesh, and kept clean.

#### Equipment Kit

Approved equipment must be purchased prior to the start of upper division. Students receive information regarding the required purchases as they progress into the upper division..

#### Late Clinical Paperwork Policy

Clinical Paperwork Grading Policy: Students in UG clinical nursing courses may be required to complete concept maps or other clinical paperwork as part of clinical requirements in a course. The following is the grading policy regarding unexcused late submission of a concept map or clinical paperwork:

- First offense within a course: Student will receive a 10-point deduction per day late until a grade of 0 is achieved, and/or the paperwork is submitted for grading, whichever is achieved first. Additionally, the student will receive a warning

through a STAR performance improvement form and will be required to meet with clinical and/or course faculty.

- Second offense within a course: Student will receive a 10-point deduction per day late until a grade of 0 is achieved, and/or the paperwork is submitted for grading, whichever is achieved first. Additionally, the student will receive a Clinical Day Failure through a STAR counseling form and will be required to meet with clinical and/or course faculty.
- Third offense within a course: Student will receive a 10-point deduction per day late until a grade of 0 is achieved, and/or the paperwork is submitted for grading, whichever is achieved first. Additionally, the student will receive a Clinical Day Failure through a STAR counseling form and will be required to meet with clinical and/or course faculty. This would be the second Clinical Day Failure and thus, may result in course failure.

### 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 or preceptor.
2. The patient's condition will be assessed, and the error will be reported to the charge nurse and 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. 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. A medication error that endangers the patient's life or causes 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.

### Clinical Behaviors

- Prepares 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.
- Wears correct professional attire always including name badge.
- 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,

### 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 CON nor the USC is responsible for any vehicle occurrences or transportation.

### Clinical Inclement Weather Policy



The College of Nursing Clinical Inclement Weather Policy is based on the safety and welfare of all students. Since students are spread all over the state and work all shifts, the policy is more individualized than for other clinical courses and is based on the location of the clinical site and the travel distance for the student. If the student feels it is unsafe to travel back and forth to the clinical site for their scheduled shift due to weather conditions, then it is their responsibility to notify their preceptor or the clinical unit and their clinical faculty to let them know they are unable to work the shift as scheduled. Please understand this policy is not dependent on decisions made by the University to delay the start or cancel classes due to weather conditions. This means if USC Columbia or any of our campuses delay starting or cancel classes and the student's clinical is in Greenville where there are no weather alerts, the student should go to clinical. If conditions start changing while the student is at clinical, please have the student use their judgment to leave early to ensure their safe travel home. Please consult the local forecast for road conditions. The College of Nursing suggests you follow the local school system guidelines, meaning if elementary, middle, and high schools are canceled then so is clinical. The same would apply for early release.

If the student is unable to go in for a planned shift, they are still responsible for calling their preceptor so they will know not to expect you. If the student cannot reach your preceptor, then the student is to leave a message on their assigned unit. The student should also let their clinical faculty know.

If the student needs to reschedule due to weather, please know that the student is still responsible for completing required clinical hours and so they may need to regroup and adjust their planned schedule to accommodate any missed shifts. Your priority is to be safe!

### Center for Simulation and Experiential Learning (SAEL)

The Center for Simulation and Experiential Learning of the College of Nursing is located on the West Columbia satellite campus at Lexington Medical Center. 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 and Learning's (INACSL) Standards of Best Practice: SimulationSM. For more information, please visit [SAEL](#).

### 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.

### Process

The student must 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.

- a. *Percutaneous Exposure (e.g. needle stick, cut, animal bite)* – Immediately wash or flush the exposed area with soap and water for 10 minutes.
  - b. *Mucous Membrane Exposure (e.g. eyes, nose, or mouth)* – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush the eyes (holding open) using the eyewash station for 10 minutes.
2. The student or supervisor should immediately notify the appropriate entity within the health care institution where the exposure occurred 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:
  - a. Employee health office
  - b. Charge nurse for the floor or unit where the exposure occurred
  - c. Infection control nurse
  - d. Administrative officer of the day
  - e. Clinic director (for outpatient sites)
3. Once the necessary “source patient” testing has been ordered, the student should seek medical treatment as soon as possible by immediately reporting the injury to the faculty supervisor.
  - a. *Non-life-threatening injuries or illnesses for which medical treatment may be necessary* – The faculty supervisor and injured student together will **immediately** call CompEndium Services (available 24/7) at **877-709-2667**.
  - b. *Life-threatening injuries or illnesses* – Dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room and contact your supervisor and CompEndium Services as soon as possible. CompEndium will assist in processing and scheduling the student’s work-related injury for treatment and claims handling with USC’s insurance provider.
4. CompEndium will:
  - a. Direct the student to a medical provider for treatment.
  - b. Issue a treatment authorization number to the medical provider, which will authorize treatment of the injured student.
  - c. Provide a CompEndium email address where the student will submit [Employee Injury Report Form \(81-B\)](#) and where the faculty supervisor will submit [Supervisor Report of Injury Form \(81-C\)](#).

5. The student must notify the CON Office of Student Affairs of the incident at **803-777-4889**. Leave a message with a return phone number if there is no answer.
6. The student submits [Employee Injury Report Form \(81-B\)](#), and the faculty supervisor submits [Supervisor Report of Injury Form \(81-C\)](#) to the Office of Student Affairs at [NURSINQ@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:NURSINQ@mailbox.sc.edu).
7. The Office of Student Affairs Administrative Coordinator forwards both forms to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

### **Important Notes**

1. All exposure incidents in clinical agencies and the client-simulated laboratory (CSL) must be reported, investigated, and documented. If an exposure occurs and there is no faculty present, the student must notify the course faculty and the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible.
2. Workers' Compensation covers the following populations who experience a bloodborne pathogen exposure while working or at a clinical setting if appropriate reports are filed:
  - a. All USC employees and apprenticeship students in the College of Education, Department of Exercise Science, School of Medicine, CON, College of Pharmacy, and College of Social Work.
  - b. Work study students and graduate assistants who are exposed while on the job.
3. Students who suffer a non-job related or non-clinical related Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure during an enrolled academic session should report to University Health Services for initial evaluation and referral. If closed, students may seek care at the nearest hospital emergency department.

### **Evaluation and Review**

The Associate Dean for Academics is responsible for annually reviewing this policy and procedures and its effectiveness and for updating the program as needed. (Reviewed August 2025)

### **Preceptor Guidelines**

Preceptors for clinical courses are integral to the student's clinical learning. The preceptor must have the expertise to support (facilitate) a student's achievement of course/clinical objectives as listed on the course syllabus and clinical agreement forms. The course faculty approves the preceptors. The preceptor for the course receives the evaluation tool to assess student's performance, located in the course syllabus. Taking into consideration preceptor evaluation, the course faculty determines the student's final grade.

### **Unsafe Clinical Practice and Clinical Evaluation**

Nursing Department faculty members are academically committed to preparing students 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

The student understands 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. The 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 (online) 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.

### Clinical Evaluation

Failure to meet mandatory requirements set forth by the College of Nursing 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 document 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/or the BSN Program Director 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 Associate Dean of Academics and the student may not be allowed to continue in the second course.

## Central Student Portal (RN-BSN Students)

### Clinical Course Requirements and Approval Process (RN-BSN)

The faculty of the course will provide step by step guidance on how to determine practicum site selections, obtain clinical contracts, placements, and obtain a name badge.

### RN-BSN Practicum Site Selection

Students will take a proactive role in selection of an acceptable site for their practicum experience.

Once the site has been selected and a preceptor identified, the Practicum Application needs to be completed and submitted at least **90** days prior to the beginning of the practicum course. The preceptor's name, qualifying information, and contact information must be included on the application.

### Criteria for site selection

- Must offer a community health nursing opportunity. Examples: home health and hospice, parish nursing, health department, school nursing, and correctional nursing
- May be in the institution where the student is currently employed but must be outside of the student's normal work area.
- May engage in patient care as part of the practicum experience. Students may teach patients, observe preceptor doing clinical teaching or patient care, and may participate in clinical conferences.
- Must have an active and unrestricted nursing license in the state where they plan to complete the practicum. For students who are completing their practicum in a different state from where they reside, proof of proper nurse licensure will be required prior to their practicum registration.

### Student Responsibilities

- Meet eligibility, course, and health requirements.
- Must have an active and unrestricted license in the state where the practicum experience will be completed.
- Identify an appropriate location and preceptor for the practicum experience; the site must be secured at least **90** days prior to the beginning of the practicum course.
- Provide a copy of the practicum handbook to their preceptor.

- Be familiar with all procedures and practicum content.
- Meet deadline dates for all practicum coursework and activities.
- Demonstrate competence in practicum assignments.
- Abide by facility rules and regulations.
- Maintain professional conduct while in the practicum experience.
- Complete **120** hours of practicum experience while in the course.
- Provide signed documentation by preceptor of **all** hours on the Student Activity Log at the completion of the practicum experience. Travel time to and from the practicum site are **not** to be included in these hours.
- Documentation of hours must demonstrate activities related to course objectives.
- Evaluate the practicum experience.

### Orientation to the Practicum

General information about the practicum is available in the RN to BSN Clinical Practicum Resource folder in Blackboard. Included on the site is a description of the practicum, forms, health requirements and contact information. These resources can be accessed through Blackboard in your organization page: *College of Nursing RN-BSN Students*.

### RN-BSN Clinical Preceptor and Site Intent Form (CPSI)

Please complete the Clinical Preceptor and Site Information Form found in the RN-BSN Virtual Community in Blackboard and submit to the NURS 434 course faculty for approval. This form provides information about your intended preceptor and clinical site so that current contracts can be determined and started if needed. **Please make sure the information you list is accurate.** Once notification and approval are received from course faculty, you may move forward in completing and submitting the CASE form for review.

**\*\*Note:** Name of person responsible for signing contracts in your attended facility should have legal signature authority. This could be an Office Manager, CEO, President, or Nurse Manager. Make sure to list the appropriate person to assist us with follow-up efforts. Incorrect information could cause delays in acquiring a contract if one is needed.

### Initiating a New Contract

If the facility you are considering **does not have a current contract** listed, please complete the **“Clinical Placement Information Form”** (see **“Initiating a New Clinical Contract”** section within the **“Finding a Clinical Site”** folder in **Blackboard**) and send to [CONContracts@sc.edu](mailto:CONContracts@sc.edu) as soon as possible. Upon receipt of this information, 4 - 9 months are required to complete the approval process for a new site contract or renewal site contract for clinical placement. If you



have questions regarding a contract, please contact the Clinical Compliance Coordinator for the College of Nursing at 803-576-7301.

### Placement Requirements

In addition to the health requirements, there may be additional clinical agency requirements. You can view specific agency requirements in Blackboard under **Clinical Information, Placement Requirements**.

### Case Form Submission

A student enrolled in a course with a clinical component is responsible for finding an approved health agency and an approved preceptor for their clinical experience. A list of current clinical agreements held by the CON are found in the Student Portal under Clinical Contract. Students are advised to locate a preceptor at least a semester before the clinical course begins. Students having difficulty finding an experience must contact the course faculty member and the Director of Clinical Partnerships for assistance.

You are required to submit a CASE Form after you have secured a preceptor for each clinical course. It must be submitted no later than one (1) week prior to the beginning of each course. If the college already approves a site or preceptor, the student will select them from a list. If new, students must enter all prompted information. A confirmation email will be sent to the preceptor and site contact including a confirmation link. The student will be able to track the progress of the approval in the system. Review instructions on how to submit and view Case Form Sample in Bb Clinical Information and Documents. Students who use multiple preceptors need to submit a preceptor agreement (CASE Form) for each preceptor.

Students CANNOT begin clinical experience until they receive contract verification and preceptor approval by the student's course professor. Going to clinical without the appropriate approval of contracts, course professor, and necessary forms in place will result in course failure and may be grounds for dismissal from the program and the CON, a violation of Academic Integrity, liability exposure, and possible Board of Nursing sanction due to possible HIPAA violations, among others.

**\*\*Please note your preceptor is not the site contact. Please find the appropriate site contact for your facility prior to submitting your CASE form. This is typically the person in charge of student placement at the facility.\*\***

### Student Resources

#### Role of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

One of the roles of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs is to serve as a student advocate in the College of Nursing. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs also serves



as the initial contact for concerns such as requesting exception to a college policy (petitions) or a grievance. The Assistant Dean serves as a confidential, informal, and independent resource for graduate student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Mr. Wright Culpepper can be reached at (803) 777-8777 or by e-mail [culpeppa@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:culpeppa@mailbox.sc.edu).

#### Role of the Interim Associate Dean for Access and Community Engagement (ACE)

The Associate Dean for ACE strives for impartiality, fairness, and objectivity in the treatment of all students and the consideration of their issues in the College of Nursing. She also serves as a confidential resource for student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Dr. Sevilla Bronson can be reached at (803) 777-5109 or by e-mail [sbronson@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sbronson@mailbox.sc.edu).

#### College of Nursing Comments and Kudos

The College of Nursing has an electronic box [Comments and Kudos \(https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/nursing/internal/current\\_students/suggestions.php\)](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/nursing/internal/current_students/suggestions.php) to allow students to make comments, share ideas, ask questions, and provide feedback to the Dean. The Office of the Dean reviews all submissions. Suggestions and comments submitted will be shared with the appropriate personnel as applicable. All submissions can be done anonymously. However, if you would like a response, you have the option to provide your contact information on the form.

#### Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

The Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support offers a wide range of services to enhance student experience and support academic success. To learn more about available opportunities and to access the services, visit the [SAAS Programs & Services web page \(http://www.sa.sc.edu/about/programs/\)](http://www.sa.sc.edu/about/programs/).

#### Undergraduate School Ombuds

The **Undergraduate Student Ombuds** serves as a confidential, neutral, informal and independent resource for undergraduate student concerns and conflicts.

#### Student Organizations

- **Student Nurses Association (SNA):** The [Student Nurses Association \(SNA\)](#) at USC is open for membership to any undergraduate nursing student.
- **Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.):** [Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.](#) is a service sorority dedicated to helping our community and building lasting relationships. It is open to registered nurses and nursing students.
- **American Assembly for Men in Nursing (AAMN):** The American Assembly for Men in Nursing (AAMN) is open for membership to any undergraduate nursing student.
- **Nurse Christian Fellowship:** 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.

- **Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing:** 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 visit [here](#).
- **Columbia Area Black Nurses Association (CABNA):** 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](#).

### Campus Life

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_affairs/our\\_experts/our\\_offices/student\\_life/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/our_experts/our_offices/student_life/index.php)

### Career Center

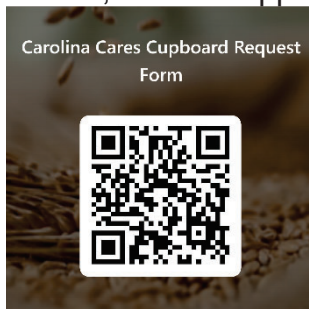
[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/career\\_center/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/career_center/index.php)

### Carolina Alert

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/law\\_enforcement\\_and\\_safety/carolina-alert/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/law_enforcement_and_safety/carolina-alert/index.php)

### **CON Carolina Cares Cupboard (CCC)**

The CCC contains food, personal care/toiletry items, and professional clothing for College of Nursing students who are in need. The CCC will also provide limited "scholarships" in cases where students need financial assistance (e.g., gas to get to clinical, clinical supplies, books). : <https://forms.office.com/r/6Pj7DpWZbm>.



### Dining Services

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/dining\\_services/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/dining_services/index.php)

#### Office of Access and Opportunity

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/access\\_and\\_opportunity/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/access_and_opportunity/index.php)

#### Law Enforcement and Safety

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/law\\_enforcement\\_and\\_safety/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/law_enforcement_and_safety/index.php) or contact USCPD as follows:

**Emergencies:** 911

**Police Dispatch:** 803) 777-4215

#### Libraries

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/university\\_libraries/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_libraries/index.php)

#### Transportation

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/parking/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/parking/index.php)

#### Student Disability Resource Center

The USC College of Nursing is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities must contact the Student Disability Resource Center prior to or early in their program to determine if reasonable accommodations will be provided. [Student Disability Resource Center website \(https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_disability\\_resource\\_center/index.php\)](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_disability_resource_center/index.php).

Student Disability Resource Center  
1705 College Street; Close-Hipp, Suite 102  
Columbia, SC 29208  
Phone: 803-777-6142; Fax: 803-777-6741  
Email: [sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu)

Students with disabilities must be able to continuously meet the core performance standards and functional abilities established to ensure that the objectives of the nursing program are met.

#### University Health Services

##### Health and Wellness

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/health\\_services/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/index.php)

##### Mental Health Services

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/health\\_services/mental-health/](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/mental-health/)

- **Mental Health Emergencies:**

Mental health resources are available. Students have access to virtual counseling and support 24/7. Go to <https://thriveatcarolina.com/> or call 833-664-2854.

If you think you may harm yourself or someone else, call the USC Police Department at 803-777-4215.

#### Medical Services

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/health\\_services/medical-services/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/health_services/medical-services/index.php)

#### Sexual Assault or Interpersonal Violence

Call (803) 777-8248 to speak to a trained interpersonal violence advocate 24/7.

#### Student Success Center

[https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/student\\_success\\_center/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_success_center/index.php)

#### Veterans and Military Services

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/veterans\\_and\\_military\\_services/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/veterans_and_military_services/index.php)

#### Writing Center

Students who need assistance with writing can receive assistance from the USC Writing Center. Contact information and hours of operation are posted on the [Writing Center website](#):

[https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/english\\_language\\_and\\_literature/beyond\\_classroom/writing\\_center/index.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/english_language_and_literature/beyond_classroom/writing_center/index.php)

### Tuition and Required Fees

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

#### Health Profession Fee Explanation

- Resources to identify, secure, and support clinical and/or experiential placements for training purposes.
- Staff and support systems to maintain regulatory and compliance standards (to include background checks, immunizations, drug screens, etc.) with experiential training in healthcare systems as mandated by respective accrediting bodies.

- Provides additional resources to improve health professional student experiences and remain competitive against peer programs by recruiting and retaining high quality faculty, preceptors, staff, and graduate assistants.
- Professional and specialized staff to support various activities related to student affairs, advisement, and student services.

### Lab Fee Explanation

- Covers simulation lab with immersions, supplies, guest faculty for immersions, staff to ensure all regulatory, legal and compliance issues are met with your respective clinical sites (as each site differs),
- Standardized patient costs including training, fees, and costs of development and oversight of the experiences.
- While students may not be currently in the simulation lab with immersions, the regulatory, legal and compliance portions are still occurring. We are still contacting facilities to see if students can remain, processing clinical contracts, and assisting students with clinical placements for future terms. If you review the **Bursar's** website, you will see that this fee is assessed to each clinical course in your program. Therefore, this fee will not be reimbursed, nor can it be reduced.

### Tuition Refund

Withdrawing from class can have both an academic and monetary impact. For information regarding academic withdrawal, please review the withdrawal information provided by the [University Registrar](#). You can also view the Parts of Term Dates and Deadlines located in the Academics section of [my.sc.edu](#). Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in [SSC](#) to determine the [part of term](#) for your classes.

If you withdraw from all courses during a semester, contact [regapeal@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:regapeal@mailbox.sc.edu) to obtain information on the Tuition Refund Appeal process.

## Financial Aid

### Financial Assistance

The USC Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship can 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 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](mailto:uscfaid@mailbox.sc.edu) or 803-777-8134.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

If you have lost your financial aid due to deficient academic performance or low course completion rate, you are required to meet with an Academic Coach and complete an Academic Plan. View additional information [here](#).

### Scholarship Opportunities

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 by March 15th of the following year. The funding for the submitted application is effective for the upcoming academic year. College of Nursing award decisions are expected to be finalized and announced each year in late May/early June.

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. Scholarships and research funding opportunities may be available through the College, the University, and extramural sources.

### External Scholarship Opportunities

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Students/Financial-Aid>
- The Foundation of the National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.  
[www.forevernursing.org](http://www.forevernursing.org)
- 50 Great Scholarships for Nursing Students  
This [scholarship resource](#) is provided through healthcare-administration-degree.net