

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

**University of Missouri – Kansas City
School of Nursing**

I. Preamble

One of the goals of a school of nursing is to educate nursing students during the transition to a professional life. The University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Nursing (UMKC-SON) has an obligation to society¹ to evaluate students pursuing the B.S.N., M.S.N., and Ph.D. degrees, as thoroughly as possible. This responsibility includes their cognitive abilities, their academic and professional knowledge and skills, their integrity, and their suitability to practice nursing in their desired professional role. Accordingly, the Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior detailed in this document have been developed to guide students who are enrolled at all levels with the UMKC-SON, including undergraduate and graduate students, and are designed to assure accountability for the professional and ethical standards of the nursing profession.

II. Integrity

A. Personal and Professional Integrity

1. Honesty

A nursing student shall deal honestly with people including, but not limited to, colleagues, instructors, representatives of the University, patients, attending physicians, nursing staff, any representative of our clinical agencies, and other members of the health care team. Students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity in all aspects of their interaction with patients and staff – particularly in assuring accuracy and completeness in their actions and documentation. The nursing student shall be willing to admit errors and must not mislead others or promote himself or herself at the patient's expense. The nursing student shall strive to report, by utilizing the Honor Council Procedures for Violations of the Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior, those student nurses deficient in character or competence, or who engage in fraud, deception, and/or dishonesty.

A basic principal underlying all research is honesty. Scientists and nursing students who participate in research have a responsibility to provide research results of the highest quality; to gather facts meticulously, to keep impeccable records of work done; to interpret results realistically, not forcing them into preconceived molds or models; and to report new knowledge through appropriate channels. Co-authors of research reports must be sufficiently acquainted with the work of their co-workers that they can personally vouch for the integrity of the study and validity of the findings, and must have been active in the research itself.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

¹ ANA (2003). Nursing's Social Policy Statement.

a. Cheating

- Use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
- Dependence upon the aid of unauthorized sources in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out assignments;
- Acquisition or possession without permission of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff;
- Use of assignments or papers prepared in one class for another class without disclosing such information to the faculty
- In any way giving assistance to others who are participating in any of the three preceding types of behavior; or
- Falsifying attendance records or other official documents.

b. Plagiarism

- Use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with footnotes, citations or bibliographical reference;
- Unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials; or
- Unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.

c. Sabotage

- Unauthorized interference with, modification of, or destruction of the work or intellectual property of another member of the University.

d. Falsification of Patient's Medical Record or Information

Examples of dishonesty related to clinical practice include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Writing progress notes or other documentation regarding the patient's status, including, but not limited to, clinical observations, medication administration or results in the patient's chart when the student nurse has not seen or evaluated the patient, or using incorrect times of data entry.
- Reporting medical information such as physical examination findings, lab values, test results, medications, or any other relevant patient information to other students, nurses, nursing supervisors, residents, attending physicians, the patient, the patient's family or other relevant health care personnel that has been fabricated by the nursing student.

2. Responsibility

A nursing student must acquire competencies with the appropriate concepts, knowledge and skills that the faculty determine essential. These competencies shall be utilized to care for the sick and to promote the health and welfare of society². A nursing student shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to an improved community.

Nursing students caring for patients must not be harmful, dangerous, or negligent to the mental or physical health of a patient or the public. Negligent means failure to exercise that degree of skill and learning ordinarily used under the same or similar circumstances by other nursing students.

Students must be familiar with and follow the rules and regulations of the School of Nursing, the University, and professional organizations which they are required to follow as nursing students. Copies of such rules and regulations are attached herewith.

B. Professional Nursing Behavior

1. Nondiscrimination

A nursing student shall provide care to patients without discriminating based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, disability or Vietnam Era Veterans status.

It is against the University regulations to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, disability, or Vietnam Era

² ANA (2003). Nursing's Social Policy Statement.

Veterans status. The University has an AIDS policy statement consistent with state law that prohibits discrimination against persons with AIDS or who are HIV positive.

2. Confidentiality

A nursing student shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, affiliated institutions, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidences within the constraints of law. The patient's right to confidentiality in regard to his or her medical information, which includes confidentiality of personal and social information, is a fundamental tenet to health care.

The discussion, in any public setting, of the issues of any patient, without the patient's permission, by professional staff (including other students) violates patient confidentiality and is unethical. This includes any discussion held in public places, such as hallways, break rooms, elevators and cafeterias as well as in any media forum (such as T.V. or print media) or any virtual forum, such as social networking sites.

Under no circumstances can any medical record be removed from any institution. Photocopying of the entire record is never permitted for presentations, rounds, or conferences; if permitted by the health care institution or provider students are permitted to extract information, but not copy 'wholesale' parts of the chart. Names of the patients should be omitted from any documents used for these presentations.

3. Disclosure

While the nursing student is a member of the patient care team and under direct or indirect faculty supervision, a nursing student shall continue to study, apply and advance scientific knowledge, make relevant information available to patients, colleagues, and the public, obtain consultation and use the talents of other health professionals when indicated.

Sharing of medical information appropriately with a patient and colleagues involved in the care of the patient is a fundamental ethical requirement. The patient must be well informed to make health care decisions and work intelligently in partnership with the patient care team. Information that the patient needs for decision-making shall be presented in terms that patient can understand. If, for some reason, the patient is unable to comprehend, there shall be disclosure to the patient's authorized representative.

Failure of a nursing student to share medical information relevant to a patient with a patient and colleagues involved in the care of the patient is unethical. Providing inaccurate information with these individuals is also unacceptable.

4. Misconduct with Patients

The nursing student will not engage in or other nonprofessional behaviors with patient – even upon the apparent request of a patient – while involved with the patient’s care.

5. Representation

A nursing student shall accurately represent himself or herself to others including, but not limited to, colleagues, instructors, representatives of the University and their affiliates, partner institutions, patients, nurses, and other members of the health care team.

Examples of misrepresentation include, but are not limited to the following:

- Misrepresentation of the student’s position, knowledge, and authority, including use of the title “nurse” by an undergraduate nursing student, or by use of the titles advanced practice nurse (APRN), nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), nurse midwife (NM), or nurse anesthetist (CRNA) by a graduate student.
- Use of fraud, deception, lies, or bribery in securing any certificate or registration or authority, diploma, permit or license issued, or in obtaining permission to take any examinations.
- Impersonation of any person holding a certificate of registration or authority, permit, license or allowing any person to use his/her certificate of registration or authority, permit license, or diploma from any school.
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of a patient’s medical records or knowingly furnishing false information to the other members of the health care profession and/or professional organizations.

6. Assessment of Personal Competence (Self-Evaluation)

Nursing students shall seek consultation and supervision whenever their ability to play their role in the care for a patient is inadequate because of lack of knowledge or experience.

Students are expected to respond to constructive criticism by appropriate modification of behavior.

7. Professional Demeanor

The nursing student is a representative of UMKC, and should realize that their behavior may positively and negatively affect the judgments of others about UMKC-SON.

UMKC-SON students are expected to be thoughtful and professional when interacting with faculty, patients and their families, nurses, attending physicians, nursing preceptors, affiliated institutional staff, other students, the public and other members of the health care team. This professional behavior is to be maintained in any and all situations where the student has identified themselves as a UMKC-SON student. This includes situations off-campus, when the student has identified themselves as a UMKC-SON student, as well as in “virtual” sites, such as on-line social networking sites.

Students shall maintain a neat and clean appearance, and dress in attire that is generally accepted as professional by the patient populations served.

Professional demeanor is required of students in Cyberspace in the same manner it is required in all other settings. Student must keep in mind that behavior that is illegal or a violation of university policy on campus will be illegal or violate university policy if it appears online. If a student has identified themselves as a UMKC-SON student in an online forum, the UMKC-SON will hold them to the highest standards of professional demeanor. While it is not the policy of UMKC-SON faculty to routinely monitor any student’s web sites, if inappropriate postings are brought to their attention the faculty will investigate the report.

Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, the use of offensive language, gestures, or remarks, as well as offensive or inappropriate photographs when the parties involved have not consented or are patients or persons affiliated with UMKC. Attempting, directly or indirectly, by way of intimidation, coercion or deception, to obtain or retain a patient or discourage the use of a second opinion or consultation is not appropriate.

8. Impairment

The nursing student will not use alcohol or drugs in ways that impair his/her ability to perform the work of the profession or results in compromised patient care. It is the responsibility of every nursing student to strive to protect the public from an impaired colleague and to assist that colleague whose capability is impaired because of alcohol or drug use.

9. Conflict of Interest

If a conflict of interest arises, the moral principle is clear – the welfare of the patient must be, at all times, paramount. For example, gifts, hospitality, or subsidies offered by manufacturers and distributors of medical and or other equipment/goods shall not be accepted if acceptance would influence the objectivity of clinical judgment.

10. Criticism of Colleagues

Professional relations among all members of the medical community shall be marked by civility. Scholarly contributions shall be acknowledged and each person shall recognize and facilitate the contributions of others to this community; slanderous comments and acts are not acceptable. Nursing students shall deal with professional, staff, and peer members of the health team in a considerate manner and with a spirit of cooperation.

It is unethical and harmful for a nursing student to disparage, without sufficient evidence, the professional competence, knowledge, qualifications, or services of a colleague to anyone. It is also unethical to imply without reliable evidence – by word, gesture, or deed – that a patient has been poorly managed or mistreated by a colleague.

11. Teaching

It is incumbent upon those entering this profession to teach what they know of the science, art, and ethics of nursing care. It includes communicating clearly and teaching patients so that they are properly prepared to participate in their own care and in the maintenance of their health.

III. The University of Missouri Student Conduct Code

In addition to the conduct detailed in the preceding sections, a nursing student is subject to the **University of Missouri Student Conduct Code**, as administered by

the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, except for provisions dealing with academic dishonesty, Section 200.01 0 B. 1.

Conduct for which students are subject to sanctions falls into the following categories:

- A. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of University documents, records or identification, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University.
- B. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, conduct proceedings, or other University activities, including its public service functions on or off campus.
- C. Physical abuse or conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person.
- D. Attempted or actual theft of, damage to, or possession without permission of property of the University or of a member of the University community or of a campus visitor.
- E. Unauthorized possession, duplication, or use of keys to any University facilities or unauthorized entry to or use of University facilities.
- F. Violations of University policies, rules or regulations or of campus regulations including, but not limited to, those governing residence in University-provided housing, or the use of University facilities, or the time, place and manner of public expression.
- G. Manufacture, use, possession, sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages or any controlled substance with out proper prescription or required license or as expressly permitted by law or University regulations.
- H. Disruptive or disorderly conduct or lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct or expression.
- I. Failure to comply with direction of University officials acting in the performance of their duties.
- J. Illegal or unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives, other weapons, or dangerous chemicals.
- K. Actual or attempted theft or other abuse of computer time, including but not limited to:
 - Unauthorized entry into a file to use, read, or change the contents, or for any other purpose;

- Unauthorized transfer of a file;
- Unauthorized use of another individual's identification and password;
- Use of computing facilities to interfere with the work of another student, faculty member, or University official;
- Knowingly causing a computer virus to become installed in a computer system or file.

Details of the policies, procedures, sanctions, and due process for violations of the University of Missouri Student Conduct Code are found in the University of Missouri – Kansas City General Catalogue and the student handbook.