

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY



**SCHOOL of SCIENCE, ENGINEERING
AND TECHNOLOGY**

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

**BSN
Student Handbook**

2025-2026

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

As a student in St. Mary's Nursing Program, it is important to know the information relating to the Department philosophy, curriculum, policies, and procedures. To meet this need, we have assembled the information in this Student Handbook. We hope it will answer your questions about the department. Your advisor can help you in answering any questions you may have. We hope you enjoy your studies with us as you earn your nursing degree. Have a good year!

The information in this handbook is intended to be informational and not contractual in nature. St. Mary's University reserves the right to amend, alter, change, or modify the provisions of this handbook at any time and in any manner that the St. Mary's Nursing Program or administration deems is in the best interest of the University and its students.

B. STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

St. Mary's University affirms its commitment to promote the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational enterprise in full compliance with the requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and other federal, state, and local laws.

If you have a documented disability, or a condition which may impact your performance and want to request disability-related accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Student Accessibility Services, located in the Center for Life Directions Building. Please stop by the SAS Office, call 210-431-3135 or email accessibility@stmarytx.edu to set up an appointment to meet with the Student Accessibility Services staff.

For more information, please go to [Equal Opportunity, Nondiscrimination, Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment - Policy Library \(stmarytx.edu\)](#)

C. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

All student policy and procedures are annually reviewed and revised as necessary during Nursing Faculty Organization meetings. The students are invited to present student concerns, questions, and recommendations regarding the policies and procedures through their designated/elected student representative. Revised and new policies and procedures are distributed to all nursing students. If there are revisions of old policies/procedures or new policies and procedures during the academic year, those will be emailed to every student and posted on the Department Canvas page and the [Nursing Department](#) monitor display. Students are required to sign the Statement of Receipt and Compliance form annually. All students are expected to read each policy and procedure, clarify any questions or concerns, and adhere to the policies and procedures for the current academic year.

D. STATEMENT OF RECEIPT AND COMPLIANCE

Student Policies and Procedures

I have reviewed the current 2025-2026 Department of Nursing (DoN) Student Policies and Procedures and clarified any questions or concerns. I feel that each policy and procedure is fair and equitable. I agree to adhere to the requirements as stated in each of the policies and procedures as indicated by my signature in the appropriate space below.

The Texas Board of Nursing and Council on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) periodically reviews nursing programs. A portion of this process is the review of nursing student's educational records for validating the process of faculty/student evaluation and the student's health and criminal record for compliance to admission standards. Clinical agencies may request review of student health and criminal records to assure compliance with the contractual obligation and accreditation standards.

I give my consent for the visitors for the State Board of Nursing and the CCNE to review my education and criminal record. I also extend the privilege to review my health and criminal records to a clinical agency that I may be affiliated with as a student.

Requirements for RN licensure

I have reviewed the current Texas State Board of Nursing requirements for RN licensure and clarified any questions or concerns. I agree to adhere to the requirements as stated by the Texas Board of Nursing as indicated by my signature in the appropriate space below.

Media / Photography/Video Implied Consent:

There is implied consent to the University to use news media as well as use of photos and video on the web and in promotional materials. Photograph(s) and video footage may be obtained from both informal and formal settings. All electronic media, prints, and raw footage are the property of St. Mary's University. If anyone wishes to withdraw consent to the University for photography or videography usage, he or she may contact the Department of Nursing Administrative Coordinator (caraiza1@stmarytx.edu). It is the student's responsibility to contact the Nursing Department to withdraw consent for photography and videography. It is also the student's responsibility to exclude him/herself from any situation involving photography or videography.

Please Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Upload signed document to SentryMD

II. FACULTY AND STAFF

A. FACULTY

| Name | Title | Office Phone # | Office Room# | Email Address |
|---|---|----------------|--------------|--|
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B. STAFF

| | | | | |
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| Karlis Butler | Simulation Operations Specialist | | BSIC 303 | |

III. CURRICULUM

A. THE NURSING PROGRAM

1. PHILOSOPHY

The Nursing program at St. Mary's University supports the mission (St. Mary's University, 2023b) of St. Mary's University. The university mission statement declares: St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence. The university welcomes people of all faith, or no faith, tradition and supports an environment dedicated to community and inclusivity.

The Nursing program recognizes human beings as holistic and unique, and deserving of care, compassion, dignity and respect. Each human being encompasses a physiological, psychological, sociological, intellectual, and spiritual component that makes up their God-given personhood. Nursing faculty members recognize that every human makes free choices and that preferences, values, and needs, including health and well-being, are shaped by the society and environment in which they live. Human beings are in a reciprocal relationship with the environment for health and flourishing. The environment is sociocultural with internal, external, and spiritual components which promote health, comfort, love, and safety for human beings. Human beings heal in caring and safe environments with faith that invites, supports, and accepts all.

Health is in a dynamic interaction with one's environment and other people. Health is a subjective experience as it is a person's sense of well-being. It does not necessarily mean the absence of illness or injury. Health has many components: physical, mental, cultural, environmental, spiritual, and socioeconomic. The human being's lived experiences of these different components of health affect their sense of health and well-being. Health is a fundamental right for all.

Nursing is a professional discipline which adheres to legal and ethical standards. Nursing serves humanity with the purpose of maintaining and restoring health and well-being holistically for all. Nursing is both an art and a science. The science of nursing is theory and evidence-based practice that guides the implementation of safe therapeutic nursing interventions. The art of nursing encompasses human caring behaviors, faith, and a holistic approach that underpins the trust of the nurse-patient relationship.

The St. Mary's Department of Nursing approaches the education of nursing students within the Catholic and Marianist traditions. Education is a self-initiated, life-long, intellectual, and social process that is committed to the development of the whole person. Nursing education at St. Mary's is student-centered. Faculty are intentionally present and work collaboratively with students to attain knowledge, skills, behaviors, and self-actualization. Faculty members are facilitators of student learning and are responsible for creating and implementing active learning strategies. Faculty work to create loving and respectful learning environments enabling students to actively engage in the teaching-learning process. Nursing students are expected to be responsible and accountable for their own learning in a supportive environment. Faculty embraces each student's diverse background and works collaboratively with them to become caring, compassionate, ethical, and critical-thinking professional nurses who make sound clinical decisions.

2. MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the Department of Nursing is the formation of compassionate, caring, and

transformative professional nurse leaders committed to providing holistic, quality safe care that is fair and equitable for all. The vision of the program is to empower innovative and passionate servant leaders who will transform health and healthcare systems by addressing inequities with perspectives informed by the Catholic and Marianist traditions and an excellent grounding in nursing theory and practice.

This mission and vision will be accomplished by providing:

- An experiential, student-centered learning environment,
- An education for transformational, servant leadership,
- A family spirit and formation for the appreciation of all,
- A focus on excellence and support of inquiry,
- A commitment to serving diverse and vulnerable populations,
- A self-reflection that aligns career, personal mission, and vocation.

3. VALUES

The core values of the Department of Nursing are informed by the four characteristics of a Marianist Education (St. Mary's University, 2023b).

- Faith
 - Recognize the spiritual dimension of human experience
 - Appreciate the impact of faith on living meaningful lives
 - Integrate the heart and intellect to display respect for the multiplicity of faiths and cultures
- Excellence
 - Sharpening reflection, critical thinking and clinical judgement skills
 - Promote a respectful academic environment where students feel safe to openly dialogue with faculty and peers, creating a community of learners
 - Expand personal views in the quest social justice
- Community
 - Appreciate a culture of inclusivity
 - Accept others in a spirit of family
 - Learn within a community of faith, respect, and love
 - Promote teamwork and collaboration
- Service
 - Advocate for peace and social justice
 - Minister to the suffering and the poor
 - Practice servant leadership

4. HISTORY OF THE NURSING DEPARTMENT

St. Mary's University is a Catholic, Marianist, liberal arts institution founded in 1852. The need for a baccalaureate program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree was evidenced through a feasibility study conducted by the University administration in 2022. The Faculty Senate gave its support for the development of a nursing program and on March 25, 2022, the Board of Trustees gave full approval for the program.

On January 25, 2024, the Texas State Board of Nursing gave initial approval to the nursing curriculum, and the first class of nursing students will be admitted in the fall of 2025. Graduates of the Nursing Program are eligible to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination – RN (NCLEX – RN).

The baccalaureate nursing program will apply for accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) after the first cohort of students are enrolled.

B. ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

St. Mary's University BSN Curriculum uses the metaparadigm of human beings, environment, health, and nursing as referred to in our philosophy. Patient-centered care which recognizes nurses are in partnership with human beings, is the core concept of our framework (Figure 1). Patients include individuals, families, communities, and populations. Faculty at St. Mary's University embrace the contributions of Watson's Theory of Human Caring (Watson Caring Science Institute, 2023) and the Fundamentals of Care Framework (Kitson, 2018). The Theory of Human Caring identifies the caring behaviors of nurses that promote the subjective inner healing processes of the patient. The Fundamentals of Care Model speaks to the formation of patient-centered fundamental care, which is the goal of the nurse-patient relationship. This Model refers to the essential and practical elements of care which involve the physical, psychosocial, and relational aspects required by every person within any healthcare setting.

Patient-centered care is supported by the concepts of professionalism, safety, evidence-based practice, teamwork and collaboration, quality improvement, and informatics. These supporting concepts are equally important and interdependent with nurses using clinical reasoning to make clinical judgements when providing patient-centered care. Finally, caring and compassion are foundational for not only patient-centered care but also with interactions within and among supporting concepts. Caring and compassion create the respectful healing environments which are hallmarks of a graduate from the St. Mary's University BSN nursing program. Our graduates will fully integrate all conceptual components of the framework into their nursing practice.

Figure 1.



C. BSN NURSING PROGRAM and CURRICULUM

1. PURPOSE OF THE BSN NURSING PROGRAM

The Baccalaureate Nursing Program prepares generalists in nursing to assist individuals, families, communities, and populations toward the goal of health and wellness throughout life. Baccalaureate education in nursing provides each student with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to be practice ready professional nurses. The curriculum is based on a liberal arts foundation in the Catholic and Marianist tradition and utilizes the perspective of caring/nursing theorists for its organizing framework.

The faculty of the Department of Nursing (DoN) have embraced education as a learner-centered, self-initiated, life-long, intellectual, and social process with a commitment to the development of the whole person. We view learning as a self-motivated and voluntary endeavor on the part of our nursing students. Faculty are intentionally present and work collaboratively with students to attain knowledge and self-actualization. Faculty are facilitators of student learning and responsible for creating and implementing active teaching strategies.

2. BSN NURSING PROGRAM GOALS

- a. Provide a liberal educational program in the Catholic and Marianist Tradition of academic excellence emphasizing critical reflection, community, ethical practice, and service to others.
- b. Increase diversity in the nursing workforce by recruiting, retaining and graduating a diverse student body who are prepared for generalist professional nursing practice at the baccalaureate level.
- c. Provide clinical educational opportunities with underserved and underrepresented populations for students to develop into caring, compassionate, and socially just professional nurses.
- d. Prepare students for management and leadership roles to transform healthcare to improve safe, quality, patient-centered healthcare environments.
- e. Emphasize life-long learning for continued personal and professional growth, and future graduate studies.

3. BSN STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- a. Develop a professional identity as a nurse incorporating the Marianist values of service, peace, justice, and integrity of creation.
- b. Practice patient-centered care integrating knowledge from the liberal arts and science for clinical judgement in the provision of safe, caring and compassionate evidence-based care.
- c. Utilize effective leadership skills to ensure safety, diversity, equity, inclusivity and belonging for improving patient outcomes and transforming healthcare systems.
- d. Function effectively as a member of the healthcare team with effective communication, teamwork and collaboration skills.
- e. Employ communication technologies and informatics processes to provide care, gather data, and support decision-making.

4. LEVEL COMPETENCIES

| FRESHMAN YEAR | SOPHOMORE YEAR | JUNIOR YEAR | SENIOR YEAR | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------|
| TH 1301 BL 1411 MT1304 EN1311/131 FYE 1302 | CH 1305 BL 1412 EN 23XX HS 13XX Fine Arts | For Lang I PS 2355 BL 2420 BL 2311 NU 2301 | For Lang II PL 1301 NU 2601 NU 2303 NU 3202 | NU 3401 NU 3302 NU 2302 NU 3301 PL 2301 | NU 3601 NU 3201 TH 33XX PS 3381 | NU 4402 NU 4401 NU 4301 NU 4403 | NU 4302 NU 4601 NU 4404 |
| 1. Acquire knowledge from the liberal arts and science for clinical reasoning to make informed decisions for the provision of safe, patient-centered care and compassionate nursing care. | 1. Apply knowledge from the liberal arts and sciences for the holistic nursing assessment of the person. | 1. Demonstrate patient-centered care utilizing knowledge from the liberal arts and sciences for clinical reasoning to make informed decisions for the provision of safe, caring and compassionate evidence-based holistic patient-centered nursing care. | 1. Practice patient-centered care integrating knowledge from the liberal arts and science for clinical judgement in the provision of safe, caring and compassionate evidence-based care. | | | | |
| 2. Identify the core values of a Marianist education. | 2. Identify professional values derived from core values of the Marianist education. | 2. Recognize professional nursing values incorporating the Marianist values of service, peace, justice, and integrity of creation. | 2. Develop a professional identity as a nurse incorporating the Marianist values of service, peace, justice, and integrity of creation. | | | | |

| FRESHMAN YEAR | SOPHOMORE YEAR | JUNIOR YEAR | SENIOR YEAR |
|--|---|---|---|
| 3. Develop information literacy skills for formal composition assignments. | 3. Apply computer and information literacy skills to support decision-making for patient care. | 3. Apply communication technologies and informatics processes to provide care, gather data, and support decision-making for patientcare. | 3. Employ communication technologies and informatics processes to provide care, gather data, and support decision-making. |
| 4. Develop an appreciation for a culture of belonging, diversity, equity and inclusion when caring for others. | 4. Explain the role of a culture of safety, belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusion for improving patient outcomes. | 4. Show leadership skills to promote a culture of safety, belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusivity for improving patient outcomes and transforming healthcare systems. | 4. Utilize effective leadership skills to ensure safety, diversity, equity, inclusivity and belonging for improving patient outcomes and transforming healthcare systems. |
| 5. Identify the role of effective communication and collaboration skills when interacting with others. | 5. Apply effective communication, teamwork and collaboration skills. | 5. Work as a member of the healthcare team using effective communication, teamwork and collaboration skills. | 5. Function effectively as a member of the healthcare team with effective communication, teamwork and collaboration skills. |

5. ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY NURSING PROGRAM PROGRESSION PLAN (See [Appendix A](#))

IV. ADMISSION CRITERIA

St. Mary's University has a two-step admission process into the nursing program. Candidates apply to St. Mary's University as a general admission student for the first year. After completing the first semester at St. Mary's University, candidates can apply to the nursing program. All application material will be due by March 1. Application materials will be reviewed by the Nursing Admissions Committee with decisions based on the following criteria.

Requirements for Admission include:

- Student in good standing at St. Mary's University with minimum GPA 2.0
- BL 1411 Human Anatomy and Physiology I with a "C" or better
- MT 1304 Math for Nurses with a "C" or better
- ATI TEAS exam with a comprehensive score of 58.7% or better

Candidates will be scored using the Admission Rubric ([Appendix B](#)). Candidates will be awarded one point for each admission requirement that has been met. Qualifying candidates will have a minimum of four points. Candidates can earn additional points based on the criteria listed on the rubric with a possible maximum score of 14. The 40 students with the highest rubric scores will be guaranteed an interview and other candidates may be invited to interview but it is not guaranteed.

The final phase of the admission process begins May 1 which is when interviews will start being scheduled. Final admission decisions will be complete by June 1. The program will admit 30 students.

Additionally, candidates must

- Remain in good standing with a GPA of at least 2.0
- Achieve a "C" or better in BL 1412 Human Anatomy and Physiology II
- Achieve a "C" or better in Chemistry

by the end of semester two in order to be admitted into the nursing program.

Once admitted, students must successfully complete the Texas Board of Nursing criminal background check and fingerprinting before the start of sophomore year fall term. Review [§213.28. Licensure of Individuals with Criminal History](#) for concerns regarding licensure with a criminal history.

VI. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. ABSENCES

1. [Excused Absence Policy](#)

The student is responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for absence. Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the Department of Nursing are the following:

- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family. Immediate family may include: mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, spouse, child, spouse's child, spouse's parents, spouse's grandparents, step-mother, step-father, step-sister, step-brother, step-grandparents, grandchild, step-grandchild, legal guardian and others as deemed appropriate by the dean or dean's designee.

- Illness of a dependent family member or any familial responsibilities associated with COVID-19 (e.g., loss of childcare, closing of schools, inability to secure eldercare, etc.)
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Observance of religious holiday.
- Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class or clinical. Please contact Student Accessibility Services if temporary accommodations are needed due to injury or long-term illness.
- Injury or illness of three or more days. For injury or illness that requires a student to be absent from classes for three or more business days (to include classes on weekends), the student should obtain a medical confirmation note from her or his healthcare provider. The medical confirmation note must contain the date and time of the illness and the provider's confirmation of needed absence. Please submit medical documentation to the Office of Student Development.
- Injury or illness less than three days. Faculty members may require confirmation of student injury or illness that is serious enough for a student to be absent from class for a period less than three business days (to include classes on weekends). At the discretion of the faculty member illness confirmation may be obtained by confirmation of a visit to a healthcare provider affirming date and time of visit.
- Students required to miss clinical experiences due to injury or illness may be required to receive clearance from a healthcare provider to perform the essential functions of the clinical if patient safety might be jeopardized or if it is perceived that participation in clinical might cause further harm to the student.
- Required military service.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
- In accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Department of Nursing shall treat pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom) and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period as is deemed medically necessary by the student's healthcare provider. Requests for excused absence related to pregnancy should be directed to Student Accessibility Services. Upon meeting with SAS, a Title IX Letter of Adjustments will be issued.
 - If the absence is excused, the instructor must either provide the student an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the final grade or provide a satisfactory alternative by a date agreed upon by the student and instructor. If an instructor has a regularly scheduled make up exam, students are expected to attend unless they have a school approved excuse. Please note that make-up quizzes and exams will be different from the original. The make-up work must be completed in a timeframe not to exceed 7 days from the last day of the initial absence. Upon the student's return to class and clinical, it is the course coordinator's discretion whether to grant an extension for currently occurring assignments and tests.

The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence. If the student is absent for excused reasons for an unreasonable amount of time during the semester, the Director of Nursing may consider giving the student a grade of W during the semester enrolled after collaboration with the faculty and the student.

Whenever a student is absent for unknown reasons for an extended period of time, the instructor should initiate a welfare check of the student by reporting to the Director of Nursing.

2. Clinical / and Clinical Immersion Attendance Policy

The DoN at St. Mary's University believes that clinical experiences are essential to the education of our students. Our curriculum is designed to give the students clinical experiences that are increasing in intensity, acuity, and time spent in the clinical arena. It is the expectation that each student attends all scheduled clinical experiences since clinical learning experiences are required by the Texas Board of Nursing, but we recognize that situations may arise that necessitate the student be absent from one or more of these experiences. For this reason, the DoN has instituted a clinical absence policy that will afford the student the opportunity to makeup a limited number of excused missed clinical time, thereby not jeopardizing their clinical learning experiences due to absence. This policy covers all clinical experiences including the preceptorship immersion experience in the spring semester of the senior year. Simulation and skills lab are clinical days and fall under this policy.

Unexcused clinical absences are monitored across all clinical courses in each semester and are cumulative within that semester. All unexcused clinical absences will be documented via the Professional Behavior Contract (PBC).

- a. If a clinical day is cancelled due to university class cancellation, clinical agency cancellation, or faculty illness, makeup days will be determined by the course coordinator.
- b. If a student misses a clinical day due to an excused absence the student may be offered a clinical makeup assignment that is equivalent in time, effort, and experience to the missed clinical day. Completion of this alternate assignment will be due as per the clinical instructor. If the complete assignment is not submitted by the deadline, the course grade will be lowered one full letter grade. The student is responsible for ensuring that electronic submissions are properly submitted and received by the instructor. At the discretion of the clinical faculty, the student may be asked to make up this clinical day on a day and time as determined by the clinical faculty instead of being offered an alternate assignment.
- c. The clinical instructor/preceptor must receive notification of excusable absences at least 1 hour before the clinical experience starts. Failure to communicate to the instructor/preceptor prior to this time will result in an "unexcused absence." An "excused" absence is defined under the [**Excused Absence Policy**](#).
- d. Clinical instructors/preceptors have the option to exclude students from clinical if tardy or unprepared including not completing pre-class/lab/simulation/clinical assignments;. These circumstances would be considered an unexcused absence.
- e. More than one tardy and/or absences will prompt the clinical instructor to write a PBC for the clinical course.
 - 1) "Tardy" for clinical is defined as not being on the clinical unit/simulation/skills lab and ready for report by the start of the clinical experience (this time may be different for preceptorship and for different clinical experiences; refer to your course clinical schedule).
 - 2) Three clinical tardies constitute one unexcused absence from clinical.
- 2) IF A STUDENT DOES NOT NOTIFY THE CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR/PRECEPTOR AT LEAST ONE HOUR PRIOR TO AN ABSENCE OR TARDINESS PRIOR TO CLINICAL, IT MAY BE AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE.**
- f. Absences for reasons other than University sanctioned events (which must be approved by Deans or the Academic Vice President) will be determined to be "excused" or "not excused" by the Director of Nursing. An excessive number of absences, even if they are excused, can severely compromise the quality of the students' learning experience. Therefore, if the Professor judges that the student is not meeting clinical objectives due to excessive absences (excused, unexcused or a combination of the two), that Professor will initiate PBC in collaboration with the student. The Professor shall notify a student prior to initiating action for a student's withdrawal. Grades assigned for withdrawals initiated by the Professor or by the student are recorded as a "W" (Withdraw).
- g. Students cannot miss more than 20% of clinical per course.

- 1) Courses with 45 hours of clinical=9 hours
- 2) Courses with 90 hours of clinical=18 hours
- 3) Courses with 135 hours of clinical=27 hours
- 4) Courses with 180 hours of clinical=36 hours

h. Failure of the clinical component of the course will result in failing the entire course.

Clinical Immersion Preceptorship hours are scheduled between the student and preceptor. All clinical policies, including absences and tardiness, are applicable to the preceptorship immersion experience as well.

3. Classroom Attendance Policy

- a. Class attendance is related to academic success, and class participation contributes to the synergism of the educational process. Nursing students are expected to attend all classes, including laboratories, clinical, and events associated with the course or program.
- b. Faculty members keep the roll, record grades for any work missed due to an unexcused absence and may make a recommendation to the Program Director to drop a student for missing an equivalent of two weeks of classes for unexcused absences. Students missing this much class time are at risk of not meeting course objectives/requirements and faculty will write a PBC in collaboration with the student. Faculty may not drop a student without the approval of the Dean.
- c. Three tardies constitute one absence for class.
- d. Absences for reasons other than University sanctioned events (which must be approved by Deans or the Academic Vice President) will be determined to be "excused" or "not excused" by the Professor. An excessive number of absences, even if they are excused, can severely compromise the quality of the students' learning experience. Therefore, if the Professor judges that the student has missed excessive material due to absences (excused, unexcused or a combination of the two), that Professor will initiate PBC in collaboration with the student. The Professor shall notify a student prior to initiating action for a student's withdrawal. Grades assigned for withdrawals initiated by the Professor or by the student are recorded as a "W" (Withdraw).
- e. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Professor before an absence, if possible, or, in the case of an emergency, as soon after the absence as possible. It is also the responsibility of the student to make up any missed work to the satisfaction of the Professor on the basis of guidelines stated in that Professor's course syllabus.
- f. If a student must be absent from a class for one of the reasons listed below, the student is required to communicate with the faculty member to provide information on the reason for the absence. Untruthful student claims about absences are considered a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.
- g. Students will be given the opportunity to make up any missed assignments or their equivalents when their absence is the result of one of the following situations.
 - 1) University-related activities: Students who are absent from class while participating in a university-sponsored event or who are absent from the campus because they officially represent the University in such sponsored activities as intercollegiate athletics and research activities will be excused from classes.
 - 2) Illness and Emergencies: In cases of severe illness or emergency, students may be excused from in-person classes and clinical experiences. For all situations, the procedures below should be followed:
 - 3) Students who experience a personal or family illness-related emergency that interferes with academic performance are expected to contact the Office of the Dean of Students (deanofstudents@stmarytx.edu) and provide documentation evidencing the situation. It is standard protocol for the Office of the Dean of

Students to contact the faculty whose student is experiencing a personal or family illness-related emergency to offer recommendations to the faculty regarding the handling of the absence. Personal or family medical documentation should only be provided to the Office of the Dean of Students.

- h. Students are reminded of their responsibility to uphold the Code of Conduct and may be subject to academic penalties and university sanctions for falsely reporting an illness or emergency as a reason for missing, or to miss, class; students should work closely with the faculty members, the Office of Student Development, and the Student Health Center to communicate their illness or other circumstances causing an emergency.
- i. Students who have COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness should not attend class, lab, or clinical until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Students are strongly encouraged to wear a mask upon return until all symptoms have fully resolved to protect classmates, faculty, and patients. Failure to attend classes for reasons other than those listed above are considered unexcused absences unless the faculty member, in consultation with the student, approves an absence as excused.

Appeals to decisions based on this attendance policy may be brought to the attention of the Dean of the School of Science, Engineering, and Technology.

4. Cancellation of On-Campus Classes and Clinical

The faculty is committed to the education of students. Classes will only be canceled in cases of extreme emergency. The faculty responsible for the class will post a policy for notification of cancellation of class in their course syllabus. Nursing classes will still occur remotely via Zoom at the same time class is offered. If the cancellation is due to weather on a clinical day, clinical will be canceled and faculty will provide an alternate clinical experience such as case study/computer-based simulation via Zoom the same time clinical is scheduled.

B. GRIEVANCE POLICY

The DoN defines a Grievance as a formal written complaint. A formal written complaint is a statement of dissatisfaction that is presented according to the Nursing Department's established policies and procedures. The student must file the formal complaint in writing using step 1 in the process below.

1. Grade Appeal Process

Students appealing a grade will follow the procedure outlined in the University Grade Appeal Policy and Procedure. This grievance procedure must be initiated within three weeks of receiving the grade. Please see [University Grade Appeal Policy and Procedure](#) for complete details.

2. Formal Complaint

The faculty and staff of the DoN strive to demonstrate a high level of ethical values and professionalism in all its activities. In some cases, a situation may generate complaint for which no formal grievance process exists. The complaint should be written, signed, include details about the complaint as well as documented evidence and mail to:

Program Director, Department of Nursing
One Camino Santa Maria
San Antonio, TX 78228

OR email nursing@stmarytx.edu with subject line FORMAL COMPLAINT and tagged high importance.

Please include contact information so the Program Director can reach you in order to resolve the complaint.

The following outlines the process for handling a complaint against the Program:

- a. The Director of Nursing will discuss the complaint directly with the party involved within 14 business days. The expectation is that the complaint can be satisfactorily resolved by this discussion. The Director of Nursing will provide a written description of the resolution to the complainant.
- b. If dissatisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the Director of Nursing, or if the complaint is against the Director of Nursing, the complainant may submit a written complaint to the Dean of the School of Science, Engineering, and Technology. The Director of Nursing will provide the Dean with a written summary of previous discussions if applicable.
- c. The Dean will discuss the matter with the Director of Nursing and complainant separately and may schedule a joint appointment or conference call with the Director of Nursing and complainant in an attempt to reach a solution.
- d. The Dean will provide the complainant and the Director of Nursing with a written letter outlining the solution reached through this step.
- e. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the resolution provided, the last line of complaint is to the Provost, who serves as Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs for St. Mary's University.

3. Resolution of Formal Complaint

Copies of all documentation should be placed in the department file on grievances documenting the outcomes or resolution of the complaint.

C. ADVISING POLICY: FACULTY/STUDENT

During the first two years at St. Mary's, students are assigned to a professional academic advisor and a nurse faculty mentor. Students meet with their academic advisers at least three times per semester and their faculty adviser at least once per semester. The partnership between a student and their advisers helps build a strong foundation for academic success at St. Mary's

University. The faculty mentor assumes the role of academic adviser at the start of the third year and remains so until graduation.

Full-time and Part-time faculty members are assigned specific nursing students by the Director of Nursing at the beginning of each academic year for the purpose of academic advising. The purpose of the DoN Advising is to assist each nursing student in planning, implementing, and evaluating his/her academic goals in accordance with St. Mary's University and specific nursing curriculum goals. Student advisees and faculty are responsible for meeting each semester to evaluate the student's present status in the Nursing Program and to establish specific plans for progression through the St. Mary's University nursing curriculum.

Faculty advisors may schedule additional meetings with each assigned student throughout the semester as necessary. A schedule of the faculty office hours is posted on individual office doors. A student may arrange for an appointment with his/her faculty advisor during scheduled office hours. If this is not possible, other arrangements will be made by the advisor and student. A summary of each meeting will be documented by the faculty advisor and maintained in the student's file in the DoN.

D. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

1. Office of Disability Services

St. Mary's University is a community that welcomes and embraces students with disabilities. St. Mary's University ensures access to its programs, services and activities for all qualified individuals with documented disabilities. Each disability is unique and for this reason, services are individually tailored to the needs of each student. It is for this reason that we highly recommend any student with a disability reach out to the Office of Student Accessibility Services.

a. ADA Accommodation Statement

Persons requesting accommodations in accordance with ADA should contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services at:

Office of Student Accessibility Services

Center for Life Directions

Office Hours

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday

Phone: 210-431-3135

Fax: 210-431-6706

accessibility@stmarytx.edu

2. Accommodations Process

Accessibility Services will facilitate reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. A student requesting accommodation must self-identify and provide recent documentation of his or her disability to Office of Student Accessibility Services staff. This documentation is used to establish the student as an individual with a disability and provides rationale for reasonable accommodations. Please see [Student Disability Services](#) for more detailed information on establishing services.

E. DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Please refer to the St. Mary's Alcohol and Other Drug Policy at

<https://www.stmarytx.edu/policies/student-development/alcohol-and-other-drugs-policy/>

PLEASE NOTE: Sec. 301.404. DUTY OF NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO REPORT. A nursing educational program that has reasonable cause to suspect that the ability of a nursing student to perform the services of the nursing profession would be, or would reasonably be expected to be, impaired by chemical dependency shall file with the board a written, signed report that includes the identity of the student and any additional information the board requires."

F. ATTIRE POLICIES

1. Classroom, Nursing Laboratories, and Clinical Sites

The student is to be dressed neatly and well groomed, with clothing clean, pressed, and in good repair. The student must maintain proper hygiene with respect to body odors, perfume, after shave, secondhand smoke, and scented hand cleaners. Male students are expected to be clean shaven or with appropriately groomed facial hair based on clinical site expectations. All students are expected to wear appropriate undergarments. The following examples of dress items are considered inappropriate and a student so attired will be asked to leave the classroom or lab:

- a. Bare mid-drifts
- b. Baggy pants revealing underwear
- c. Low cut or tight-fitting clothing

When formal simulations and clinical on campus are scheduled, the students must present

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themselves in full uniform with name tags. Students are required to wear their uniform and lab coat during on campus labs, clinical -site rotations and designated University events.

2. Uniform Policy for Clinical Practice

The student uniform consists of **galaxy-blue scrub pants and galaxy-blue scrub top**.

Particulars of the dress code include:

- a. Unless otherwise stipulated, full uniform is required at all times on the clinical unit. Full uniform is defined as follows:
 - 1) Scrubs:
 - i. The top may be worn with a white or black turtleneck or tee shirt underneath. The turtleneck or tee shirt may be long or short sleeved and may not have any printing or design on the shirt.
 - ii. The pants may have an elastic or draw string waist.
 - 2) White or galaxy-blue socks.
 - 3) White, black, or blue athletic shoes which must be non permeable and waterproof, no sandals, no clogs or backless shoes.
 - 4) White cotton lab/warm-up jacket with StMU logo. Hoodies are not permissible
 - 5) Clinical site ID policy must be followed; this is specific to each clinical. You will be informed of the clinical site policy prior to clinical.
 - 6) Watch with a second hand must be worn at clinical.
- b. The clinical uniform may be worn to class if it immediately precedes or follows the clinical experience.
- c. Hair should be clean and styled neatly. Hair that is shoulder length or longer must be tied back and off the collar of the uniform. Unnatural hair colors (purple, green, blue, pink, orange, etc.) are not permitted.
- d. **Jewelry that is worn must be conservative.**
- e. Only small earrings may be worn-**ONE EARRING PER EAR** (earrings are limited to - earlobe only - post only - no **DANGLING EARRINGS or ear tunnels**) and **NO NECKLACES FOR SAFETY PURPOSES**. This policy protects student nurses from injury.
- f. Wedding band may be worn; no other rings.
- g. Body jewelry should be concealed. Tongue piercings are not permissible.
- h. Nails are to be short and neatly trimmed. **No nail polish**. A clear coat is acceptable but must not be cracked or chipped. **No acrylic or other false nails**.
- i. For professional appearance and in respect for various populations that might be served, students should refrain from having visible tattoos. Some clinical agencies may not permit any tattoo on uncovered skin so students should be prepared to cover those areas with clothing, tape or makeup. In all cases, tattoos that depict violence, offensive language or are sexually explicit must be covered during all program activities and clinical.

The dress code may vary in adherence to the clinical institution's dress code with the permission of the Clinical Instructor. Students will be notified accordingly. Any DoN faculty member may dismiss a student from the clinical unit for infraction of any part of this policy and a PBC will be completed.

G. CPR CERTIFICATION

All students must have successfully completed and be currently certified in the Healthcare Provider Basic Life Support Course, sponsored by the **American Heart Association** in summer before year two and recertify in summer before year four.

A copy of the student's current course certification shall be maintained in SentryMD which is a software background check and compliance management company to provide a secure account to manage your time sensitive school and clinical requirements.

This certification **must** be current prior to starting and continuing in any clinical courses. Any student who cannot provide evidence of current certification for the required CPR content (as identified above) **will not** be permitted to perform in the clinical area.

H. EXAMINATION POLICIES

Students are expected to take examinations as scheduled. During exam time, all materials, including cell phones, smart watches, books, baseball caps and book-bags, are to be in an area of the room designated by faculty.

Missed Exam and Make-Up Policy

To safeguard exam integrity and ensure fairness to all students, any absence from a scheduled examination must be supported by appropriate documentation. Acceptable documentation includes, but is not limited to, a medical note, bereavement notice (such as an obituary), or verification of a personal emergency (such as confirmation of contact with the Dean of Students).

Except for emergencies that occur during the scheduled exam period, students must notify the course faculty by email or phone no later than 60 minutes prior to the start of the exam to report the absence and its reason. Failure to provide both timely notification and required documentation may result in a 50% reduction in the score of the make-up exam.

Late Arrival

At the discretion of the course faculty, a student arriving late for an exam may be permitted to begin the exam; however, only the remaining time in the scheduled exam period will be allowed. No additional time will be given. This policy ensures fairness to all students and maintains the integrity of the testing environment.

Make-Up Exam Eligibility and Exam Format

Students who meet the criteria for an excused absence and provide appropriate documentation within two business days of the missed exam may be eligible for a make-up exam, to be completed within two business days (excluding weekends/holidays) of the student's return to class.

Make-up exams will differ in format, content, and level of difficulty from the original examination to preserve exam integrity. Formats may include written, oral, or alternative versions administered at a date and time determined by the faculty.

Failure to complete the make-up exam within the designated timeframe will result in a grade of zero for that assessment.

Exam Performance Review Policy

Policy Statement

To promote academic success, mastery of course content, and preparation for safe clinical practice, *any student who scores below 80% on a course examination is required* to meet with the course faculty for an exam performance review. This meeting will provide individualized feedback, identification of knowledge gaps, and guidance on effective study strategies to support improved learning outcomes.

Student Responsibility

It is the student's responsibility to initiate and schedule the required exam review. Students must contact the course faculty within one 48 hours of receiving their exam grade to arrange the meeting. Failure to schedule or attend the exam review may result in delayed feedback and may impact the student's ability to develop an appropriate academic improvement plan.

Faculty Role

During the exam review, faculty will:

- Clarify missed concepts or question types
- Provide targeted content review and study tips

- Recommend learning resources and academic support services

Collaborate with the student to develop an individualized improvement plan using the Performance Behavior Contract form for documentation

Students scoring above 80% on exams may schedule an exam review within one week following an examination to schedule a review with the instructor if they choose to do so.

Students are required to attend final examinations as scheduled. Please refer to the University Policy at <https://catalog.stmarytx.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/academic-policies-procedures/study-days-final-exam/>

The Nursing Program upholds fairness, academic integrity, and the use of evidence-based resources in all examinations. Nursing students are permitted to challenge exam items. Refer [Appendix C](#) to the Test Item Challenge Policy.

I. INCIDENT POLICY

During a clinical experience, if a student becomes ill or injured, a DoN Incident Report form will be completed. This form may also be used to document unusual events that occur in campus classrooms or laboratories. All occurrences should be documented. The DoN Incident Report form makes it possible to recall the nature of the incident, action taken, witnesses, and the follow-up.

If possible, the form should be completed by the student with the assistance of the clinical instructor. This form should be completed within **three business days** after the incident occurred. The completed form should then be submitted to the faculty in which the incident occurred. After review, the original form will be placed in the incident report file and a copy in the student's file in the DoN office unless additional action is determined to be necessary.

If the event occurs during a clinical experience, it may be necessary to complete the agency/hospital's incident report per the agency/hospital's policy.

If a student becomes ill or injured while on campus and requires medical attention, Campus Police should be notified for incident management.

J. PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

St. Mary's University Department of Nursing pays each student's professional liability insurance premium. Limits of Professional Liability are \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000, which pay up to \$1,000,000 for each claim and up to a total of \$3,000,000 in any one year. Payment is made by the insurance company on claims arising out of real or alleged malpractice, regardless of the number of claims or persons involved, when the injury being claimed is the result of error, accident or omission. Payment of all court costs is also provided. Expert legal counsel and claims adjusters are immediately available in all sections of the country to aid and defend the insured without cost.

Under this program students are covered only for malpractice related to their normal curriculum, studies and assignments 24 hours a day, working in or out of school including vacation and days off. Coverage under your Student Blanket Insurance policy terminates on the date of your graduation.

K. MEDICATION CALCULATION EXAM

The professional nurse requires logical thinking ability and proficiency in arithmetic operations in order to safely calculate medication dosages. All students who take Fundamentals of Care

must successfully demonstrate proficiency with medication calculations.

Students may repeat the math exam twice. Students who are unsuccessful after the second attempt must remediate with faculty. **Failure of the third medication calculation exam constitutes course failure.**

Medication Calculation Exam with level specific score:

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Fundamentals of Care | 80% |
| Junior level I | 85% |
| Junior level II | 90% |
| Senior level I | 95% |
| Senior level II | 100% |

L. MINIMUM CORE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS POLICY

Nursing education requires that the accumulation of scientific knowledge be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of skills and professional attitudes and behaviors. The nursing degrees awarded by St. Mary's University at the completion of the educational process certifies that the individual has acquired a base of knowledge and skills required for the practice of nursing.

To this end, all courses in the curriculum must be completed successfully. To acquire the knowledge and skills to function in a variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care, candidates for the undergraduate in nursing must have the following Core Performance Standards

| Requirements | Standards | Examples |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Critical thinking | Critical thinking ability for effective clinical reasoning and clinical judgement consistent with level of educational preparation | Identification of cause/effect relationships in clinical situations Use of the scientific method in the development of patient care plans Evaluation of the effectiveness of nursing interventions |
| Professional Relationships | Interpersonal skills sufficient for professional interactions with a diverse population of individuals, families and groups | Establishment of rapport with patients/clients and colleagues Capacity to engage in successful conflict resolution Peer accountability |
| Communication | Communication adeptness sufficient for verbal and written professional interactions | Explanation of treatment procedures, initiation of health teaching. Documentation and interpretation of nursing actions and patient/client responses |
| Mobility | Physical abilities sufficient for movement from room to room and in small spaces | Movement about patient's room, work spaces and treatment areas Administration of rescue procedures-cardiopulmonary resuscitation |
| Motor skills | Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient for providing safe, effective nursing care | Calibration and use of equipment Therapeutic positioning of patients |

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Hearing | Auditory ability sufficient for monitoring and assessing health needs | Ability to hear monitoring device alarm and other emergency signals Ability to discern auscultatory sounds and cries for help |
| Visual | Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in-patient care | Ability to observe patient's condition and responses to treatments |
| Tactile Sense | Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment | Ability to palpitate in physical examinations and various therapeutic interventions |

St. Mary's Nursing Program embraces diversity in nursing and nursing education. Reasonable technological accommodations can be made for some disabilities in certain areas, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner and exercise independent judgment. For this reason, any student who seeks accommodation prior to or immediately after enrolling in the nursing program is encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services. To get started, students are encouraged to schedule an appointment by contacting accessibility@stmarytx.edu or calling 210-436-3135 or 210-431-5080. The Office of Student Accessibility Services is located in the Center for Life Directions Building room 139.

Reference:

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/our-initiatives/education-practice/faculty-tool-kits/accommodating-students-with-disabilities>

M. PROGRESSION AND RETENTION POLICIES

1. System of Grading

All nursing courses will be graded according to the following system:

| | | | |
|----|-------------|---|-----------------|
| A | = 95 – 100% | C | = 77 – 79% |
| | | + | |
| A- | = 90 – 94% | C | = 70 – 76% |
| B | = 87 – 89% | D | = 60 – 69% |
| | | + | |
| B | = 84 – 86% | F | = 59% and below |
| B- | = 80 – 83% | | |

Students must **earn a minimum grade of C+ (77%)** in all required nursing courses to meet progression requirements.

Final grade averages will **not** be rounded up to the next letter grade. For example, a 79.7 would **not** round up to 80.0.

For NU prefix course with a clinical/lab component, students must first achieve a minimum cumulative exam average of C+ (77%) in all required nursing courses before other assignment grades are calculated into the final grade. Once the exam average meets the 77% threshold, additional assignment grades will be included. See below for more information.

Any withdrawal (W) from a NU prefix course in year two requires a suspension of all NU prefix courses that term.

2. Academic Progression

Progression and continuance in the Nursing Program is based upon academic performance and successful achievement of nursing prerequisites, compliance with health

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requirements, adherence to St. Mary's University policies in the current University Catalog, and DoN policies. The faculty of the DoN has the right and the responsibility for judging and evaluating the quality of the student's achievement, both in the mastery of the theoretical content and in clinical competence.

- 1) Students must earn a minimum grade of "C" in the following prerequisite/corequisite courses.

| Natural Science Courses: | Social Sciences Courses: |
|--|---------------------------------|
| CH 1305 Chemistry for Health Professions | PS 2355 Human Development |
| BL 2420 Microbiology | PS 3381 Introductory Statistics |
| BL 1411 Anatomy and Physiology I | Mathematics Course: |
| BL 1412 Anatomy and Physiology II | MT 1304 Math for Nurses |
| BL 2311 Food and Nutrition | |

- 2) Students must earn a minimum grade of C+ in all NU prefix courses. A "C" or below counts toward unsuccessful completion and must be repeated.
- 3) Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of **2.5** to enter and remain in the professional phase of the nursing program, which begins in the second semester of the sophomore year. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.5, they will be placed on academic probation within the Nursing Department for one semester. During this time, the student must meet with the Director of Nursing to develop a written plan for academic success prior to the start of the next semester. The student will have one semester to raise the cumulative GPA to 2.5 or higher. Failure to meet this requirement within the allotted time will result in dismissal from the nursing program. The only nursing course taken prior to entry into the professional phase of the nursing program is NU 2301 Pathophysiology for Nursing Practice.
- 4) Prior to the second semester sophomore year, it is recommended that the maximum number of liberal arts courses the student should have left to complete is five (5) courses. When scheduling classes, it is the student's responsibility to schedule classes so that the classes do not interfere with labs and clinical experiences.
- 5) A maximum of two NU prefix courses can be retaken in the total curriculum. Any repeat courses must be passed with a C+ or better in the 2nd attempt.
- 6) Nursing majors **MUST** earn a minimum grade of "C+" (77%) in each nursing course to progress to the next course that requires a clinical laboratory component.
 - i. For NU prefix course with a clinical/lab component, students must first achieve a minimum cumulative exam average of C+ (77%) in all required nursing courses before other assignment grades are calculated into the final grade. Once the exam average meets the 77% threshold, additional assignment grades will be included. When these are factored in, one of three outcomes may occur:
 - The overall course average remains the same,
 - The additional grades raise the overall average, or
 - The overall average falls below 77% (C+), in which case the student will not meet progression requirements.
 - If the 77% exam threshold is not met, the other assignment grades will not be factored into the final grade.
 - ii. A grade of less than a "C+" will constitute an unsuccessful attempt in any NU Prefix course.
 - iii. A student may repeat a NU prefix course only once. Dismissal occurs when a student is unsuccessful (less than "C+/"or withdraws) the second

time.

- iv. If a student's level of clinical practice is unsafe or unsatisfactory, the student will fail the course BEFORE the end of the semester.
- v. Any withdrawal from a NU prefix course is considered an unsuccessful attempt and needs to be repeated before progressing in the curriculum.
- vi. If a student is out of any NU prefix course(s) for over two years, the student MUST repeat ALL prerequisite and corequisite courses with a NU prefix.

7) A student who requests and receives a continuance or readmission is responsible for curricular changes in the program of nursing study which occur during his or her absence. A student follows the curriculum guide for the class which he or she joins upon returning to the program.

3. Clinical Progression

Clinical performance will be evaluated weekly and reviewed with the student at midterm and final. However, it may be reviewed more frequently if a student is having difficulty. Grading during the clinical rotation is on a satisfactory (S), (E) emerging, and unsatisfactory (U) grading scale. This will include "+" and "-"; for example, S+ or S-. Any U level of performance at midterm will require an individualized PBC which defines the goals that must be met for the student to achieve a S level of performance by the final. Students must achieve a satisfactory level of performance on each course's final clinical evaluation to pass clinical. Clinical is pass/fail.

4. Clinical Failure

To pass clinical, **all** grading criteria on the final clinical evaluation tool must be graded as **satisfactory**. Even one emerging score will result in clinical failure. A clinical failure results in a failure for the course regardless of the theory grade.

Failure to practice safely may result in the student being removed from clinical and the course failure. Failure to adhere to the Professional Behavior and Integrity Policy is grounds for dismissal.

5. Final Course Grade Computation – Clinical Courses

- a. Final satisfactory level of clinical performance and final theory grade of 77% or better equals the grade for the course. Clinical grading is derived from the clinical evaluation tool.
- b. Failure of either the clinical or theory component will result in the entire course's failure. This will necessitate the student to repeat both the clinical and theory components on a space available basis provided the student has not exhausted the allotted number of repeats.

6. Clinical Warning for Clinical Dismissal

A student may be placed on clinical warning for dismissal based upon unsatisfactory level of performance. This warning will be communicated via the PBC which defines the goals that must be met to pass the clinical component. This is a method to identify behaviors that interfere with the attainment of clinical objectives.

7. Program Suspension/Dismissal Policy

A student may be suspended or dismissed from the nursing program for the following reasons:

- a. **Suspension for Academic Performance:** A student will be suspended from the program when earning less than C+ in any NU prefix course or withdrawing from a NU prefix course. The student will need to repeat/retake the course the next time it is offered pending available seats. Students will not progress to the next term until successful completion of the course that resulted in suspension of the program. Courses can only be repeated one time.
- b. **Dismissal for Academic Performance:** If unsuccessful on the second attempt of the course, students will be dismissed from the program. The repeated course MUST start within a calendar year. Only two courses can be repeated throughout the NU prefix curriculum. After the second NU prefix course unsuccessfully passed with less than a C+, a student will be dismissed from the program.
- c. **Dismissal for Unsafe Clinical Practice:** Dismissal for unsafe clinical practice may occur at any time during the academic semester. Dismissal is based on unsafe behavior demonstrated by the student as determined by the faculty of the DoN.
Dismissal may be based on:
 - 1) One potentially life-threatening incident; or
 - 2) One incident contributing to the injury or death of another; or
 - 3) Two or more incidents of unsafe practice identified at any time during the length or enrollment in the DoN.
- d. **Dismissal for Unprofessional Behavior:** In addition to the list found in the Professional Behavior Policy, the following provides examples of behaviors in three areas as basis for dismissal from the DoN:
 - 1) **Regulatory** – examples include, but are not limited to the student's failure to practice within the guidelines of:
 - i. The Texas Board of Nursing
 - ii. The Policies and Procedures of St. Mary's University and the DoN
 - iii. Policies and procedures of the clinical agencies
 - iv. Patient's Bill of Rights
 - 2) **Accountability** – examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Failure to adequately prepare for clinical learning experiences
 - ii. Failure to communicate accurate and complete information verbally and/or in writing
 - iii. Failure to report unsafe or incompetent practice of peers or other healthcare team members to nursing faculty
 - iv. Failure to practice within limitations of the student nurse role
 - v. Failure to accept responsibility for own behavior
 - vi. Failure to accept responsibility for client care
 - vii. Failure to seek appropriate guidance from the faculty
 - viii. Excessive absence or tardiness as per the absence from class/clinical policy
 - ix. All forms of dishonesty, including cheating, falsification, or plagiarism of information on assignments
 - 3) **Clinical Nursing Performance** – examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Medication administration errors
 - ii. Misinterpretation of medical orders
 - iii. Improper implementation of nursing care plans
 - iv. Improper implementation of procedures according to the Department and/or agency guidelines
 - v. HIPAA violations

The Department of Nursing has designated the Admissions, Progression and Retention (APR) Committee as the administrative body responsible for enforcing the Retention Policies listed in the Department of Nursing Student Handbook. Please consult those policies directly for more specific information.

The procedures of the APR Committee regarding Retention Policies are as follows:

- a. Instructors shall notify the APR Committee Chairperson (within one week of the end of the semester) of a student who will be receiving a final grade in a course that is below a C+. The APR Committee Chairperson is responsible for initiating the academic action to be taken and to notify the student by email.
 1. Retention Policies may indicate that academic action is taken, including a) suspension, b) dismissal from the program.
 2. If academic action is based on academic performance, the APR Committee will notify the student in writing no later than two weeks after the end of the semester in which the student received a final grade in any course(s).
 3. If academic action is based on the conviction of a crime, the APR Committee will notify the student within two weeks of receiving notice of the conviction.
 4. If the academic action is based on a claim of unsafe behavior in the clinical setting, or other student misconduct, APR Committee notification will occur no later than two weeks after the Director of Nursing has communicated the decision to the student.

Any student who is dismissed from the program has the right to Requests and Appeals Related to Dismissal from the Nursing Program:

Students in the who wish to apply for reinstatement after having been dismissed from the nursing program shall contact the APR Committee within 72 hours from their notification of dismissal. Their application for reinstatement should describe the nature of the circumstances leading to their dismissal and their corrective plan of action for future success in the nursing program. The APR Committee will review their application and decide whether to reinstate or uphold the dismissal. While the APR committee reviews the student's application for reinstatement, they shall remain responsible for any coursework/assignments/deadlines/compliance issues related to their classes in that semester. Students under dismissal/reinstatement review will NOT be allowed to participate in any clinical activity where direct patient care is involved. In lieu of attending clinical, the student shall be offered an equivalent assignment at the discretion of the APR Chairperson and/or the Director of Nursing. In the event the student is reinstated, the student will be notified via e-mail of their reinstatement. The student shall henceforth be responsible for adhering to the conditions set forth by the APR Committee. In the event the APR Committee decides to uphold the dismissal, the student shall be immediately removed from all NU Prefix class rosters and will no longer be allowed to attend any NU prefix classes/clinicals or any other nursing program related activity virtually or in-person. Although dismissed from the nursing program, students may declare another major and continue as a student at St. Mary's University.

The student has the right to petition for reinstatement within a week of notification of the decision to uphold the dismissal by the APR Committee directly to the Director of Nursing, who may decide to reinstate the student or uphold the dismissal. In the event the Director of Nursing denies reinstatement, the student shall be dismissed immediately. In the event the Director of Nursing reinstates the student, they will be eligible to join the next cohort and enroll in classes the next semester **IF** there is available space.

The student will be responsible for adhering to the conditions set forth by the Director of Nursing. If the student fails to comply with the conditions set forth by the Director of Nursing, the student will be eligible for immediate dismissal. The decision of the Director of Nursing is final. Moreover, a student may only be reinstated once.

8. Health Requirements Policy

Students must adhere to the health policies or other policies of St. Mary's University DoN or they will not be able to progress in the nursing program.

N. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR POLICIES

As representatives of St. Mary's University and future members of the profession of nursing, students must demonstrate professional behavior at all times in the classrooms, clinical sites, and nursing labs. Students must adhere to the policies, responsibilities, rules, and regulations as outlined in the St. Mary's University Student Handbook, DoN's BSN Student Handbook, as well as those of the clinical agencies.

1. Academic and Campus Conduct

The BSN Program follows the Code of Student Conduct as detailed in the Mary's University [Code of Conduct](#). At the University, student members are to uphold and abide by the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#), which are embodied within a set of core values that include service, peace, justice, and integrity of creation. Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit misconduct is subject to the procedures and sanctions as outlined in the policies.

Disruptive behavior in the classroom or clinical area will not be tolerated. Each disruptive activity will be documented as unprofessional behavior in a PBC and may be subject to action under the Code of Student Conduct.

2. Professional Standards Conduct

Nursing students are held to the same standard of professional behaviors as a professional nurse, and these standards apply to the classroom, lab, clinical, and community settings. Standards of behavior establish the minimum acceptable level of nursing behavior/good professional character as noted in the TBON [§213.27. Good Professional Character](#). Failure to meet these standards may result in dismissal from the nursing program. St. Mary's nursing program adheres to the [The Code of Ethics for Nurses | ANA \(nursingworld.org\)](#) (2015) and the [Texas Administrative Code \(state.tx.us\)](#)

Faculty who observes or suspects a student is in violation of the Professional Behavior Policy will meet with the student and document the occurrence in a PBC.

Students can only receive up to three PBCs based on the event's impact of the occurrence over the professional phase of the nursing program. After three PBCs, the student will be dismissed from the program.

In addition to documentation, further consequences of any violation may include, but not be limited to:

1. Receiving an Unsatisfactory (U) for the clinical day
2. Receiving a "F" grade or zero points for the assignment or exam
3. Referral to Counseling
4. Suspension from class/clinical
5. Dismissal from the nursing program

Any student suspected of being under the influence of non-prescribed drugs and/or alcohol in the classroom or clinical area will be required to follow the St. Mary's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy.

PLEASE NOTE: "Sec. 301.404. DUTY OF NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO REPORT. A nursing educational program that has reasonable cause to suspect that the ability of a nursing student to perform the services of the nursing profession would be, or would reasonably be expected to be, impaired by chemical dependency shall file with the board a written, signed report that includes the identity of the student and any additional information the

A notification of any action as result of unprofessional or unethical behavior will be submitted to Director of Nursing.

References:

ANA Code of Ethics 2015

TX Administrative Code Title 22 Part 11 Chapter 213 Rule §213.27 Good Professional Character

TX Administrative Code Title 22 Part 11 Chapter 217 Rule §217.11: Standards of Nursing Practice §217.12 Unprofessional Conduct

3. Clinical Behavior Conduct

Professional conduct and accountability are essential components of nursing education and practice. To ensure patient safety, confidentiality, and professional integrity, students are expected to adhere to the following clinical behavior standards:

1. Faculty Authorization for Skills

Students must obtain explicit permission from the clinical faculty before performing any nursing skill or procedure that has not yet been evaluated and approved by faculty, regardless of whether the patient's healthcare provider or preceptor is willing to allow the student to perform the skill. Faculty supervision is required to ensure competency, patient safety, and compliance with program and facility policies.

2. Patient Safety and Confidentiality

Students must always maintain strict patient confidentiality in accordance with HIPAA regulations, institutional policy, and the ANA Code of Ethics. Discussion of patient information is limited to educational purposes within the clinical and classroom setting. Sharing or discussing patient information outside these settings is strictly prohibited.

3. Photography and Recording

The use of cameras, mobile devices, or any recording equipment to take pictures, videos, or audio recordings in any clinical setting is strictly prohibited. This includes patient care areas, nursing stations, and conference rooms.

4. Mobile Phone Policy

To promote professional engagement and patient-centered care, students may use their mobile phones only as a clinical resource and only when such use complies with the facility's policies.

Consequences for Breach of Policy

Maintaining patient safety, confidentiality, and professional behavior is a condition of continued enrollment in the nursing program.

- Any breach of patient safety, privacy, or confidentiality—such as performing unauthorized skills, discussing patient information outside the clinical learning environment, or taking/possessing unauthorized photos—will result in immediate removal from the clinical setting and a formal review by the Nursing Program Administration.
- Depending on the severity of the violation, consequences may include:
 - A failing grade for the clinical course, and/or
 - Dismissal from the Nursing Program for violations involving patient harm, safety risks, or breaches of confidentiality or professional ethics.

These actions are consistent with St. Mary's University and Texas Board of Nursing standards for professional conduct and safe nursing practice.

Rationale and Alignment

This policy reinforces the program's commitment to patient safety, professional accountability, and ethical practice, which are central to nursing education and the profession's standards.

- AACN Essentials (2021): Domains 2 (Person-Centered Care), 4 (Scholarship for Nursing Discipline), 7 (Systems-Based Practice), and 9 (Professionalism).
- Texas Board of Nursing (Rule §215.10): Ensures clinical instruction promotes safe practice and direct faculty supervision of students.
- Marianist Values: Reflects respect for the dignity of every person, responsible stewardship, and education for service, justice, and peace.

These expectations prepare *Rattler Nurses* to demonstrate professionalism, integrity, and compassion in all patient care settings.

O. Civility Policy

In a university learning community, critical thinking and diverging opinions are embraced to the extent that they are expressed with civility and respect. It is expected that issues and conflicts are addressed promptly and openly using respectful dialogue and proper channels of communication.

St. Mary's University professes values of integrity, community, social justice, respect, and responsibility. In that spirit, it is the expectation that all faculty, staff, and students in the DoN will choose civility in the spirit of the Marianist tradition.

The DoN will not tolerate demeaning, intimidating, threatening, or rude behavior as these expressions weaken the learning community. Violations should be reported using the Department of Nursing Formal Complaint Process presented earlier in the student handbook.

P. RATIO OF LAB/SIMULATION/CLINICAL HOURS TO CREDIT HOURS POLICY

1. Definition of Terms

- a. **Credit hour** – one semester credit hour is equal to fifty (50) minutes of classroom instruction per week.

Clinical and Skills Laboratory/Simulation – that unit of time which is used for the application of theoretical content and includes laboratory experiences and clinical on and off-campus. It does not include travel time to or from such experiences.

The curriculum is designed to start students' clinical learning in the on-campus lab/simulation environment. This affords students the ability to build confidence before actual patient care. As the student progresses through the curriculum, there shall be more clinical experiences within affiliating agencies and less in an on-campus laboratory/simulation environment. Because of the importance of the clinical experience to the curriculum, the DoN uses a ratio of 1:3 of credit to clinical hours which is congruent with the recommendations in TX Administrative Code §215.9.

**The fall and spring terms at St. Mary's University are 15 weeks.*

Q. SKILLS LAB and SIMULATION POLICY

1. Simulation/Skills Lab Activities

Simulation replicates some or nearly all of the essential aspects of a clinical situation so the student can practice in a safe environment prior to participation in clinical experiences. Simulation activities can range from basic skill acquisition to participating in complex simulated patient scenarios. Simulating real-life situations are conducive for developing clinical reasoning and clinical judgement skills, which will increase the probability of transference to the clinical practice areas. Simulation also enhances the theoretical component of the courses by providing opportunities for the application of theory content to case scenario exercises. One hour of simulation will be equivalent to one hour of clinical.

Simulation labs for usage is comprised of 4 simulation rooms, a 7-bed skills lab, and a simulated apartment. All areas are fully equipped to practice all essential clinical skills and conduct simulations.

Simulated case scenarios relevant to the theoretical content will be scheduled per course learning activities. As a focus of student-centered learning, students are expected to be active and self-directed participants.

Students are also encouraged to use the Nursing Department simulation/skills labs for practice of skills in preparation for clinical experiences. Open lab hours will be posted for the semester.

Students are required to follow the Nursing Department's Professional Behavior and Clinical Attire Policies, and specific guidelines when participating in Simulation/Lab activities.

Professionalism

- a. Students are expected to be fully prepared for lab/simulation including Lab Pack.
- b. The student's actions and communication will be professional, as if it were a real patient care experience.
- c. Students will support and guide peers in a positive and professional manner abiding by the Peer-to-Peer Basic Health Assessment Policy ([Appendix D](#))
- d. Confidentiality will be maintained regarding the simulation experience, team member actions, and debriefing discussions.

Safety

- a. It is imperative that anyone with a latex allergy or other lab substance allergy, notify the Faculty member who is conducting the sim/lab experience.
- b. Any unusual event, including accident, injury or illness that occurs in Sim/Skills Lab should be reported immediately to Simulation/Lab Coordinator.
- c. Safety guidelines must be practiced while performing skills.
- d. Students should refrain from sitting on beds, stretchers, or wheelchairs unless using them for skills practice.
- e. Universal Precautions will be used at all times in the skills lab/simulation areas.

Supplies and Equipment

- a. Equipment can be signed out by the student for practice. The sign-out and sign-in books are located in the labs.
- b. Only manikin approved lubricant should be used for skills requiring lubricant. No pens, markers, liquids or staining substances (betadine) are permitted near the manikins.
- c. Assist in cleaning up the sim/lab areas and equipment/supplies after completion of activities.
- d. Anyone caught vandalizing lab property will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from the Nursing Program.
- e. The phones in the simulation/skills labs may not be used for personal calls.
- f. Questions about working the equipment, or problems with equipment usage, should be directed to the Nursing Simulation Coordinator or Simulation Tech.

Utilization of the Nursing Laboratory

Revised 10/15/2025

Approved 12/3/2025 via email

1. *Purpose:* The nursing laboratory is an essential resource for students to practice and refine their nursing skills before applying them in clinical settings. To maximize its benefits, students are encouraged to use the nursing laboratory as outlined below:
 - a. *Practice Sessions:* Students are encouraged to use the nursing laboratory to practice skills taught during lab sessions before performing them in clinical settings or during skill return demonstrations. The nursing laboratory hours will be posted each semester for student reference.
 - b. *Abnormal Findings:* During assessment practice on peers, if students identify findings outside the expected range (e.g., abnormal blood pressure), they should be referred to their personal healthcare providers for follow-up.

Nursing Lab Safety Guidelines

2. *Equipment Usage:* Students must receive orientation on the proper use of lab equipment, including electronic beds, side rails, wheelchairs, and suction machines, before operating them. For any newly introduced equipment, students should wait for instructions from faculty before use.
 - a. Students must seek faculty guidance before accessing lab equipment. Cupboards and drawers should not be opened without permission.
 - b. Lab staff should always be consulted before using the laboratory facility.
3. *Needles and Syringes:* Needles and syringes used for practice should not leave the lab area.
 - a. Students must exercise extreme caution during needle and syringe practice to prevent needle punctures. Any needlestick incidents must be immediately reported to faculty.
 - b. Used needles must be promptly discarded in the appropriate sharps' container.
4. *Cleanliness and Orderliness:* At the end of each practice session in the lab, students are responsible for appropriately disposing of waste materials and leaving the workspace clean, orderly, and free of debris.
5. *Emergency Preparedness:* Students should be familiarized with the location of fire extinguishers and the evacuation route in case of fire or other emergencies. In the event of a fire alarm, all students must promptly leave the building.
6. *Food and Drink:* Consumption of food and drinks is strictly prohibited in the nursing laboratory to maintain a clean environment.

Skill Return Demonstration

7. *Opportunities for Skill Return Demonstration:* Students will be expected to successfully return-demonstrate critical nursing skills as required by the Nursing faculty. Student will be provided with the guidelines for each skill on a labs skill sheet and have lab time for learning the skill and practice of skills prior to being tested. Students will sign up for all skills that require a return-demonstration with the Skills Lab/Simulation Coordinator.
8. *Missed Demonstrations:* If a student is unable to attend a scheduled return demonstration appointment, they must contact the nursing lab assistant in advance to cancel the appointment. Failure to do so will result in the demonstration being considered a failure.
9. *Skill Return Performance Evaluation:* When students pass the skill return demonstration on their first attempt, they will receive two points (or the full allotted points as per course criteria) added to their overall course points.
 - a. In the event of a failure during the first attempt, students must schedule time for remediation and practice of the skill with the lab assistant before a second attempt.
 - b. If a student fails the second attempt, they must again schedule time for remediation and practice of the skill before a third attempt.
 - c. If the student fails the third attempt, they must withdraw from the course or receive a failing grade for the course as per the discretion of the Practical Nursing faculty.

Skill Return Demonstration Deadline

10. Skill return demonstration deadlines will be clearly communicated and listed in the course syllabi, ensuring students are aware of the timelines for demonstrating their nursing skills competency.

R. Network Media Policies

1. Acceptable Use of Email, Network, and Internet Resources

Please refer to <https://www.stmarytx.edu/policies/it-services/acceptable-use-of-technology/>

All email communication will occur through the university email stmarytx.edu. Faculty will only email students using their university email. Students should check this email daily. Students should only email nursing department faculty and staff using their St. Mary's University email.

2. Social Media Policy

Please see the St. Mary's University [Social Media Policy](#) for specific guidelines on the use of social media. Social media are websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Prominent examples of social media include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Pinterest. Social media is an effective and accepted form of communication that warrants a safeguard to prevent misuse and abuse.

The Social Media policy is developed to provide guidance for the use of social media technologies, both internal and external to St. Mary's University and the DoN. It is the intent that through this policy, these systems are used appropriately and lawfully in accordance with all other St. Mary's University Social Media policies and procedures.

As a nursing student, you agree that you will not violate any local, state, federal, or international laws and regulations. HIPAA laws apply to social media applications and are federal laws.

Students are expected to maintain professional behaviors related to the prudent use of social media:

The following guidelines on the use of social media by nursing students are meant to clarify and not to supersede those of St. Mary's University. Many forms of social media exist in society today. While there are distinct advantages to staying connected and informed, it is essential that the use of this media does not bring harm.

- a. *Harm to self* – All students in the Nursing Program share the same goal, to continue to become a respected member of the profession. Posting inappropriate content in an open forum can negatively impact every student's progress toward this goal. In recent years, it has become commonplace for employers to conduct a web search in an attempt to learn more about prospective employees. Inappropriate photos or comments posted for all to see can mean the difference between finding a secure and satisfying work and unemployment.
- b. *Harm to the Department* – St. Mary's University has maintained an excellent relationship with the surrounding community for many years. There are many medical professionals in the surrounding area who go to great lengths to offer their expertise and skills in real and virtual classroom as well as clinical practice settings. Posting of derogatory or defamatory comments about these individuals, their staffs, or their facilities as well as any Program faculty and staff, could potentially cause great damage to the strong relationship that has been forged over the years. This, in turn, could deter future involvement with the Nursing Program by them as well as their colleagues. Should a student have a negative experience with any guest lecturer, clinical preceptor, Department faculty or staff member, it should be brought to the immediate attention of the Department Chair.

- c. **Harm to Patients** – While it is human nature to want to share interesting experiences, a patient's right to privacy must be protected at all times. In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), patient information such as name and/or address must NOT be shared. **Do NOT post any patient information (including photos or medical information) or experiences you have had with patients on social media such as Face Book, Twitter, etc.**

S. STANDARDIZED COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

The BSN Program utilizes Standardized Testing throughout the curriculum to familiarize students with computerized testing which is similar format to the NCLEX-RN. Additionally, these exams will help identify students' strengths and weaknesses for early remediation and for program evaluation. This is in accordance with TBON SB 1429 ([88\(R\) SB 1429 - Enrolled version - Bill Text \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/tbontx/legislature/2021/bills/sb1429))

T. STUDENT EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Students are urged to give **careful consideration** to their ability to engage in part-time employment during the academic year because of the considerable demands of the nursing program. Students will not be excused from theory, lab, or clinical experience due to conflicts with an employment schedule. Employment schedules should be taken into consideration before enrolling in classes.

U. STUDENT CLINICAL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS POLICY

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG TESTING

Clinical agencies require background checks and drug screens as a condition for clinical placement. Students are required to have a drug screening and criminal background checks (CBC) completed before the student begins classes and/or clinical practicum at St. Mary's.

The CBC is conducted by the Texas Board of Nursing (TBON). Newly accepted students will receive a Service Code Form from the Nursing Department to be eligible for fingerprinting. Once the Service Code Form is sent, students must complete the fingerprinting within 30 days. The student is responsible for all required fees to process the Texas Board of Nursing CBC.

Failure to clear the criminal background check with the TBON will prohibit the student from attending the nursing program.

The student is required to bring their Texas Board of Nursing "Blue Card" to the nursing office Senior Administrative Assistant before the start of the first fall semester of the nursing program. In lieu of the "Blue Card", a student may submit an operations outcome letter, enforcement outcome letter, or eligibility order from the Texas BON. A denial letter from the Texas BON will prohibit a student from participating in any nursing program activities. A TBON denial letter will result in rescinded admission to the school of nursing. Failure to bring the Blue Card or submit letter to school, will prohibit the student from attending the nursing program classes, laboratories, or clinical practicums. Students who have a pending criminal case appearing on their SentryMD background check will be required to have an additional background check processed 30 days following the scheduled court date listed on the background check report.

All background checks will be at the cost of the student. The outcome from the pending court case will determine if a student may remain in the nursing program.

For references regarding criminal history information please refer to the Texas Nurse

Nursing students must submit to a urine drug test at least 30 days before the start of their first clinical rotation (Sophomore Semester II) and may be asked to submit to a drug test anytime throughout the program. Failure to comply with the request for a drug test will be treated equivalent to a positive test result. A diluted positive drug screen will be considered positive. A diluted negative drug screen must be repeated. A positive drug test, and therefore inability to participate in clinical courses, will result in the inability to continue in the nursing program for a minimum of 12 months.

In addition to the CBC and urine drug test, students must comply with health and other clinical attendance requirements. Table 1 shows the clinical attendance requirements. Failure to meet the requirements will result in the inability to attend clinical and will be considered an unexcused absence. Students are responsible for costs incurred for these requirements.

Table 1. Clinical Attendance Requirements

| Requirement (Note: this may be altered due to change in clinical site requirements) | Soph | Junior | Senior |
|---|------|--------|--------|
| Health Physical Exam | X | | |
| Annual Flu vaccine due by October 1 | X | X | X |
| Titers (MMR, Hepatitis B, Varicella) OR documentation of vaccinations | X | | |
| Two-step TB skin test | X | X | X |
| Urine Drug Screen | X | X | X |
| TX BON Criminal Background Check/Fingerprinting | X | | |
| Health Insurance Card | X | X | X |
| Up to date University Immunization Requirements | X | | |
| American Heart Association Healthcare providers CPR certification | X | | X |
| Signed Release of Confidential Information form | X | | |
| Auto Insurance Card | X | X | X |
| HIPAA and Occupational Exposure to Blood borne Pathogens Training | X | X | X |

Detailed information related to the above and the appropriate health forms will be distributed to students in the fall prior to entry into soph 2, and summer before junior and senior years. This required information must be completed and submitted to the appropriate departments at St. Mary's University as indicated on the cover sheet that the student will receive in the spring.

Students can access the Student Health Center (SHC) for a limited range of vaccines such as meningitis and annual influenza. Please note that at this time, the only health insurance plan accepted at SHC is the Student Health Insurance Plan. For students that have other types of health insurance, the recommendation is to use your insurance with your primary care provider or with a community health clinic. Refer to the SHC for additional possible health services offered.

As the clinical requirements documentation is submitted to SentryMD they will be

reviewed by SentryMD in collaboration with the Nursing Department. All health records will be maintained confidentially in SentryMD.

All information must be complete and submitted prior to the designated year. Otherwise, the student will not be permitted to start the clinical rotation.

Any absence due to failure to obtain clearances for clinical will be considered an unexcused absence and will not be eligible for clinical makeup. Any changes in these clearances must be immediately communicated to the Director of Nursing (i.e. recent changes to criminal and FBI clearances and health-related issues).

A student will not be permitted to participate in the clinical component of the nursing courses until the completed examination forms and immunization records are submitted to SentryMD and reviewed.

A student may be asked to withdraw from the Nursing Program if there is evidence to suggest that the health of the student or the safety of the patients/clients in the clinical area may be threatened by the continuation of the student in the program. Falsification or omission of information required for the student's health record is also a condition for requesting the withdrawal of a student from the Nursing Program. Students will also be referred to the Dean of Students and the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT).

Students who develop any health issues during the semester must abide by hospital/clinical policy.

To return to clinical due to illness or hospitalization, the health provider must submit documentation directly to the Director of Nursing that the student's health problem has been or is currently being treated, and that the student can return to clinical practice.

If there is any change to the student's criminal background clearances, the student must notify the DoN within two weeks of the offense.

V. STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY

The student is responsible for his/her own health insurance coverage, healthcare, and all health bills incurred. The student is to give health insurance coverage information to the DoN prior to entering the junior and senior years. This is a requirement of the affiliating agencies. See Student Health Insurance Requirements for Student Health Insurance Plan if interested at <https://www.stmarytx.edu/policies/student-development/student-health-insurance-requirements/>.

Most clinical agencies will provide emergency medical care to students, and the expenses of that care are the responsibility of the student.

W. STUDENT RECORDS POLICY

The Office of the Registrar maintains education records for all currently enrolled and former students. Student education records are governed by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended.

The following information for each nursing student is maintained in SharePoint, a secure, password protected software program:

1. Student evaluations related to theoretical and clinical experiences.
2. A summary of student/advisor conferences.
3. Copy of official communications sent to and received by student.
4. Student information form and program of studies form.
5. Health Requirement results will be kept in SentryMD

Following graduation, the student's files are retained for three years by the DoN.

Content of the student's record is confidential. The Director of Nursing has access to the SharePoint student records. Others within the Nursing Department/University or credentialing bodies may be permitted access to student records on a need-to-know basis. The student can access his/her records under the University's policy as stated in the current Student Catalog.

X. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE GUIDELINES

Student level representation provides a means for students to participate in the evaluation of the Nursing Program. The faculty welcomes open dialogue with students to enhance the quality of the educational program.

Procedure:

1. At the beginning of the fall semester, one student representative and one alternate in good academic standing will be elected. Additionally, one student representative for the Curriculum Committee will be elected.
2. Student representatives will be notified at least one (1) week prior to a scheduled meeting. Student representatives may present items in writing for inclusion on the agenda to the Chairperson of the Nursing Department, or any faculty member of St. Mary's University DoN one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting.
3. Student reports/concerns will be the first order of business at the respective meetings.
4. Student comments should be a reflection of the program/level as a whole. Concerns relating to an individual student should be discussed with the instructor.
5. Student representatives are responsible to report the outcomes of the meetings to fellow students.

Y. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Travel to and from all assigned clinical facilities and field trips, and other expenses, such as lodging, as incurred are the responsibility of the student.

Therefore, students should be prepared for this expense. It is expected that students will abide by parking regulations at each of the institutions and agencies where clinical experiences are planned. Although on occasions it may be possible to share transportation with other students, this cannot be guaranteed.

VI. TEXAS STATE BOARD OF NURSING

1. Requirements For RN-Licensure

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program is approved by the Texas State Board of Nursing.

In order to become a Registered Nurse (RN), the Texas Board of Nursing and the National Council of State Board of Nursing (NCSBN) require that educational requirements be met. When students graduate from the Nursing Program, they will be eligible to take the NCLEX-RN® at a local Pearson Vue testing center. Students will be given details about this process prior to graduation.

The NCLEX-RN® is the national examination for state registered nurse licensure. The National Council for State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) is responsible for all nurse-licensing examinations. For more information on the NCLEX-RN® and student tools, [NCLEX & Other Exams | NCSBN](#)

The NCLEX-RN® is given only in a computerized adaptive testing (CAT) format. It is designed to test knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level. The length of the computerized exam is determined by the student's response to the items.

Note: The Nursing Jurisprudence Examination (NJE) and Pearson Vue (PV)* registration MUST be completed BEFORE you can receive your Authorization to Test (ATT) and in turn your GN/GVN permit (if applicable).

For complete step-by-step details of NCLEX® registration, please go to [Licensure - Examination Information](#) and follow the Online Procedure Steps.

Multi-State Licensure Compact

The State of Texas, through the Texas Board of Nursing (BON), requires all registered nurses be state licensed. Texas participates in the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) so RNs licensed in Texas may hold one multistate license, with privilege to practice in TX and other eNLC states physically, electronically, and/or telephonically. Check the BON website for current states participating in the Compact ([Texas Board of Nursing - Nurse Licensure Compact Information](#))

A map guide to state-by-state nursing licensure can be found at www.nursinglicensemap.com.

Practice - Guidelines and Interpretive Guidelines

Rules and Guidelines Governing the Graduate Vocational and Registered Nurse Candidates or Newly Licensed Vocational or Registered Nurse
www.bon.texas.gov/practice_guidelines.asp

Appendix A

St. Mary's University Nursing Program Progression Plan

| FIRST YEAR | | | |
|---|-----------|--|-----------|
| Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits |
| ^TH 1301 Theology (God) | 3 | ^*CH 1305 Chemistry for Health Professions | 3 |
| *BL 1411 Human Anatomy and Physiology I | 4 | *BL 1412 Human Anatomy and Physiology II | 4 |
| ^*MT 1304 Math for Nurses | 3 | ^EN 23XX Literature | 3 |
| ^EN 1311/1313 Freshman Comp I | 3 | ^HS 13XX History | 3 |
| ^FYE 1301 First Year Experience | 3 | ^Fine Arts (MU, DM, or AR) | 3 |
| Total | 16 | Total | 16 |
| SECOND YEAR | | | |
| Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits |
| ^Foreign Language I | 3 | ^Foreign Language II | 3 |
| ^PS 2355 Development | 3 | ^PL 1301 Philosophy (self) | 3 |
| *BL 2420 Microbiology for Health Professions | 4 | NU 2601 Fundamentals of Care 4 didactic; 2 (6) simulation/skills lab/clinical | 6 |
| BL 2311 Food and Nutrition | 3 | NU 3202 Healthcare Informatics and Technology | 2 |
| NU 2301 Pathophysiology Nursing Practice | 3 | NU 2303 Holistic Health Assessment 2 didactic; 1 (3) simulation/skills lab | 3 |
| Total | 16 | Total | 17 |
| THIRD YEAR | | | |
| Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits |
| NU 3401 Psychosocial and Mental Health 2 didactic, 2 (6) simulation/clinical | 4 | NU 3601 Adult Health 3 didactic, 3 (9) simulation/clinical | 6 |
| NU 3302 Older Adult Health 2 didactic, 1 (3) simulation/clinical (2nd 8 weeks) | 3 | ^PS 3381 Introductory Statistics | 3 |
| NU 2302 Pharmacology for Nursing Practice | 3 | NU 3201 Healthcare Systems, Policy and Economics (1 st 8 weeks) | 2 |
| NU 3301 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Across the Lifespan (30 hours Community-based Service Learning) | 3 | ^TH 33XX Theology | 3 |
| ^PL 2301 Philosophy (ethics) | 3 | | |
| Total | 16 | Total | 14 |
| FOURTH YEAR | | | |
| Fall | Credits | Spring | Credits |
| NU 4402 Childrearing Families 2 didactic 2 (6) simulation/clinical (2 nd 8 weeks) | 4 | NU 4302 Leader and Manager of Care | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| NU 4401 Childbearing Families 2 didactic; 2 (6) simulation/clinical (1 st 8 weeks) | 4 | NU 4601 Advanced Adult Health 3 didactic, 3 (9) simulation/clinical (1 st 8 weeks) | 6 |
| NU 4301 Research Methods and Utilization (30 hours Community-based Service Learning) | 3 | NU 4404 Clinical Immersion 4 (12) clinical (2 nd 8 weeks) | 4 |
| NU 4403 Community and Global Health 2 didactic, 2 (6) simulation/clinical | 4 | | |
| Total | 15 | Total | 13 |
| Total Credits to Degree 123 | | | |

[^]St. Mary's Core Curriculum; *Prerequisite Courses for Nursing Core Curriculum

Appendix B

Admission Rubric

St. Mary's University Nursing Program Admission Rubric

| Criteria | Points Awarded |
|--|----------------|
| GPA One point will be awarded for good standing in college with at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA. Extra points will be awarded for any GPA as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.0+ = 2 points• 3.5-3.99 = 1.5 points• 3.0-3.49 = 1 point• 2.5-2.99 = 0.5 points | |

BL 1411 Anatomy and Physiology 1 (or equivalent)

One point will be awarded for meeting the minimum requirement of at least a grade of "C" in BL 1411 Anatomy and Physiology I. Extra points will be awarded for any grade above C as follows:

- A = 2 Points
- A- = 1.75 points
- B+ = 1.5 points
- B = 1.25 points
- B- = 1 point
- C+ = 0.75 point

MT 1304 Algebra with Clinical Applications (or equivalent)

One point will be awarded for meeting the minimum requirement of at least a grade of "C" in MT 1304 Algebra with Clinical Applications. Extra points will be awarded for any grade above C as follows:

- A = 2 points
- A- = 1.75 points
- B+ = 1.5 points
- B = 1.25 points
- B- = 1 points
- C+ = 0.75 points

ATI TEAS

One point will be awarded for meeting the minimum requirement of a comprehensive score of at least 58.7% on the ATI TEAS exam. Extra points will be awarded in each of the categories as follows:

- Reading score at or above 79.5% = 1 point
- Math score at or above 88.2% = 1 point
- Science score at or above 65.9% = 1 point

Previous healthcare provider coursework

Quarter point (0.25) will be awarded for an official transcript showing completion of up to three (0.25 points per course) healthcare professional coursework with at least a grade of C or better. Total points 0.75

One point for awarded for healthcare professional certification. Will need to upload certificate to application.

Previous community or high school service

One point will be awarded for documented consistent, sustained community or high school service of at least one year

- Letter of Recommendation **on letterhead required** and will be used to verify

Previous healthcare/service industry related employment

One point will be awarded for employment verification of work in a health-related organization or in service-related employment.

- Letter of Recommendation **on letterhead required** and will be used to verify

Qualifying minimum score = 4 points

Maximum score = 16.75 points

Interview Questions for the top 40 ranked students:

1) What are 2 characteristics you possess that will help you as a healthcare professional? Please explain.

2) Describe a difficult situation you overcame and what strategies did you use to do this?

3) Choose a Marianist characteristic you feel aligns with providing nursing care and explain how? Please see [Mission and Vision | St. Mary's University | San Antonio, Texas](#)
You will have the opportunity to ask us questions.

Appendix C

Test Item Challenge Policy

Test Item Challenge Policy

The Nursing Program upholds fairness, academic integrity, and the use of evidence-based resources in all examinations. Nursing students are permitted to challenge exam test items under the following guidelines:

1. Eligibility to Challenge

- A test item challenge may only be submitted **after the course faculty have completed the exam item analysis** and communicated results to students.
- Only test items included in the student's completed examination are eligible for review.

2. Procedure

- Students must complete the official **Test Item Challenge Form** (see below).
- Each challenge must include:
 - The test item number in question.
 - The student's rationale for challenging the item.
 - **Supporting evidence** cited from program-adopted resources (e.g., required textbooks, Lippincott, faculty lecture materials, or other designated references). External resources not adopted by the program will not be accepted.

3. Timeframe

- Test item challenges must be submitted **within three (3) business days** after the exam review session or release of exam scores, whichever comes first.
- Challenges submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

4. Faculty Review and Decision

- The course faculty will review all submitted challenges collectively, in consultation with the exam item analysis.
- Faculty decisions regarding challenged items will be final and applied consistently to the entire class if an item is revised or credited.

5. Professional Expectations

- All test item challenges must be submitted in a professional manner that reflects respect, integrity, and academic responsibility.
- Verbal or informal challenges outside of the official process will not be considered.

St. Mary's Nursing Program

Test Item Challenge Form

Instructions: This form must be used to submit a formal test item challenge. Challenges may only be submitted after the faculty have completed the exam item analysis. Each challenge must include the specific item number, a clear rationale, and supporting evidence from program-adopted resources. External resources will not be accepted. This form must be submitted within three (3) business days after the exam review session or release of the item analysis.

Student Information

Name: _____

Course: _____

Exam: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Test Item Challenge Details

Test Item Number Rationale for Challenge

Supporting Evidence (At least 2
Program-Adopted Resources)

Faculty Review and Decision

Reviewed by Faculty: _____

Decision: _____

Comments: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Peer-to-Peer Basic Health Assessment Practice

Policy: Peer-to-Peer Basic Health Assessment Practice

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the practice of basic health assessment skills within the undergraduate nursing curriculum. Engaging in peer-to-peer practice allows students to experience the patient perspective, promotes empathy, and enhances real-world learning in a controlled and respectful environment.

Policy Statement:

Students enrolled in the undergraduate nursing program are expected to participate in peer-to-peer practice of basic health assessment skills as part of their clinical skills training. These activities will only be conducted in a supervised classroom or lab setting and will adhere to the following principles:

1. Clothing Requirement:

- All assessments will be performed **while fully clothed**.
- Students should wear appropriate attire that allows for palpation and assessment (e.g., short sleeves, loose-fitting clothing).

2. Scope of Practice:

- Assessments will include non-invasive techniques such as inspection, palpation over clothing, auscultation, and vital sign measurement.
- No invasive or sensitive assessments (e.g., breast, genital, or rectal exams) will be performed during peer practice.

3. Educational Value:

- Peer-to-peer practice provides students with a unique opportunity to:
 - Understand the patient experience and develop empathy.
 - Apply classroom knowledge in a realistic and interactive setting.
 - Receive immediate feedback on technique and communication skills.

4. Student Concerns and Accommodations:

- While participation is strongly encouraged, the program recognizes that some students may have personal, cultural, or medical concerns.
- Students with concerns should **notify faculty privately prior to the scheduled lab session**.
- Faculty will work with the student to provide alternative learning strategies as needed (e.g., use of mannequins or simulation).

5. Professionalism and Respect:

- All students are expected to maintain the highest level of professionalism, respect, and confidentiality during peer assessments.
- Any inappropriate behavior or discomfort should be reported immediately to faculty.

Compliance:

Participation in peer-to-peer assessment is a component of the program's experiential learning objectives. Students who are unable to participate and do not seek accommodations may risk not meeting course requirements.

Undergraduate Nursing Program – Informed Consent for Peer-to-Peer Health Assessment Practice

Purpose:

The purpose of this consent form is to acknowledge your understanding of the policy regarding participation in peer-to-peer practice of basic health assessment skills in the undergraduate nursing program. These activities are designed to enhance your clinical competence, empathy, and communication skills in preparation for real-world patient care.

Description of Activities:

- You will practice **basic health assessment skills** (e.g., vital signs, inspection, palpation over clothing, auscultation) with your classmates in a supervised lab setting.
- All assessments will be performed **while fully clothed** and **will not include invasive or sensitive areas** (e.g., breast, genital, or rectal exams).

Educational Rationale:

Participating in peer practice provides the following benefits:

- Increases empathy by allowing you to experience the patient's perspective.
- Improves your ability to communicate effectively with patients.
- Offers realistic, hands-on experience in a safe and controlled environment.

Voluntary Participation and Accommodations:

- While participation is strongly encouraged, you have the right to express concerns for personal, cultural, or medical reasons.
- If you have concerns, **you must discuss them with faculty prior to the scheduled lab session.**
- Faculty will provide reasonable alternatives (e.g., use of mannequins or simulation) as appropriate.

Professional Expectations:

- You agree to maintain **professionalism, respect, and confidentiality** during all peer practice activities.
- Any discomfort or inappropriate behavior should be reported immediately to faculty.

Consent Statement:

I have read and understand the policy on peer-to-peer health assessment practice. I acknowledge the educational purpose of these activities and agree to participate as outlined. I understand that I may request alternative arrangements if I have concerns, and I agree to communicate those concerns to faculty in advance.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____