

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
HARRIS COLLEGE OF NURSING &  
HEALTH SCIENCES

**GRADUATE NURSING**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**



**Harris College**  
of Nursing & Health Sciences

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Nursing

Revised May 2022

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## WELCOME

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Welcome to Texas Christian University (TCU) and the Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences (HCNHS) Graduate Nursing Program. During the next several semesters you will learn the art and science of professional nursing, gaining career skills designed to carry you well into the 21st century. *The TCU Nursing Graduate Student Handbook* contains the policies and procedures that apply to nursing students at TCU. The Handbook also introduces the standards of professional nursing. In order for TCU Nursing to provide the best educational preparation for you, all of us—faculty, staff, and students—are accountable for the information contained in this handbook.

We value your choice to become a student in our program, recognizing the privilege and responsibility you have granted us. Welcome to TCU Nursing.

## TCU NURSING PROGRAMS

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### TCU NURSING

#### VISION

To be a leader in nursing education, practice, and scholarship

#### MISSION

To equip individuals to deliver evidence-based care, advance nursing scholarship, and lead practice innovation.

#### CORE VALUES

**Altruism:** Concern for the welfare and well-being of others, a commitment to caring and compassion.

- In professional practice, altruism is reflected by the nurse's concern for the welfare of patients, family members, other nurses, members of the healthcare team, and populations.

**Autonomy:** Professionalism, lifelong learning, personal wellness, and responsibility, while upholding the right to self-determination.

- In professional practice, autonomy is demonstrated when the nurse respects patients' rights to make decisions about their health care. In addition, autonomy is demonstrated when the nurse exercises independent and interdependent decision-making in accordance with the scope and standards of nursing practice.

**Civility:** "An authentic respect for others that requires time, presence, willingness to engage in genuine discourse, and intention to seek common ground that governs both speech and behavior towards others" (Clark, 2016)

- In professional practice, civility is promoted through a culture where others (peers/patients/caregivers) feel validated and valued. Civility must be present for professionalism to occur.

**Human Dignity:** Respect for the inherent worth and uniqueness of individuals and populations, exercising civility in all circumstances, promoting wellness and holism, confidentiality and privacy.

- In professional practice, human dignity is reflected when the nurse values and respects all patients, family members, colleagues, and populations.

**Innovation:** Commitment to creativity, ingenuity, and curiosity in practice and scholarship, teaching/learning, and improved performance and outcomes.

- In professional practice, innovation is evident when the nurse utilizes updated knowledge to develop a new or novel approach which enhances health and education.

**Integrity:** Commitment to accountability, transparency, stewardship, citizenship, honesty, and veracity, in accordance with an appropriate code of ethics and accepted standards of practice.

- In professional practice, integrity is demonstrated when the nurse is honest and provides care based on an ethical framework that is accepted within the profession.

**Social Justice:** Dedication to upholding moral, legal, and humanistic principles.

- In professional practice, social justice is evident when the nurse advocates assuring equal treatment under the law and equal access to quality health care for all.

**Teamwork:** Respect for the value of interprofessional collaboration, effective communication, academic-practice partnerships, and community engagement.

- In professional practice, teamwork is reflected when the nurse promotes change agency and transformation among patients, community members, and members of the healthcare team.

Approved NFA 04-26-2018

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

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### **MSN Program Outcomes (revised 2018)**

Upon completion of the master's nursing program, the graduate will:

1. Demonstrate values and behaviors that support the vision, mission, and core values of TCU and TCU Nursing.
2. Initiate innovative nursing practices across healthcare systems in a global society.
3. Employ leadership and management principles to promote optimal outcomes.
4. Analyze technologies to support safe practice environments and to optimize patient safety, cost-effectiveness, and health outcomes.
5. Analyze how policies influence the structure and financing of healthcare, practice, and health outcomes.
6. Employ ethical principles to decision-making in healthcare practices and systems.
7. Utilize credible scientific evidence to evaluate approaches in nursing practice and healthcare delivery.

### **DNP Program Outcomes (revised 01/25/22)**

Upon completions of the doctor of nursing practice program, the graduate will:

1. Translate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to improve health care systems.
2. Use systems thinking, technologies, and innovation to implement and evaluate health care delivery and outcomes.
3. Analyze policies that address financing, resource management, health outcomes, and equity in health care.
4. Collaborate across professions and communities in leading team-based, person-centered care.
5. Develop a professional identity that fosters career-long learning, well-being, and resilience.

**Accreditation**

The TCU Nursing Program, enabled by a trust fund established by the late Dr. Charles Houston Harris, was organized as an academic unit of TCU in 1946. The College achieved national accreditation in 1952 and has remained fully approved by the Board of Nursing for the State of Texas, P.O. Box 430, Austin, TX 78767-0430, 512-305-7400. The baccalaureate degree in nursing program, the master’ degree in nursing program, the Doctor of Nursing Practice program and the Post-Graduate APRN certificate program at Texas Christian University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), 655 K Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, <http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>. TCU has maintained full accreditation and recognition for over 20 years.

**MSN and DNP Program and Post -Graduate Certificate Licensure Disclosure Policy**

Disclosure Requirements for Academic Programs Leading to Professional Licensure

**Licensure Requirements:** Each state and territory has different licensure and certification requirements. For states where Texas Christian University (TCU) has presently enrolled students, and for states where prospective students have inquired, TCU has contacted state licensing authorities to confirm that the program meets the educational requirements leading to professional licensure. Other licensure requirements may include professional certification exams, background checks, years of work experience, fingerprinting, or other items as determined by each state. Licensure information is reviewed and updated on this site in **May** of each year. As of May 1, 2022, we have determined that the **TCU’s MSN, DNP, and Post-Graduate Certificate** Program curriculum:

Meets the requirements in these states and US Territories	Does NOT meet the requirement in these states and US Territories	We have not made a determination if the program curriculum meets the requirements in these states and US Territories
Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, US. Virgin Islands	Connecticut	American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands

\*Connecticut requires an additional pharmacology course for advanced nursing practice

If you would like additional information about whether a particular program meets the educational requirements for professional licensure in another state, please contact the program director at [graduatenursing@tcu.edu](mailto:graduatenursing@tcu.edu).

**If you intend to practice in any state other than Texas**, you should contact the appropriate licensing agency to independently verify whether TCU's online program satisfies the educational requirements for licensure in a particular state **before beginning TCU's program**. Be aware that state licensure requirements **may change** from time-to-time and that states may have conditions for licensure in addition to educational requirements. The following site contains links to state licensing boards in nursing <https://www.ncsbn.org/contact-bon.htm>.

**If you relocate during the course of the program to another state**, it may impact whether you can continue in the program and meet eligibility requirements, and/or receive financial aid funding. **If you are considering relocating, you MUST contact the graduate program office at [graduatenursing@tcu.edu](mailto:graduatenursing@tcu.edu).**

### **State Authorization Information**

Information about distance learning and state authorization reciprocity agreements (SARA) for your graduate nursing program can be found at [cte.tcu.edu/distance-learning/resources-for-distance-learning-students](http://cte.tcu.edu/distance-learning/resources-for-distance-learning-students). **Please refer to the clinical placement policies on page 26 for more information about clinical placements.**

A map of where TCU is authorized to offer distance education activities, including enrolling out-of-state students and allowing current TCU students to complete experiential learning placements is available <https://cte.tcu.edu/distance-learning/state-authorization-map/>

### **TCU DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

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TCU is committed to providing a positive learning, living, and working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and retaliation. In support of this commitment, in its policy on Prohibited Discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation, TCU has a range of prohibited behaviors, including unlawful discrimination and harassment and related sexual and other misconduct based on age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, predisposing genetic information, covered veteran status, and any other basis protected by law. The **Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)** is responsible for responding to all reports of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation.

Please use the following links to review [TCU Policy 1.008 Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Retaliation](#) or to review [TCU Policy 1.009 Responding to Reports of Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation](#).

To make a report, you may call OIE at 817-257-8228, email [oe@tcu.edu](mailto:oe@tcu.edu), visit us at The Harrison, Suite 1800 or click here: [Make a Report](#).

[To learn about the Campus Community Response Team \(CCRT\) and Report a Bias Incident click here:https://inclusion.tcu.edu/campus-community-response-](#)

[team/](#)

## **STUDENT ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION**

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Texas Christian University affords students with disabilities reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. To be eligible for disability-related academic accommodations, students are required to register with the TCU Office of Student Access and Accommodation and have their requested accommodations evaluated. Students are required to provide instructors an official TCU notification of accommodation approved through Student Access and Accommodation. More information on how to apply for accommodations can be found at <https://www.tcu.edu/access-accommodation/> or by calling Student Access and Accommodation at (817) 257-6567. Accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR TCU NURSING STUDENTS**

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Texas Christian University Harris College of Nursing provides the following description of technical standards to inform incoming and enrolled students of the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to successfully complete the requirements of the nursing curriculum and provide effective and safe health care. To enter, remain, and progress in the nursing program, the student must meet these technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations and maintain related satisfactory demonstration of these standards. Please note that examples of the technical standards and abilities listed below are not inclusive.

After sufficient education, the student will be expected to perform the following technical standards:

### Acquire Information:

- Acquire information from demonstrations and experiences in nursing courses such as lecture, group work, and physical demonstrations.
- Acquire information from written documents and computer systems (e.g., literature searches and data retrieval).
- Identify information presented in images from paper, slides, videos, and transparencies.
- Recognize and assess patient changes in mood, activity, cognition, verbal, and non-verbal communication.

### Use and Interpret:

- Use and interpret information from assessment techniques/maneuvers such as those involved in assessing respiratory and cardiac function, blood pressure, blood glucose, neurological status, etc.
- Use and interpret information related to physiologic phenomena generated from diagnostic tools (i.e. sphygmomanometer, otoscope, stethoscope) during a comprehensive examination of a client or patient.

### Motor:

- Possess psychomotor skills necessary to provide holistic nursing care and perform or assist with procedures, treatments, and medication administration.



- Practice in a safe manner and appropriately provide care in emergencies requiring life support procedures and perform standard precautions.

Communication:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and families from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.
- Communicate effectively with faculty, preceptors, and all members of the healthcare team during practicum and other learning experiences.
- Accurately elicit information including a medical history and other information needed to adequately and effectively evaluate a client of patient's condition.
- Document effectively and accurately.

Intellectual Ability:

- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data related to the diagnosis and treatment of patients.
- Exercise proper judgment and complete responsibilities in a timely and accurate manner according to the advanced generalist nursing role.
- Synthesize information, problem solve, and think critically to determine the most appropriate intervention or assessment strategy.
- Ask for help when needed and make proper judgments of when a nursing task can or cannot be carried out alone.

Behavioral:

- Maintain mature, sensitive, effective relationships with clients/patients, families, students, faculty, staff, preceptors and other professionals under all circumstances.
- Exercise skills of diplomacy to advocate for patients in need.
- Possess emotional stability to function under stress and adapt to changing environments inherent to the classroom and practice settings.

Character:

- Demonstrate necessary personal qualities of concern for others, integrity, accountability, interest, and motivation.
- Demonstrate intent and desire to follow the ANA Standards of Care and Nursing Code of Ethics.

Used with permission by Rush University College of Nursing. Adapted from AACN White Paper on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Nursing Educational Programs for the California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD).

## **CHANGE IN HEALTH STATUS**

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Students who experience a change in their health status that may affect their ability to function safely or meet course objectives in the practicum and/or classroom setting must notify their assigned faculty. The University may require documentation from the student's health care provider indicating the student's functional abilities and/or limitations. Examples include but are not limited to: change in medication, use of assistive devices, or temporary utilization of braces or cast.

## **STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY**

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The faculty and academic advisers are available to help students understand and meet academic requirements for a degree, but the students themselves are responsible for understanding and fulfilling the requirements. The degree cannot be awarded until all requirements as defined by the *TCU Academic Graduate Catalog* are met. It is essential that each student become familiar with all requirements and remains informed throughout the program.

## **MID-SEMESTER GRADES**

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After mid-semester grades are received, the faculty will identify students with unsatisfactory progress in any course. Students will be sent an academic and/or clinical warning letter from the Registrar. It is the student's responsibility to seek the assistance necessary to successfully complete the course in question.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS**

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Mere absence or lack of participation from a class does not constitute withdrawal. In order to withdraw from a course, a student must go through official established procedure by going to My.TCU.edu. Official withdrawal dates are found on the current [TCU Academic Calendar](#).

## **REPEATED CLASS WITHDRAWAL**

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A student may withdraw from the same class a maximum of one time. The second time the student enrolls in the class they will not be permitted to withdraw from the class. Students with extenuating circumstances may petition the Director, Nursing Graduate Studies for permission to withdraw.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE AFTER THE LAST DATE TO DROP (Q grade)**

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If a student experiences an extenuating circumstance such as severe illness or death in the family which impacts the ability to complete coursework, students may be eligible for a grade of "Q". The grade of "Q" indicates that the course was dropped by permission of the dean after the drop date set by the university. The student should meet with the Director, Undergraduate Nursing to discuss the request. Students will be referred to the Dean of Students office who will obtain documentation and make a recommendation as to the awarding of the Q grade. If approved, the Associate Dean for Nursing and Nurse Anesthesia will notify the Registrar's Office of such action.

*Note:*

- 1. Performing poorly in a class is not considered to be a justifiable reason to drop a class after the deadline and request or receive a Q.*
- 2. The Q grade is given to all courses in which the student is enrolled for that semester—not to selected courses.*
- 3. A Q grade is not awarded retroactively after grades are posted.*

## GRADUATE NURSING ENROLLMENT AND PROGRESSION POLICIES

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The University policies for enrollment, progression, probation, and suspension can be found in the [TCU Graduate Studies Catalog](#). The Nursing policies are found in the HCNHS section of the Catalog.

### **Progression Policy**

Graduate students are expected to meet the academic standards required by the university and found in the TCU Graduate Bulletin. Graduate students must achieve a semester and cumulative GPA of at least 3.00, indicating the minimum acceptable letter grade of B. Regardless of overall GPA, any student receiving a C grade in any course will be placed on academic probation for the next semester. By the end of the probationary semester, the student must meet both semester and cumulative minimum GPA. Students on academic probation are not eligible for registration in independent study courses. A grade below C is considered a failure. Any student receiving two C grades during the program may be dismissed from the program. A student who is placed on academic probation for one semester will be dismissed if the semester or cumulative GPA falls below a 3.00 in any subsequent semester.

A student may receive grade of F or be administratively withdrawn from a course for lack of academic progress in the course, for unprofessional or unsafe conduct, or for receiving disciplinary action from the Board of Nursing. The student may further be dismissed, suspended, or expelled from the University. Recommendation for such action originates with the faculty of record for the course and requires approval of the Associate Dean for Nursing.

### **Program Interruptions for Life Events Policy**

Unexpected life events occasionally result in the need for graduate nursing students to drop from full time status to part time status or to miss a semester or semesters. Life events can be:

1. Individual – examples include: personal illness or injury; job loss or change; and pregnancy.
2. Family-related – examples include: illness, injury, or death of a family member; marriage; separation/divorce; issues with children; and unexpected relocation.
3. Environmental – examples include: natural disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes, fire, and flooding.

The graduate student experiencing such an event will contact the Program Director and Director, Nursing Graduate Studies. Together, the student and director will draft an altered plan of study. If the student requires a semester or semesters off, the student and program director will mutually agree on the date of the student's return to the program.

If the student follows the mutually agreed upon plan or renegotiates for an alternate plan, the student will be considered a continuing student in the program. If the student does not follow the plan, the student may be dropped from the program and will have to reapply for readmission.

### **Residency Requirement**

Online students do not have to meet the residency requirement required for on-campus students.

### **Transfer Credit Policy**

Graduate credit earned from another accredited college or university may be considered for transfer to the nursing graduate program, if courses have been taken within the past five years. Written request for transfer credit with two copies of official academic transcripts reflecting the requested credit should be made at the time of application for admission. Such credit must be applicable to the student's program as determined by the Director, Nursing Graduate Studies, carry at least a "B" grade, and be coursework taken through an accredited school of nursing. Six semester hours of transfer credit usually is all that will be accepted.

### **Intent to Graduate**

At the beginning of the semester in which the student plans to graduate, he/she must complete and return an *Intent to Graduate* form. This form will be sent to the student from the TCU Nursing Graduate office. In the event that graduation cannot be completed, a cancellation form must be filed with the Dean. An *Intent to Graduate* form <https://harriscollege.tcu.edu/resources/graduate/intent-to-graduate-graduate-students/> must be refiled in case of postponement. A non-refundable graduation fee, which includes all graduation costs, is charged when the Intent to Graduate form is filed.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF GRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN DIDACTIC AND PRACTICA COURSES**

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### **Attendance in Online Classes**

Students are required and expected to attend all online classes. If you are unable to do so, you must notify the faculty. Students are expected to participate in online class discussion. Each student will be accountable for all assigned objectives. The student will be held accountable for all content taught in previous courses. The APA format will be used for all written material in all classes.

Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Conduct Policy of the University <http://catalog.tcu.edu>.

### **Attendance in Clinical Practice**

As part of the clinical experience students have the opportunity to work in several clinical settings with qualified clinical preceptors. As professional nurses, students are expected to keep confidential all information entrusted to them by clients, peers, and colleagues in a practicum setting. The student who demonstrates unprofessional behavior can be administratively removed from or will fail the practicum course. Students are expected to be on time to practicum and to be prompt for any appointments made. Students are expected to conform to the standards of nursing practice as stated in the Texas Statutes Regulating the Practice of Professional Nursing, or the nursing practice act of the state where they live and practice. Each student must review basic information regarding use of standard precautions and sign the *Student Clinical Form* requiring mandatory implementation.

Clinical preparation may require reading, researching, or written assignments prior to arrival at practicum. Clinical attendance is mandatory. Students who experience emergencies, such as a death in the family, personal or family illness, jury duty, hazardous weather conditions, or other situations beyond the student's control should notify course faculty and clinical preceptor as soon as possible. Frequent unexcused absences from clinical will be considered unprofessional behavior and may result in removal or failure of the practicum course.

### **Status of RN Licensure**

All graduate nursing students must have an unencumbered license as designated by their licensing Board of Nursing (BON) to participate in graduate clinical nursing courses. If the student's license is under investigation or becomes encumbered by the BON at any time while enrolled in an MSN or DNP Program, it is imperative that the Director of Graduate Nursing is informed immediately. Students who fail to report the above may be subject to dismissal. Information about encumbered licenses can be found at the Texas BON for Texas RNs or the student's state licensing board.

### **University Emergencies and Closures**

Email communication will be sent to the student's TCU-provided email account. Messages sent to the students via email are considered an official form of university communication. Most university offices will use TCU email exclusively to communicate with students. In the event of an emergency, the University will notify students through TCU Alert. This service sends emergency messages to campus members via texts to cell phones, campus-wide emails and messages to home phones.

TCU also will utilize the media, in addition to TCU Alert, to inform the community about campus closures and delays. In the event of an emergency, updated TCU also will utilize the media, in addition to TCU Alert, to inform the community about campus closures and delays. In the event of an emergency, updated information can be found on the TCU Home page ([www.tcu.edu](http://www.tcu.edu)) and on the recorded information line at (817) 257-INFO or (866) 321-7428.

To receive these emergency text messages, students must add their cell phone number in the "Student Center" in their my.TCU portal.

When the University is closed for holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving break, Christmas break) or inclement weather, students cannot be in the student role. Please refer to the TCU Academic Calendar for dates.

### **Examinations**

Examinations are listed on the tentative class schedule. Students will take each examination at the time scheduled. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the student must contact the faculty prior to period the examination is being taken. Arrangements to make up the examination will be made at that time. A student who fails to comply with the above will not be permitted to take the examination, and the grade will be recorded as zero.

### **Exam Policy for TCU Graduate Nursing**

#### Policy Statement:

All exams in TCU Graduate Nursing will be administered and proctored electronically when it is appropriate for the type of testing or evaluation being used.

Purpose:

The use of electronically proctored testing provides a secure testing environment and is consistent with best practices for online teaching.

Procedure:

- Online graduate nursing courses require the use of LockDown Browser and a webcam for online exams. The webcam can be built into your computer or can be the type that plugs in with a USB cable.
- Students may download and install LockDown Browser from this link:  
<http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=957434800>
- To take an online test, start LockDown Browser, log into **TCU Online**, and select this course. Then navigate to the exam. (Students are not able to access the exam with a standard web browser.) For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
- When taking an online exam, graduate nursing students will follow these guidelines:
  - Ensure you are in a location where you will not be interrupted.
  - Turn off all and put away all mobile devices and phones.
  - Clear your desk of all external materials — books, papers, other computers, or devices.
  - Remain at your desk or workstation for the duration of the test.
  - LockDown Browser will prevent access to other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted.
  - Any baseball caps must be turned backwards or taken off.
  - All smart watches must be removed and placed out of sight.
- Faculty will build exams online and post exams for graduate nursing student(s).
- Faculty may have additional requirements during the exam. These will be shared with students and defined in the syllabus. Additional requirements may include but are not limited to:
  - Faculty will not answer questions about test items during the exam.
  - Students must use the calculators provided on the computer.
- Immediately after the exam: When posting the exams, each faculty member will determine what the student will see upon completion. This may include:
  - Viewing raw or percentage score at the end of the exam.
  - Review missed exam items immediately after the exam.
  - No raw score or percentage score at the end of the exam.
  - No review of missed exam items immediately after the exam.
- Reviewing the exam: Each faculty member will explain in their syllabus how exams will be reviewed and when grades will be posted after the exam.

Approved by Graduate Faculty on 11/11/19

**Technology Policy**

Please review <https://tcuonline.tcu.edu/kb/platform-requirements/>

## Assignments

Students are responsible for preparing for each assignment. All assignments are due on the date specified on the class schedule. If an extension needs to be made for an assignment due to extenuating circumstances, the faculty of the course must be notified in advance of the due date to make an appropriate decision on the request. Any assignment turned in late may lose points as noted on the evaluation form of the particular assignment.

## Policy on Grading Scale

The faculty of the Graduate School of Nursing endorses the following grading scale and recommends that faculty in this School use the following scale in determining course grades.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
F	69 or below

## Chain of Communication for Courses

If you have any questions or concerns about your experiences in this course, the first step is to communicate these questions or concerns directly with the person(s) involved. Your instructor is your primary contact for any questions or concerns that arise with this course. The chain of communication for this course is:

- Your instructor; if the situation is unresolved, consult with
- The Director, Graduate Nursing Studies; if the situation is unresolved, consult with
- The Associate Dean for Nursing and Nurse Anesthesia.

## Procedures for Grade Appeal

See [TCU Official Student Handbook](#).

## On Campus Intensives (OCIs) for Advanced Practice Tracks

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRNs) students will be required to participate in clinical training and skills assessment during OCIs at scheduled times throughout the program of study. OCIs are mandatory and will require travel to the TCU campus. Dates and times will be provided in advance for planning and travel purposes. Videotaping and audio recording may occur to enhance and support learning. A release form will be signed prior to OCIs. The schedule and number of OCIs is based upon the student's track. Please contact the track coordinator for questions about track specific OCIs.

## **DNP Project Information & General Guidelines**

The DNP Project is intended to engage the doctoral student in translating evidence into practice by impacting nursing practice through a substantive scholarly work. The DNP project is similar in concept to a doctoral thesis but is rooted in the practice focus and is not considered a research project. DNP Projects should not be referred to as nursing research. Students should enter the DNP Program with a project idea that can be explored during the DNP coursework. Students should select a project that is both in an area of interest and an area of expanding expertise with the goal of impacting patients, populations, communities or institutional, local, state, federal, or global health policies. The project should result in a positive change in the health care system and/or improved outcomes for a targeted population. The DNP Project serves as a springboard for future scholarly work and impact on the nursing profession. DNP student growth occurs through the knowledge and expertise gained through the process of creation, innovation, development, planning, implementation, and resulting impact of the DNP Project experience. The DNP Project should illustrate a synthesis of knowledge gained throughout the DNP Program from all coursework and practicum experiences. See DNP Project Handbook for further details.

### **General Guidelines and Expectations for the DNP Project**

- The project is to be translational focused, not research generation.
- Projects may not formally begin until IRB approval as appropriate is obtained.
- Implementation of the project is desired if feasible. However, if not appropriate, a detailed implementation plan and evaluation plan is expected which identifies outcomes, data to be collected, and evaluation methodologies.
- Students are expected to share project outcomes via poster presentation, presentations at conferences, and/or via publication.

### **Medication Administration**

As registered nurses, students are able to administer medications under their license during the clinical practicum courses. Students are responsible for safely administering medications and for following the rules and regulations of the BNE and the clinical practicum facility.

### **Email, Electronic Communications, and Social Networks**

See [TCU Official Student Handbook](#).

### **Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences Social Media Policy**

Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences (HCNHS) acknowledges that social networking sites are a popular means of communication. Students who choose to use these websites must be aware that posting certain information may expose the student to criminal and civil liability. Further, offenders may be subject to probation, suspension, and possible dismissal from HCNHS.

The following actions are prohibited by the HCNHS and considered a violation of the TCU Code of Student Conduct.

1. You may not disclose the personal health information of other individuals. Removal of an individual's name does not alone constitute proper de-identification of protected health or personal identifying information. Inclusion of data such as age, gender, race,



diagnosis, date of evaluation, or type of treatment or intervention provided may still allow the reader to recognize the identity of a specific individual.

2. You may not report private (protected) academic information of another student.
3. You may not present yourself as an official representative or spokesperson for HCNHS or TCU.
4. You may not represent yourself as another person, real or fictitious, or otherwise attempt to obscure your identity as a means to circumvent any prohibitions listed in the TCU Student Handbook (undergraduate or graduate, as appropriate).

Other violations of the HCNHS policy pertaining to the use of social media would include but are not limited to:

1. Knowingly distributing false evidence, statements, or charges against another student or faculty/staff member.
2. Using electronic channels of communication to disseminate inappropriate or uncivil comments regarding peers, faculty or staff.
3. Verbal, written or electronic insults to, or verbal attacks on, TCU, HCNHS, clinical facilities, faculty, staff, or students.
4. Threats or acts of physical violence against TCU, HCNHS, clinical facilities, faculty, staff, or students.
5. Harassment, in any form, of TCU, HCNHS, clinical facilities, faculty, staff, or students.
6. Violating the confidentiality of a faculty committee by an elected student representative serving on that committee.

Approved by Harris College Administrative Council on 11/19/18

### **Professional Attire (Graduate)**

Students are to be professionally attired at all times when representing themselves as TCU-Graduate Nursing students.

In any clinical setting, students are expected to comply with the following:

- Wear a TCU Nursing graduate student nametag at all times.
- Lab coats will be site specific. If lab coats are required, they must be white with permanently affixed TCU nursing identification.
- The lab coat may be fingertip length or knee length and well maintained.
- Professional clothing, such as skirt or slacks with a shirt or blouse or dresses should be worn to clinical and under lab coat.
- Scrubs are not acceptable unless required by the facility.
- Do not wear jeans, shorts, hats, tee shirts, flip flops, or sandals.
- No revealing clothing i.e. bare midriff or back, visible undergarments or cleavage.
- Due to OSHA requirements, closed toed shoes must be worn in the clinical setting.
- Hair must be naturally occurring color in humans, neatly pulled back, secured and should not rest over/below the shoulder or risk interfering with provision of patient care. If worn, hair bands should be solid color, unembellished, and less than 2 inches in width.
- Facial hair must be neatly trimmed and ½ inch or less in length.
- Refrain from wearing perfume or strong scents.
- No dangling jewelry or earrings are permitted.
- No visible piercing except one stud per ear.

- Fingernails should be clean and trimmed no longer than the fingertip. No nail jewelry or artificial nails are permitted.
- Tobacco or e-cigarette use while in clinical is unacceptable.

### **Professional Behavior**

The TCU Nursing nursing student is expected to display professional behaviors that are conducive to the practice of professional nursing at all times. Professionalism is a concept that embraces conduct, attitudes, values, and standards relating to the practice of a professional. Professionalism in nursing can be witnessed in individual and collaborative practice and organizational participation. The nursing students are expected to incorporate into their behavior the TCU Student Code of Conduct and the policies and regulations as established by the following regulatory bodies:

1. American Nurses' Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses
2. [Nurse Practice Act](#)—Texas Statutes Regulating the Practice of Nursing
3. American Hospital Association Bill of Rights

### **Professional Conduct Statement**

The faculty of TCU Nursing expects professional nursing students to conform to the standards of nursing practice as stated in the Texas Statutes Regulating the Practice of Professional Nursing (available on BON website <https://www.bon.texas.gov>). The term unprofessional conduct is described as any act, practice or omission that fails to conform to the accepted standards of the nursing profession. Unprofessional conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Failing to assess and evaluate a patient's/client's status or failing to institute nursing intervention which might be required to stabilize a patient's/client's condition or prevent complications.
2. Knowingly or consistently failing to accurately or intelligibly report or document a patient's/client's symptoms, responses, progress, medications, and/or treatments.
3. Knowingly or consistently failing to make entries, destroying entries, and/or making false entries in records pertaining to the giving of narcotics, drugs, or nursing care.
4. Appropriating medications, supplies, equipment, or personal items of the patient/client or employer.
5. Failing to administer medications and/or treatments in a responsible manner.
6. Performing or attempting to perform nursing techniques and/or procedures in which the nursing student is unprepared, unsafe, and/or without appropriate supervision.
7. Violating the confidentiality of information or knowledge concerning the patient/client except where required by law.
8. To cause, suffer, permit, or allow physical or emotional injury to the patient/client or failing to report same in accordance with the incident reporting procedure in effect where the nurse is employed or working.
9. Leaving a nursing assignment without notifying appropriate personnel.
10. Failing to report to the Board or the appropriate authority in the organization in which the nurse is working, within a reasonable time of the occurrence, any violation or attempted violation of the Texas Nurse Practice Act or duly promulgated rules, regulations, or orders.
11. Expressly delegating nursing care functions or responsibilities to a person who lacks the ability or knowledge to perform the function or responsibility in question.

It is the responsibility of the graduate nursing student to maintain an unencumbered license while enrolled in TCU Graduate Nursing Programs. If at any time your license has actions filed against it while enrolled in the program, you must immediately report this to the TCU Graduate Nursing Office.

Failure to meet these standards will result in a failing grade and may lead to dismissal from the program.

### **Unsafe Nursing Practice**

Definition: Unsafe nursing practice is defined to include, but is not limited to, the following behaviors of a nursing student:

- Allowing own value system to interfere with client care/well-being.
- Demonstrating lack of acceptable or safe nursing judgment in performing nursing interventions.
- Engaging in activities for which the nursing student is not academically prepared or which exceed the nursing student's own limitations.
- Engaging in activities that do not fall within the realm of standardized nursing practice and endangers patients.
- Recording and/or reporting client-care data and/or nursing interventions inaccurately or fraudulently, or failing to record and/or report data.
- Appropriating medications, supplies, equipment, or personal items of the patient/client or employer.
- Endangering the welfare of the client. Examples of behaviors:
  1. Reporting to practicum under the influence of alcohol.
  2. Reporting to practicum under the influence of drugs or other substances that hamper proper functioning in their responsibilities.
  3. Reporting to practicum when physically or mentally unsafe to assume care whether due to sleep deprivation, infectious disease, extreme stress, or any other condition.
  4. Failing to administer medications and/or treatments in a responsible manner, which includes having adequate knowledge of the drug.
  5. Violating the confidentiality of information or knowledge concerning the patient/client except where required by law.
  6. Leaving a nursing assignment without notifying appropriate personnel.
  7. Failing to provide a safe environment.
  8. Failing to comply with institutional policies and procedures in implementing nursing care.

### **Code of Ethics for Nurses**

1. The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and strives to protect the health, safety, and rights of the patient.

4. The nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and determines the appropriate delegation of tasks consistent with the nurse's obligation to provide optimum patient care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to preserve integrity and safety, to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse participates in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of quality health care and consistent with the values of the profession through individual and collective action.
7. The nurse participates in the advancement of the profession through contributions to practice, education, administration, and knowledge development.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public in promoting community, national, and international efforts to meet health needs.
9. The profession of nursing, as represented by associations and their members, is responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy.

© American Nurses Association

### **Sigma Theta Tau International**

The Beta Alpha chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International welcomes graduate student members. Graduate students are welcome to participate in chapter activities. Beta Alpha typically hosts three activities each academic semester. To stay up-to-date on chapter activities, like the "Sigma Theta Tau Beta Alpha" Facebook page, and routinely check the chapter website at <https://thecircle.sigmanursing.org/betaalphachapter/home>. The chapter typically holds formal induction ceremonies each fall semester. Membership dues are an estimated \$100/year. Information about two pathways to Sigma membership is as follows:

If you have never been inducted into STTI, you may be a candidate for induction as a graduate student (Master's and Doctorate). Candidates must:

- \*Have completed ¼ of the nursing curriculum,
- \*Achieve academic excellence (equates to a 3.5 GPA out of 4.0 *or higher*)
- \*Meet the expectations of academic integrity

If you were inducted into STTI as an undergraduate student, you may transfer your membership to the Beta Alpha chapter at TCU. Even if you haven't been active in STTI recently, you are always a member. Call Member Services at 888-634-7575 and ask to update your membership and transfer to the Beta Alpha chapter at TCU.

### **Student Fees**

In addition to tuition, graduate nursing students will have distance learning fees and clinical practicum fees.

### **Required Health Insurance**

Graduate nursing students must have health insurance regardless of the semester hours carried.

## IMMUNIZATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

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TCU Graduate Nursing has partnered with [CastleBranch](#), one of the top background check and compliance management companies in the nation to provide a secure account to manage your time sensitive school and clinical requirements. After you complete the order process and create your account, you can log in to your account to monitor your order status, view your results, respond to alerts, and complete your requirements.

You will return to your account by logging into <http://tcu.castlebranch.com> and entering your username (email used during order placement) and your secure password. You must complete the compliance tracker after admission to the program. If annual renewals are necessary, for example, CPR certification or TB screening, you will be notified by CastleBranch.

The 2013 Regional Standards for Drug Screening and Background Checks requires that drug screens and background checks be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of the first clinical rotation. This will be ordered in CastleBranch. **DO NOT ORDER** background checks or drug screening until instructed by the TCU Graduate Nursing Office.

**All copies** of documentation of immunization status, **AHA Healthcare Provider CPR** certification, and current RN license as required in our contracts with clinical agencies must be uploaded in the CastleBranch Compliance tracker.

IMMUNIZATIONS	REQUIREMENTS
Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap)	Booster within 10 years
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	All practicum students must document evidence of immunity to MMR. This requirement must be met by <b>either</b> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Persons born after January 1, 1957, must have <b>two (2)</b> doses since 12 months of age. The two (2) doses must be at least 30 days apart.</li> <li>or</li> <li>2. Positive MMR titer lab result.</li> </ol>
Hepatitis B	All practicum students must document evidence of immunity to Hepatitis B. This requirement must be met by <b>either</b> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Documentation of completed vaccine series.</li> <li>or</li> <li>2. Positive Hepatitis B titer lab results.</li> </ol>
Varicella (chickenpox)	All practicum students must document evidence of immunity to varicella (chickenpox). This requirement must be met by <b>either</b> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Documentation of varicella vaccine series. Immunization for adolescents and adults is a series of two doses.</li> <li>or</li> <li>2. Positive varicella titer lab results.</li> </ol>

Seasonal Flu (TBA each fall semester)  (Jan. 1 for spring semester)	Must have documentation of annual seasonal flu vaccine which includes the following information: (a) person receiving vaccine, (b) date of vaccine administration, (c) vaccine manufacturer and lot number, (d) name and title of vaccine administrator, (e) address of clinic/office where vaccine was received.
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**PLEASE NOTE:** COVID-19 vaccination documentation is being collected in Castlebranch. Most of the clinical agencies require proof of vaccination before students begin clinical practicum experiences. If a student chooses not to receive the COVID- 19 vaccine, they must inform the Director, Graduate Nursing Studies.

In addition, students must provide documentation in the compliance tracker of:

DOCUMENTATION NEEDED	REQUIREMENTS
CPR healthcare provider certification	Current certification of: American Heart Association: BLS for Healthcare Provider
ACLS or PALS Certification	Requirement dependent on program of study
Health Insurance	Current health insurance card or proof of coverage
TB Skin Test or chest x-ray (annual renewal)	Negative TST (TB skin test) results or negative QFT (serum) Negative chest x-ray
RN License	Unencumbered RN license
Driver's License	Current
Student Driver Form	Renewal will be set for one of the following 08/01
TCU student ID	Current TCU student ID
Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Form	Renewal will be set for one of the following 01/01, 5/01, 8/01
Academic Misconduct Form	Required
Credentialing Release Form	Required
Student Clinical Form	Your signature confirms that you have completed the required reading of the TCU Nursing Graduate Student Handbook. Your signature indicates you are aware of and agree to adhere to and consistently implement the nursing policies and procedures and that you are responsible for all the information found in the TCU Nursing Graduate Student Handbook. Including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional Conduct Statement</li> <li>2. Unsafe Nursing Practice</li> <li>3. Policies and Procedures Related to HIPPA</li> <li>4. Use of Standard Precautions</li> <li>5. Student Confidentiality Agreement</li> </ol>

- CPR certification must include a hands-on demonstration of skills
- CPR and TB skin test must not expire during the semester.

**Students who are not in compliance with the above policy will be administratively removed from all practicum courses.** Students will not be able to re-enroll in the practicum courses until the above requirements have been met.

The ***TCU Preceptor Agreement***, is required and located within the clinical course shell in TCU Online. **This form must be signed every semester.**

In addition to the Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Form, the COVID-19 Addendum-Off Campus Activity 2021-2022 must be completed and signed prior to participation in the clinical practicum course. This form will be collected by clinical course faculty.

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**TCU Harris School of Nursing Student Policies:  
HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)**

**Policies: Access, Use, and Protection of Health Information obtained during the course  
of Clinical Education**

1. All students must review and sign the Student Clinical Form attesting understanding of TCU nursing policies and procedures, which includes a *Harris School of Nursing Confidentiality Statement*, prior to accessing patient files in any agency used for clinical education.
2. All student documents related to patient assignments (journals, care plans, papers, assignment sheets, etc.) must be protected to assure privacy of the patient(s) information by de-identifying the health information. Your course faculty will tell you the de-identification method to be used.
3. Students should maintain the de-identification of health information when communicating with faculty, one another, or any other entity through any means including electronic means.
4. Any documents submitted to faculty should contain no protected health information (PHI) or the information should be de-identified. For example: course papers, care plans, interview information, etc.
5. If protected health information is re-identified for any reason, it is deemed to be protected health information and is subject to the applicable privacy protections. The student is responsible for maintaining the security of the re-identified information.
6. Per the TCU-Clinical Agency Identity Verification Policy, only students wearing the approved TCU identification badge will be granted access to patient information by the clinical agency.
7. Student ID's are to be worn in a visible location on the uniform, street clothing, or scrubs when representing self as a TCU student nurse. The ID is not to be worn at any other time, such as during a work shift in a hospital setting.
8. There should be no disclosure of PHI of patients by TCU Nursing students. A student should consult the course faculty if a student has a question about PHI related to disclosures required by law, disclosures for public health activities, disclosures about victims of abuse, neglect or

domestic violence; law enforcement purposes, disclosures about decedents, disclosures for cadaver organ, eye, tissue donation, disclosures to avert a serious threat to health or safety, disclosures for specialized government functions, disclosures for workers' compensation.

9. If documents containing PHI are in use by students (for example, in the hospital unit, computer lab, etc.) the document(s) must be shielded so others may not see the information. If the person using the documents leaves the room, the documents must not be left on top of the desk for others to see. Locking the documents in a secure file is recommended.

10. If faxing, copying or printing documents containing PHI it is the user's responsibility to assure protection of the PHI.

11. Documents containing PHI should only be shredded by the person authorized to have the PHI.

### **Policy: HIPAA Regulations and HCNHS Research and/or Professional Projects**

1. Any student research or professional projects should maintain the protection of health information collected during the duration of the project by including no identifying patient information on project instruments. If a code is used to re-identify the participant information, the codebook must be maintained in a locked, secured file. If an informed consent document is signed, the documents should be maintained in a locked, secured file apart from any patient/subject information. Informed consent documents should be submitted to the TCU Nursing Administrative Office at the end of the project. The documents will be stored according to TCU Safeguards in Human Research guidelines.

2. In the event protected health information collected during a research project was disclosed, the student and the student's committee chairperson should report the disclosure to the TCU Nursing Privacy Official. The Privacy Official will determine if a disclosure of PHI was made for 50 or more individuals involved in a research project. If so, an accounting of the disclosure should include the following: a) name of research activity b) a description of the project in plain language including the purpose for the research and selection of criteria for the records c) a description of the type of PHI disclosed d) the date or period of time of the disclosure e) name, address and phone number of the sponsor of the research f) the name of the researcher to whom the PHI was disclosed g) a statement that the PHI of the individual may or may not have been disclosed during the research activity.

If there were fewer than 50 individuals involved in the research, the Privacy Official must provide an accounting for every disclosure of PHI for each individual whose PHI was disclosed.

In addition, if an individual involved in a research study of 50 or more individuals requests an accounting for the disclosure of PHI pertaining to the individual, the Privacy Official must make a reasonable attempt to satisfy this request.

### **HIPAA Privacy Official**

1. The Associate Dean of Nursing and Nurse Anesthesia, is the Privacy Official, but may delegate duties to others if so desired. The appointment is continuous and will transfer when and if a new Associate Dean is named.



2. The duties of the Privacy official include: a) Maintaining program compliance with HIPAA regulations b) developing TCU Nursing policies and procedures related to HIPAA regulations c) maintaining documentation of complaints and sanctions d) overseeing HIPAA training program.
3. The chain of communication under the Associate Dean of Nursing and Nurse Anesthesia described for classroom and clinical courses is the same previously described. The student and faculty will discuss the privacy breach followed by notification of the Course Coordinator, Director, Undergraduate Nursing and the Associate Dean of Nursing and Nurse Anesthesia.

**Policy: Required Training Regarding HIPAA Regulations and Policies for All TCU Nursing Students**

1. All TCU Nursing students enrolled in practicum courses for the first time will complete a training program regarding HIPAA regulations and policies during the first week of the academic semester. Each will be asked to sign a form indicating understanding of the TCU Nursing policies and procedures related to HIPAA and the *Harris School of Nursing Confidentiality Statement*.
2. If a breach in confidentiality occurs, the student will complete a retraining program as soon as possible following the incident.
3. All students will complete retraining within 1 month following a significant change in privacy practices.

**Policy: Sanctions for Violating HCNHS Policies and Procedures related to HIPAA**

1. A complaint regarding a breach in patient privacy may be brought to the Privacy Official with the assurance that no retaliatory measures will be taken against the person bringing the complaint.
2. The Privacy Official will document the complaints received and their disposition and maintain the document in a locked, secured file.
3. Students who violate the protection of health information are subject to sanctions, which may include, but are not limited to: unit or course grade reduction; failure of course; suspension from program.

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**TCU Nursing Student Confidentiality Agreement**

Patient confidentiality at the facilities used by TCU Nursing is of primary importance. In addition to each facility policy, a federal law called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires patient health information to be kept confidential. Additionally, patients and their families have a right to deal with their issues in a private and secure manner, trusting that their privacy will be maintained. In order to protect this right to confidentiality and to comply with federal and state laws, students must agree to hold all information (including, but not limited to, patient names, their health information, and relevant agency information) gained through their clinical assignments or professional/research projects at any facility used by TCU Nursing in strictest confidence. Confidentiality includes, but is not limited to, not discussing patients or their health conditions with persons who do not have a need to know and not removing any documents with individually identifiable patient data from the facility.

I also understand the terms of this Student Confidentiality Agreement, and I agree to abide by the above confidentiality requirements. I further understand that any breach of a patient's confidentiality may result in disciplinary action against me as described in the TCU Nursing student handbook.

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### **Use of Standard Precautions & Policy for Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure**

1. All students are expected to have reviewed "Use of Universal Precautions" on the [Centers for Disease Control website](#), and be familiar with the precautions.
  2. Any exposure to blood borne pathogens during practicum should be reported immediately to the faculty and the person in charge on the unit, and the individual(s) must follow that institution's policy regarding blood borne pathogen exposure.
  3. If post-exposure procedures are not available to the involved individual, the student should go immediately to the nearest Concentra clinic on a walk-in basis. Locations are on their website at [www.concentra.com](http://www.concentra.com)
  4. Student **must immediately notify** the faculty of any exposure no matter how small it might be.
  5. Incident reports are to be completed by the faculty member and student(s) involved. The report should be delivered in person or via email to the nursing office within 24 hours of the incident.
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### **Policy for Required Drug Screening and Criminal Background Check Regional Standards:**

Drug screening and criminal background checks are required by the facilities which are the sites for the clinical learning experience of graduate nursing students of TCU Nursing. The 2013 Regional Standards for Drug Screening and Background Checks requires that drug screens and background checks be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of the first clinical rotation. Before a nursing student can be placed in clinical experience, the student must have certain acceptable results on both a drug screen and a criminal background check.

TCU Nursing (Graduate Studies) has partnered with CastleBranch for Drug Testing and Criminal Background Checks. TCU Nursing will notify students 30 days prior to the start of clinical to place an order in CastleBranch for a Criminal Background Check and Drug Testing. TCU Nursing will not accept drug test and criminal background check results from any company other than CastleBranch. TCU Nursing will only accept results ordered through CastleBranch for drug tests and criminal background checks provided for under this policy. For example, TCU Nursing will not accept a drug test/criminal background check which a student has independently obtained from the company outside the procedure provided in this policy.

CastleBranch is independent and separate from both TCU and TCU Nursing. It is not and shall not be considered a partner, joint venturer, employee, or agent of TCU or TCU Nursing. TCU shall not be considered a partner, joint venture, employee, or agent of the company.

#### Drug Screening per Regional Standards

A. *TCU Nursing Students Required Drug Screening /Timing of Drug Screening:*

TCU Nursing students enrolled in clinical coursework for the first time or a student who has had a break in enrollment in clinical courses are required to complete drug screening at a time designated by TCU Nursing prior to the first clinical day in the facility. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment for one full semester or more in clinical coursework. Refer to TCU's Student Handbook on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policies and Penalties.

#### *B. Drug Screen Procedure/Requirements*

TCU Nursing graduate students will be informed by the Graduate office 30 days prior to the start of the first clinical rotation to order their drug screen through Castlebranch. Each student required to undergo the drug test shall cooperate in all aspects the urine drug test and to complete the drug test within the time specified by TCU Nursing. Each student is required to sign any and all consents/releases, in the form(s) designated by TCU Nursing, including consent to the drug test and permission for the results of the drug test to be provided to TCU and TCU Nursing. It is a violation of this policy for a student to adulterate or attempt to adulterate a specimen, to engage in any deceptive behavior during or in connection with the testing process, or take any other action which would falsify test results or tend to make test results inaccurate.

As part of the drug testing procedure, the student may be contacted by the Medical Review Officer ["MRO"] affiliated with the testing company. The student should cooperate with and accurately respond to inquiries of the Medical Review Officer. A positive drug screen for a student is defined under this policy to be one reported as such by the testing company selected by TCU Nursing. Generally, under the Community Standards, this refers to the testing company indicating the student tested on both the company's initial test and GC/MS confirm test as outside the acceptable range set by the testing company, and with the MRO not determining the test result should be a negative. A negative test for a student is defined under this policy as a test result which is not a positive test result.

#### *C. Reporting of Drug Screen Results to TCU Nursing*

CastleBranch will communicate the drug test results to the Director, Nursing Graduate Studies. It is the policy of TCU and TCU Nursing to maintain the confidentiality of these drug test results to the extent required by law.

#### *D. Consequences*

When a positive drug screen occurs, the following will occur:

- The student will be immediately suspended for a minimum of one year (12 continuous months from the date of the beginning of the suspension) from the nursing program; and
- the positive drug screen will be shared by TCU Nursing with the TCU Dean of Students Office for further action, including but not limited to referral for a drug abuse education program, referral to counseling, and/or referral to a drug treatment program, under TCU's institutional policies; and
- the graduate student's positive results will be reported to the Board of Nursing in the state where he/she live; and
- other appropriate action, if any.

Any TCU Nursing student with a positive drug screen is encouraged to seek treatment. TCU Nursing encourages impaired graduate students to seek assistance voluntarily through their Boards of Nursing and assume responsibility for their personal and professional conduct.

A student who has on one occasion had a positive drug screen under this policy, and who desires to reapply to TCU's Graduate Nursing program, may reapply only for a school semester beginning after the period of suspension (one year minimum). The student will, in addition to meeting all other requirements for similarly situated applicants, be required to provide documentation of successful treatment and the student will be required to consent to and undergo a retest, at a time and through a testing company selected by TCU Nursing, with this retest resulting in a negative drug screen. This re-testing is at the student's expense. The decision on whether to re-admit the student is not guaranteed, and will be made on a case-by case basis.

#### *E. Suspicion Testing Under the Regional Standards*

Additionally, the Regional Standards provide that a student assigned to a facility for a clinical experience, and who is suspected by the facility or faculty of substance use or abuse, will be asked to consent to a drug test, plus other consequences. In this situation, the student is required to sign the consent and complete an immediate drug test as provided by the Regional Standards.

Criminal Background Check per Regional Standards:

#### *A. TCU Nursing Students required Criminal Background Check/Timing of criminal background check:*

TCU Nursing students enrolled in clinical coursework for the first time or a student who has had a break in enrollment in clinical courses are required to complete the criminal background check at the time designated by TCU Nursing prior to the first clinical day in the facility. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment for one full semester or more in clinical coursework.

#### *B. Criminal Background Check Procedure/Requirements:*

Each student who will be the subject of the criminal background check is required to cooperate with the company conducting the check so that it can be completed at the time required by TCU Nursing prior to the student contacting patients or employees at the facility. Each student is required to provide the screening company accurate identifying information requested so that the company can carry out the screen upon the student. Each student is required to sign any and all consents/releases, in the form(s) designated by TCU Nursing, including consent to the criminal background check and permission for it to be provided by the company to TCU and TCU Nursing. It is intended that the background check include all cities and counties of known residence for the seven-year period prior to the check.

Under this policy, the term "failing" the criminal background check is defined as the screening company reporting to TCU Nursing that the student had any of the following, during the seven year period prior to the check:

- A felony conviction.
- A misdemeanor conviction or felony deferred adjudication involving a crime against a person (physical or sexual abuse).
- A misdemeanor conviction related to moral turpitude (prostitution, public lewdness/exposure, etc.).
- A felony deferred adjudication for the sale, possession, distribution, or transfer of narcotics or controlled substances.
- Registration as a sex offender.

*C. Reporting of Criminal Background Check to TCU Nursing:*

The company conducting the criminal background check will communicate the criminal background check results to the Director, Graduate Nursing. It is the policy of TCU and TCU Nursing to maintain the confidentiality of these criminal background check results to the extent required by law.

*D. Consequences:*

When a student fails the criminal background check, the following will occur:

1. The student will be immediately suspended from the nursing program until the earlier of the following: (a) the company conducting the check reports to TCU Nursing (perhaps through clarifying information provided by the student to the company) that the student no longer fails the check, or (b) the student obtains from the Texas Board of Nursing of the state where he/she lives a Declaratory Order or similar decision stating the individual is eligible for initial licensure or licensure renewal.
2. The student will be notified of a description of the adverse action taken, the name of the company which prepared the report, a statement that the company did not make the decision to take the adverse action, that the student has a right to obtain a free copy of the company's report from the company, and to contest its contents.
3. The results will be shared by TCU Nursing with the TCU Dean of Students Office for further action under TCU's institutional policies.
4. The Board of Nursing in the state where the graduate student is licensed will be notified of the result.
5. Other appropriate action, if any.

A student who is convicted of or receives deferred adjudication for any of the criminal offenses referred to in Section B above while enrolled in the program must report the conviction to the Division Director, Graduate Nursing, within three days of the conviction, and the student will be referred to the TCU Dean of Students Office and suspended from the nursing program until the student obtains from the Board of Nursing in the state where he/she lives a Declaratory Order or similar decision stating the individual is eligible for initial licensure or licensure renewal.

TCU's Institutional Policies/Policies of Other Departments or Programs

TCU has separate and additional Institutional policies which may provide additional requirements, disciplinary action, and/or consequences applicable to events and occurrences covered by the TCU Nursing policy.

In addition, some other programs or departments at TCU have, or in the future may have, drug test and/or criminal background check policies or procedures. These other policies and procedures, and their terms, conditions, requirements, disciplinary action and/or consequences are in addition to those in this TCU Nursing policy.

See the [TCU Code of Student Conduct](#), which provides additional information about on-campus services associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Refer to the [TCU Code of Student Conduct](#) on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policies and Penalties.

## **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF CLINICAL PRECEPTORS FOR STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

### **Overview and Definitions**

Clinical preceptors are crucial to graduate nursing education providing supervision and mentorship, but also offering a rich variety of practice experience to students. As such, HCNHS values these individuals and supports their inclusion in student achievement. Students' progress will be monitored by faculty visits and conferences. Clinical preceptors are secured through partnership with students, faculty, or alumni. Course faculty review and approve all clinical placements for the ability to meet course objectives. This process is completed prior to the start of the semester.

**Clinical preceptor.** A professional who works with a student to enhance student learning experiences, provides assistance to faculty in the supervision of students, and has expertise in the basic area of nursing, or related field, for the course or specific learning experience. For advanced practice registered nurses, this includes recognition and licensure in the state where the graduate clinical experience is conducted.

**Agency.** A facility or organization focused on health care delivery (direct and indirect) including community based and acute care institutions.

### **Agency Selection and Responsibilities**

Clinical preceptors are used when a current "*Agency Affiliation Agreement*" exists between TCU Nursing Program and the agency where the student experience is planned. The faculty member assigned to the course is responsible for communicating with the Clinical Placement Coordinator to ensure that the Agency Affiliation Agreement is current. The agreements are maintained by and located in the Harris College Nursing and Health Sciences (HCNHS) Administrative Offices.

Graduate experiences are arranged by the faculty of record in collaboration with the graduate student. TCU Nursing graduate students, including those who live outside of Texas, may be required to attend a clinical site in a state other than their resident state and/or to travel a significant distance within their resident state or another, depending on the availability of suitable sites. TCU Nursing graduate students should also be aware that in very rare instances, in order to finish the clinical requirements of a degree, students may be required to relocate to Texas to finish their clinical course rotations.

### **Preceptor Selection and Responsibilities**

The faculty member assigned to the respective course is responsible for final approval of clinical preceptors and submitting to TCU Nursing a completed "*Clinical Preceptor Agreement*". Graduate students are expected to assist in this recruitment, especially in distant sites. Due to regulatory requirements or availability of preceptors, TCU cannot accommodate clinical placements in all areas of the country.

Criteria for the selection of clinical preceptors should include the following:

1. Current Licensure as a registered nurse; or if not a registered nurse, a current license in Texas (or other state for graduate experiences) as a health care professional with a minimum of a master's degree in that field.

2. For advanced practice registered nurses this includes verifying recognition and licensure in the state where the graduate clinical experience is conducted, educational background, and certification.
3. Substantial experience in nursing, or their field, in the area in which the student experience is planned. It is preferred that the preceptor have a minimum of two (2) years' experience.
4. A philosophy of health care delivery and nursing that is congruent with TCU Nursing.

### **Preceptor Responsibilities**

The preceptor is responsible for:

1. Participating in a preceptor orientation provided by course faculty.
2. Functioning as a mentor in the clinical setting.
3. Orienting the student to the facility.
4. Guiding and supervising the student in achieving clinical objectives; this includes supervision of student performance of skills & other nursing activities to facilitate safe practice.
5. Providing feedback about student performance and the preceptor experience to faculty & student.
6. Complete and submit student performance evaluations, both midterm and final.
7. Contacting faculty if assistance is needed or if any problems/issues with student performance occur.
8. Providing a current biographical profile for the nursing program.

### **Faculty Responsibilities**

The faculty member is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that current and complete "*Clinical Preceptor Agreements*" are obtained prior to the student experience.
2. Orienting both the student and preceptor to the preceptored experience.
  - a) Preceptor: Provide the preceptor with an orientation to the course objectives, and student background and previous learning and skills; student guidelines for performance of procedures; student limitations in performance, i.e. taking verbal orders, blood product administration.
  - b) Student: Document that student is in compliance with standards on immunizations, AHA CPR, knowledge of OSHA standards, and has appropriate liability coverage.
3. Working cooperatively with the preceptor and agency to determine student learning needs and assignments.
4. Communicating regularly with the preceptor and the student in order to facilitate, monitor, and evaluate the learning experience.
5. Monitoring student progress through review of student clinical assignments, clinical site visits, and faculty/ preceptor conferences in person, by telephone, or online.
6. Being readily available by telephone for ongoing consultation when student(s) are in the clinical area.
7. Soliciting feedback from the preceptor regarding student performance on a regular and ongoing basis.

### **Process for Preceptor Evaluation**

Upon completion of the preceptored experience, the student and the assigned faculty member will each complete a Preceptor Evaluation Form and an Evaluation of Clinical Agency, which will

be submitted by the faculty to the Nursing Office for filing or an electronic copy will be retained in the clinical tracking system. Evaluations will be retained for four years.

### ***Supervision of Graduate Students***

The purpose of graduate student supervision is to promote, encourage, and facilitate practice learning in a safe environment. Recognizing that online methods may create distance between faculty and students, frequent faculty, preceptor and student communication becomes imperative and integral. The following guidelines describe appropriate clinical supervision:

- Graduate students have experience as Registered Nurses. Their clinical experiences are designed to teach them advanced concepts appropriate for the advanced practice role.
- Faculty, students, and preceptors engage in an open, participative relationship to facilitate learning. Clear expectations about learning and supervisory roles are communicated at the beginning and throughout each course. Policy and agency parameters are clearly identified. Course grade is assigned by the faculty with significant input from the preceptor and the student.
- The normal progression of student development results in increasing independence. This is measured by the level of student participation in clinical encounters. Faculty and preceptors actively guide students toward achieving competencies required for APRN practice.

### **Criteria for Selection of Clinical Facilities for Graduate Students**

In evaluating potential new clinical facilities for graduate students, the following criteria will be considered:

- Environment that promotes safety for patients, staff, students, and faculty.
- Adequate opportunities for students to attain program goals and course objectives through practicum and/or observational experiences.
- Receptivity of facility personnel to student experiences.
- Availability of client population appropriate for meeting of course objectives.
- Environment that contributes to a positive learning experience.
- Safety risks are communicated to students prior to beginning practicum or observational activities via the TCU Informed Consent & Assumption of Risk form.

### **Additional Criteria for Selection of Clinical Facilities for Graduate Students**

Personnel-Student Interaction:

- Opportunities are available for the student to interact as a member of the interdisciplinary health care team using advanced practice nursing knowledge and skills.
- Preceptor(s) are available and have agreed to help students find appropriate advanced practice nursing learning opportunities.
- Clinical facility personnel are open and receptive to students.
- Opportunities are available for students and clinical facility personnel to critique one another.

Preceptors and other mentors:

- Base practice on current knowledge, theory and research.
- Assess and manage physical and psychological symptoms.
- Advocate for patients within the health care delivery system.
- Incorporate nursing standards and accountability into practice.



### Environmental Support for Learning

- The philosophy of the agency is congruent with the philosophy of TCU Nursing.
- Students are appropriately oriented to the facility.
- A place for students' personal belongings is available.
- Students have access to conference or seminar rooms.
- Students have access to necessary equipment and supplies, as well as patient and institutional data.
- There is an adequate client population to meet the course objectives.
- The clinical environment promotes a positive learning experience.

### Overall Evaluation

- Opportunities exist for students to meet learning objectives.
- Students recommend continued use of the facility.

### **Guidelines for Management of Incidents and Medications Errors**

- Any incident that creates a potential for injury or harm to any individual (patient, staff, student, faculty, etc.) must be immediately reported by phone to the Course Faculty and Program Director.
- An incident report must be completed and submitted to the Nursing Office within 24 hours.
- Agencies and specific courses may require more stringent guidelines.

### **Formal Complaints**

Nursing defines a formal complaint as any issue presented in writing that invokes the University Appeals or Grievance Policies and Procedures. Nursing students are advised to follow TCU policies and procedures when filing a formal complaint.

**THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND UPLOADED TO CASTLEBRANCH COMPLIANCE TRACKER**

**STUDENT CLINICAL FORM**

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*Texas Christian University  
Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences*

Name, please print \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

I have completed the required reading of the Graduate Student Handbook. I understand that if I have questions, I should ask my course faculty for clarification of information. My signature indicates I am aware of and agree to adhere to and consistently implement the nursing policies and procedures and that I am responsible for all the information found in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Please initial each individual item and then sign and date the signature form.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Professional Conduct Statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Unsafe Nursing Practice
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Policies and Procedures Related to HIPPA
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Use of Standard Precautions
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Student Confidentiality Agreement

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Student Signature

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Student Initials

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Date