

Code of Conduct - School of Nursing

Expectations for Professionalism

The School of Nursing expects all students, faculty, and staff to conduct themselves in a professional manner. All individuals are expected to represent the school; the preprofessional, professional, and graduate programs; and the profession in a positive, professional manner.

Violation of the School Code of Professional Conduct or of any of the professions' codes of ethics is considered professional misconduct.

Academic misconduct, while also considered a form of professional misconduct, may be adjudicated as outlined in the Northeastern University Code of Student Conduct (updated annually). Additionally, academic misconduct may be reviewed under the terms of this SCPC.

1. Scope of Policy

The SCPC applies to all students enrolled in any of the School of Nursing's academic programs, including participants in courses, research, programs, events, and activities affiliated with, sponsored by, or sanctioned by the School of Nursing. In addition, the SCPC is applicable to all student nonacademic and extracurricular activities (regardless of whether such activities take place on or off campus) that have had or have the potential to have an adverse impact on Northeastern University, the Bouvé College of Health Sciences, the School of Nursing, faculty, staff, students, or patients and staff at affiliated experiential education sites, or may affect a student's fitness for continued enrollment in the School of Nursing or entry into professional practice in nursing.

Reports and actions related to the SCPC should be directed immediately to relevant faculty and the School of Nursing's assistant dean of undergraduate programs and/or assistant dean of graduate programs. Specific questions requiring interpretations of the meaning of any provision of the SCPC will be provided by the assistant deans and/or dean of the School of Nursing as needed.

Students in the School of Nursing are also required to comply with terms of the Northeastern University Code of Student Conduct as well as the following:

- The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing Good Moral Character licensure requirement (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/good-moral-character-requirements-for-nursing-licensure/>)
- The ANA Code of Ethics (http://nursingworld.org/ethics/code/protected_nwcoe813.htm)

2. Professional Misconduct

The following is an illustrative, nonexhaustive list of some common examples of professional misconduct and does not represent all potential infractions:

- Violation of expected terms of conduct described in course policies or syllabi or as otherwise articulated in writing by the instructor.
- Actions or behaviors that violate school, professional, research, or ethics codes of conduct (e.g., professional ANA Code of Ethics or BORN Good Moral Character).
- Entering a classroom, laboratory, seminar, or experiential setting habitually late or arriving late or leaving early for a professional activity without prior permission from the instructor.
- Addressing (oral and written) faculty, staff, students, preceptors, practitioners, or patients in an unprofessional, disrespectful, and inconsiderate manner.
- Wearing unprofessional attire (note expectations in the professional program, class, and/or experiential education policies and guidelines) during on-campus learning activities including classes, laboratories, and seminars, or during experiential education activities or school-sanctioned professional events.
- Bringing family members, guests, and pets to the learning/research environment or professional academic activities without prior consent of the instructor.
- Accessing without proper authorization or revealing confidential information about faculty, staff, students of the school, college, or university.
- Accessing without proper authorization or revealing confidential information in any practice/research/learning setting.
- Using electronic resources and communication systems in a manner that is irresponsible, inappropriate, or disruptive to oneself or others. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate use of cellphones, computers, tablets, email, instant messaging, social media, blogs, and websites. Refer to the university's Policy on the A (<https://policies.northeastern.edu/policy700/>) appropriate Use of Computer and Network Resources (<https://policies.northeastern.edu/policy700/>).

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- Endangering patients or colleagues in/outside the university, damaging their property, or compromising research integrity.
- Acquiring unexcused absences and/or unexcused tardiness for clinical and/or simulation experiences and/or assigned laboratory experiences.
- Failure to complete assigned lab or clinical hours.
- Failure to communicate effectively with nursing practicum preceptors and clinical instructors as described in your course syllabi.
- Failure to submit clinical onboarding materials or clinical compliance materials by the due date regardless of reminders.
- Other activity that, at the discretion of the School of Nursing consistent with the procedures outlined below, constitutes unprofessional conduct.

3. Procedures of Reporting

Definitions

Professionalism Concern Form

Intended to be used to report an instance of or patterns of unprofessional behavior exhibited by a student. The submitted/completed forms will be maintained in a confidential file shared only by leadership and advisors.

Administrative Professional Conduct Board (at a minimum three members)

Comprised of the assistant deans of undergraduate and graduate nursing programs and/or designee, appropriate program director, and a School of Nursing professional staff member. Other School of Nursing representatives may be invited as deemed appropriate. An academic advisor and/or the assistant dean of student services from the Bouvé College of Health Sciences Office of Student Services may also be invited.

Academic Standing Committee

The Academic Standing Committee is a standing committee within the School of Nursing that reviews cases in which students may be suspended or dismissed from the School of Nursing for violations of this policy.

Procedure

The School of Nursing's professional misconduct review shall run concurrently with any other applicable university procedures including, but not limited to, academic and disciplinary proceedings administered by the university's Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. The assistant deans, the Administrative Professional Conduct Board, or the Academic Standing Committee may, at their discretion, indefinitely suspend or terminate any proceeding already instituted hereunder if they feel another procedure has or will adequately address the concern(s) raised regarding the reported unprofessional behavior.

Preliminary Review

Any faculty member, staff member, employer/preceptor, or student who believes a student has engaged in unprofessional behavior should complete the PCF using the link in the Canvas homeroom pages and report the matter to the appropriate assistant dean, who may then determine what preliminary action, if any, is needed.

Formal Review

The assistant dean is alerted via email when a new PCF form is added to the confidential file. The assistant dean will convene the Administrative Professionalism Conduct Board in a timely manner if deemed necessary to decide on an appropriate course of action to address the reported misconduct. Such course of action may include, but is not limited to, a meeting among the student, the assistant dean, and the Administrative Professionalism Conduct Board and/or the Academic Standing Committee; counseling for the student on professional conduct; remediation by the student to address the effect of their unprofessional conduct; and other steps deemed appropriate by the assistant dean and/or the Administrative Professionalism Conduct Board. The student will be notified about the PCF before an action takes place or a decision is rendered by the Administrative Professionalism Conduct Board.

Reported misconduct that may subject a student to suspension or dismissal from an academic program must be forwarded to the Academic Standing Committee. For example, a student who has three or more PCFs on file will be reported to the Academic Standing Committee for further action/recommendation. Additionally, any report of serious professional misconduct— whether a student's first, second, or third—may, at the discretion of the Administrative Professionalism Conduct Board, be reported to the Academic Standing Committee for that committee's review and potential action.

Retention of Records

PCFs and documents memorializing the resolution of the misconduct reported are kept in the confidential file. This record does not appear on unofficial or official school transcripts. Such professionalism-related documents will be destroyed upon the student's graduation except in the following circumstances:

- The reported misconduct resulted in the student's suspension or dismissal from the program or School of Nursing.
- The report is otherwise required to be retained by applicable university policies or procedures.

SCPC Implications on Student Organizations Leaderships, Professional Societies, and Awards

Existing membership, leadership, and society engagement:

- Students who are current members of student groups, professional societies, and/or organizations are expected to notify all relevant parties (e.g., faculty advisor, national office, etc.) regarding the outcome of the SCPC violation. This communication is expected to occur within 10 university business days from the student's Administrative Professional Conduct Board/ Academic Standing Committee meeting date (with a CC:) to the assistant dean. This is critical if the professional student organization/society's national bylaws or constitutions include language requiring a member to be in good academic/professional standing. Communicating with the faculty advisor and national office to seek guidance on the implications of the misconduct on the student's continued membership and/or its impact on a student's leadership position, when relevant.

New membership, leadership, society engagement, and professional awards/recognitions:

- Students who apply for new membership in professional societies/organizations and awards can expect their application to be reviewed through the assistant dean in light of SCPC violations. Students who have been found responsible for unprofessional behaviors may be removed from consideration, based on eligibility criteria of the award/recognition and/or membership requirements.

4. Academic Standing Committee

The purpose of the Academic Standing Committee is to provide students with an impartial review of reported violations of this policy that may warrant suspension or dismissal from the program. The Academic Standing Committee will meet each semester or as needed to respond to reported concerns of students' unprofessional behaviors. This committee may also implement changes to these policies and procedures at any time.

5. Hearing

A hearing date will be set by the applicable committee to discuss the reported concern. If a committee finds that there is sufficient evidence to support a violation of the professional standards previously defined, this will be so noted in the student's record. The applicable committee will develop an appropriate remediation plan in collaboration with the student and appropriate faculty and staff.

Third parties, including but not limited to witnesses, lawyers, parents, guardians, spouses, partners, and friends, are not permitted to attend the hearing.

6. Appeals

Within 10 university business days of receiving the written notification of the Academic Standing Committee's decision, the student may submit a written appeal of the decision or the sanction (or both) to the dean of the School of Nursing. Appeals must be based on at least one of the following arguments:

- There were violations of procedure that seriously compromised the investigation and/or conclusions.
- The evidence presented to the committee clearly does not support the findings.
- The sanctions implemented by the committee are excessive relative to the violation.
- There is significant new evidence that was not reasonably available during the investigation.

The dean of the School of Nursing will determine if the appeal meets the above conditions. The dean will issue a written report with their decision within 10 university business days of receiving the appeal. Students who have evidence that they were erroneously, capriciously, or otherwise unfairly treated in a professional conduct decision may petition to appeal the decision via the college-level appeals to the Bouvé College of Health Sciences Academic Affairs Committee as detailed in the catalog (<https://catalog.northeastern.edu/undergraduate/health-sciences/#undergraduate-health-sciences-college-appeals-policy>).

7. Proceedings for Registered Student Club or Organization

Student organizations may also be held responsible for violations of the SCPC. A review for a registered student organization shall be conducted in a manner like procedures used in cases involving individual students. A review shall be conducted with one spokesperson from the organization (usually the organization's president). Sanctions may be imposed upon a registered student organization for a violation of the SCPC in the same manner and using the same considerations as on individuals.