



Policy and Procedure

Policy Name: Academic and Professional Standards

Responsible office: Administration
Approved by: C. Wynd, Policy & Procedures Committee
Issued: 9/1/2015
Revisions: 7/7/2016, 6/26/17
Current version posted: 6/26/2017

The Mount Carmel College of Nursing (MCCN) faculty and staff are dedicated to facilitating student development of intellectual, moral, and professional standards. This development requires the student to become increasingly responsible for self-directed and engaged learning, thus practicing and achieving academic and professional standards in order to become a highly educated, skilled, and professional nurse.

The nursing profession demands that the individual in practice be responsible, accountable, self-directed, and professional in behavior. *The process of becoming a professional begins upon entering a professional education program such as the programs offered at MCCN.* Opportunities to develop and practice these qualities exist in the student role. MCCN expects that students will demonstrate their professionalism by:

- Attending all clinical experiences and all classes (onsite or online).
- Exhibiting courteous behaviors in the classroom, clinical sites, while on the MCCN campus, within the Residence Halls, and while representing MCCN at community events.
- Being prepared for class and clinical assignments, being punctual for classes and MCCN appointments.
- Being respectful toward all members of the MCCN community (faculty, staff, and students; particularly in the Residence Halls and even “off duty”).
- Being conscious of information shared over all social media platforms—in personal and professional communications and especially over MCCN-sponsored social media platforms.
- Using effective communication, verbally and non-verbally, by remembering always the MCHS/MCCN guiding behaviors:
 - We support each other in serving our students, patients, and communities.
 - We communicate openly, honestly, respectfully and directly.
 - We are fully present.
 - We are accountable.
 - We trust and assume the goodness of intentions.



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- We are continuous learners.

Please refer to the *Student Handbook and Policies* for a full review of all student expectations for professional behaviors and conduct.

Students who do not adhere to academic and professional standards may encounter allegations of misconduct, which imply deception in fulfilling academic and professional standards. Misconduct may take many forms and includes, but is not limited to:

Plagiarism: Defined as submission of work that is not the student's own work or submitting the ideas, writings, or thoughts of another person without proper documentation; use of someone's exact words as quotes in assignments without proper citation; also use of material from the internet without proper citation, etc.

Self-Plagiarism: Students are required to submit original work for all courses; papers and written work submitted for one course may not be used for an assignment in another course, except through negotiation with the instructor. Submitted duplicate work is considered self-plagiarism and is an example of academic misconduct.

Cheating During an Examination: Defined as, but not limited to, using notes or textbooks without the instructor's consent, looking at another person's paper, bringing items with notes written on them with the intent of using the notes during an exam, communicating with another student during an examination, using electronic devices (phones, wristwatches) without the instructor's consent.

Fabrication: Defined as constructing, manufacturing, inventing, or creating for the sake of deception, any classroom or clinical assignment; forging or falsifying any clinical or academic information; documenting clinical hours that were not actually completed; falsifying any patient record or other document used during clinical experiences.



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Academic and Professional Standards in the Residence Halls

There are additional rules, policies, and sanctions for students living in the MCCN Residence Halls. Please refer to the Residence Life policies in the Residence Hall Handbook in the Student tab under Residence Life in CARMELink (https://carmelink.mccn.edu/ICS/Student/Residence_Life.jnz).

Please note that the Academic and Professional Standards policy and procedures will be implemented for misconduct that occurs in the Residence Halls.

Standards Outlined by Professional Nursing Organizations

The National Student Nurses Association, as well as the American Nurses Association, stipulate Codes of Professional, Academic, and Clinical Conduct. These codes are fully supported by MCCN and students are expected to be familiar with and follow these codes (National Student Nurses Association www.nsna.org). The conduct of nursing students in providing patient care is also regulated by the state of Ohio through the Ohio Board of Nursing in accordance with Ohio Revised Code [4723-5-12\(C\)](#). Please see below.

Student Conduct in the Nursing Care of Patients

The following policy is taken from the Ohio Board of Nursing's Rules Promulgated from the Law Regulating the Practice of Nursing, effective December 19, 2016, [4723-5-12\(C\)](#) (accessed on the Ohio Board of Nursing website).

The policy, related to student conduct in providing nursing care, includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. A student shall, in a complete, accurate, and timely manner, report and document nursing assessments or observations, the care provided by the student for the patient, and the patient's response to that care.



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2. A student shall, in an accurate and timely manner, report to the appropriate practitioner errors in or deviations from the current valid order.
3. A student shall not falsify any patient record or any other document prepared or utilized in the course of, or in conjunction with, nursing practice. This includes, but is not limited to, case management documents or reports, or time records, or reports, and other documents related to billing for nursing services.
4. A student shall implement measures to promote a safe environment for each patient.
5. A student shall delineate, establish, and maintain professional boundaries with each patient.
6. At all times when a student is providing direct nursing care to a patient the student shall:
 - a. Provide privacy during examination or treatment and in the care of personal or bodily needs; and
 - b. Treat each patient with courtesy, respect, and with full recognition of dignity and individuality.
7. A student shall practice within the appropriate scope of practice as set forth in division (B) of section 4723.01 and division (B)(20) of section 4723.28 of the Revised Code for a registered nurse, and division (F) of section 4723.01 and division (B)(21) of section 4723.28 of the Revised Code for a practical nurse.
8. A student shall use universal and standard precautions established by Chapter 4723-20 of the Administrative Code.
9. A student shall not:
 - a. Engage in behavior that causes or may cause physical, verbal, mental or emotional abuse to a patient.



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b. Engage in behavior toward a patient that may reasonably be interpreted as physical, verbal, mental, or emotional abuse.

10. A student shall not misappropriate a patient's property or:

- a. Engage in behavior to seek or obtain personal gain at the patient's expense;
- b. Engage in behavior that may reasonably be interpreted as behavior to seek or obtain personal gain at the patient's expense;
- c. Engage in behavior that constitutes inappropriate involvement in the patient's personal relationships; or
- d. Engage in behavior that may reasonably be interpreted as inappropriate involvement in the patient's personal relationships.

For the purpose of this paragraph, the patient is always presumed incapable of giving free, full, or informed consent to the behaviors by the student set forth in this paragraph.

11. A student shall not:

- a. Engage in sexual conduct with a patient;
- b. Engage in conduct in the course of practice that may reasonably be interpreted as sexual;
- c. Engage in any verbal behavior that is seductive or sexually demeaning to a patient;
- d. Engage in verbal behavior that may reasonably be interpreted as seductive, or sexually demeaning to a patient.

For the purpose of this paragraph, the patient is always presumed incapable of giving free, full or informed consent to sexual activity with the student.

12. A student shall not, regardless of whether the contact or verbal behavior is consensual, engage with a patient other than the spouse of the student in any of the following:



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- a. Sexual contact, as defined in section 2907.01 of the Revised Code;
- b. Verbal behavior that is sexually demeaning to the patient or may be reasonably interpreted by the patient as sexually demeaning.

13. A student shall not self-administer or otherwise take into the body any dangerous drug, as defined in section 4729.01 of the Revised Code, in any way not in accordance with a legal, valid prescription issued for the student, or self-administer or otherwise take into the body any drug that is a schedule I controlled substance.

14. A student shall not habitually or excessively use controlled substances, other habit-forming drugs, or alcohol or other chemical substances to an extent that impairs ability to practice.

15. A student shall not have impairment of the ability to practice according to acceptable and prevailing standards of safe nursing care because of use of drugs, alcohol, or other chemical substances.

16. A student shall not have impairment of the ability to practice according to acceptable and prevailing standards of safe nursing care because of a physical or mental disability.

17. A student shall not assault or cause harm to a patient or deprive a patient of the means to summon assistance.

18. A student shall not misappropriate or attempt to misappropriate money or anything of value by intentional misrepresentation or material deception in the course of practice.

19. A student shall not have been adjudicated by a probate court of being mentally ill or mentally incompetent, unless restored to competency by the court.

20. A student shall not aid and abet a person in that person's practice of nursing without a license, practice as a dialysis technician without a certificate issued by the board, or administration of medications as a medication aide without a certificate issued by the board.



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21. A student shall not prescribe any drug or device to perform or induce an abortion, or otherwise perform or induce an abortion.

22. A student shall not assist suicide as defined in section 3795.01 of the Revised Code.

23. A student shall not submit or cause to be submitted any false, misleading or deceptive statements, information, or document to the nursing program, its faculty or preceptors, or to the board.

24. A student shall maintain the confidentiality of patient information. The student shall communicate patient information with other members of the health care team for health care purposes only, shall access patient information only for purposes of patient care or for otherwise fulfilling the student's assigned clinical responsibilities, and shall not disseminate patient information for purposes other than patient care or for otherwise fulfilling the student's assigned clinical responsibilities through social media, texting, emailing or any other form of communication.

25. To the maximum extent feasible, identifiable patient health care information shall not be disclosed by a student unless the patient has consented to the disclosure of identifiable patient health care information. A student shall report individually identifiable patient information without written consent in limited circumstances only and in accordance with an authorized law, rule, or other recognized legal authority.

26. For purposes of paragraphs (C)(5), (C)(6), (C)(9), (C) (10), (C) (11) and (C) (12) of this rule, a student shall not use social media, texting, emailing, or other forms of communication with, or about a patient, for non-health care purposes or for purposes other than fulfilling the student's assigned clinical responsibilities.

Effective: 12/19/2016
FYR Date: 12/19/2021
Promulgated Under: [119.03](#)



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Statutory Authority: [4723.07](#)

Rule Amplifies: [4723.06](#)

Prior Effective Dates: 2/1/96, 4/1/97, 2/1/02, 2/1/04, 2/1/07, 2/1/08, 2/1/12, 2/1/14

Student Academic and Professional Standards

Maintaining academic and professional standards is a serious matter for the professional nurse and nursing student, both in the work setting as well as outside the work setting. At MCCN, students with alleged academic or professional misconduct will be evaluated using the following processes and procedures: Initiation of a Performance Improvement Contract and/or Hearings by the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee.

Initiation of a Performance Improvement Contract

Definition: The Performance Improvement Contract (PIC) is one of a larger repertoire of tools used to promote student learning, improvement, development, and success. Each PIC is initiated to assist the student in identifying, managing, and improving conduct and behaviors that inhibit a student's full success at MCCN. The PIC is meant to provide the student with guided learning towards improvement and evaluation of that improvement. The PIC is intended to provide the student with Due Process regarding observed conduct and behaviors that may be questionable in terms of possible misconduct. (See information about Due Process below).

Faculty and staff members initiate PICs when students demonstrate a potential infraction of college or health system policies, conduct themselves in a less than professional manner, and/or demonstrate patterns of behavior that impede their ability to provide safe, high quality patient care. The PIC is initiated to help students examine behaviors that are causing them to be less than successful, to identify behaviors that may help them to improve, and to engage with faculty and staff in an action plan for making progress toward improvement and success. Because the PIC is a learning tool, there is no appeal process once a PIC has been initiated.



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The Process and Procedures: Faculty/staff members who identify student conduct and behaviors that may be inhibiting a student's success will follow the process and procedures outlined below:

1. Faculty/staff and supervisors, all who are involved with student cases, will **maintain confidentiality at all times**; not discussing the student with anyone except those involved directly with PIC processes.
2. Faculty members will consult with:
 - a. The Course Coordinator (CC) and the Academic Department Leader (ADL) in cases where students are undergraduates (the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs will be kept informed of the situation).
 - b. The CC and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs in cases involving graduate students.
3. In cases where the conduct and behaviors occur within the purview of the Residence Halls, the Director of Student Life and/or the Coordinator of Residence Halls will consult with the Academic Dean and the Director of Compliance.
4. The faculty/staff member will meet with the student as soon as possible to discuss the conduct and behaviors that are causing the student to be less than successful. Conduct and behaviors will be explored with the student to determine what types of factors that may be contributing to these behaviors (health factors, cultural/ethnic background factors, personal factors).
5. If the conduct and behaviors are resolved when the student and faculty/staff member meet, no further action is taken except for documenting the discussion.
6. If the conduct/behaviors require further attention, faculty/staff will meet with the appropriate supervisors (as noted above) to discuss the potential need for a PIC and a



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decision will be made to move forward with development of the PIC. Additionally, the ADL will determine if the student has any previous PIC(s) in the online Google file.

7. The student will be notified by the appropriate supervisor that a PIC will be initiated.

8. The PIC will be written by the faculty in conjunction with the course coordinator, ADL, and appropriate Dean.

9. The student will then meet with the faculty, course coordinator, and ADL. At the time of the meeting, the PIC will be reviewed with the student. The student, faculty, and appropriate Dean will electronically sign the PIC. The student will be provided with a paper copy of the PIC and the electronic version of the PIC will be maintained in the online Google folder with access provided only to the Deans and ADLs.

10. Following initiation, discussion, and electronic signing of the PIC, the student and faculty will meet weekly to address student progress toward the outlined plan for improvement.

11. If the student violates the terms and conditions of an active PIC or exhibits unprofessional behaviors, an additional PIC will be initiated.

12. At the end of the term/semester, the student, faculty, and the appropriate supervisors will meet in order to assess the student's progress with the identified issue. If the PIC is successfully completed written notification of successful completion will be forwarded to everyone involved and the date of resolution will be added to the by the Course Coordinator.

- **A student who is dismissed from SDAP cannot be admitted to the pre-licensure program if she/he has a pending academic misconduct hearing. The case must be resolved prior to consideration of admittance to the pre-licensure program.*

13. If a PIC is initiated at mid-point of the course or later and is not successfully resolved, it may progress with the student to the next course or term/semester with a new resolution date. If a PIC is initiated prior to mid-point of a course it needs to be resolved



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by end of that course, or a second PIC will be initiated with a new resolution date.

14. If a student receives a third PIC, the appropriate supervisor will schedule a meeting with the student and the appropriate Assistant/Associate Dean. Additionally, the student will be referred to the Academic & Professional Misconduct Committee where those processes and procedures will be initiated (see below).

The Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee Hearing: Policy, Process, Procedures

Students whose conduct/behaviors are found to be less than successful (as noted above) and/or who may have incurred three PICs are subject to hearings performed by the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee.

Suspected Misconduct

When academic or professional misconduct is alleged, it is the responsibility of the faculty staff in either the graduate or undergraduate nursing program or Residence Halls to both discuss the matter with the student and file a written account of the alleged misconduct with the Chairperson of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee. The written account will include recommendations for action, including the grade recommended for the student if the academic misconduct allegation is connected to a graded portion of a course.

In cases where faculty and college officials are concerned that students pose immediate dangers to other people and property, especially in clinical cases related to patient safety, the student's academic and clinical educational progression will be temporarily suspended by the MCCN Academic Dean until the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee hearing is conducted and recommendations are made about outcomes and potential sanctions.

When a student suspects misconduct by a peer:

Student peers have a responsibility to report alleged misconduct to the lead instructor or relevant staff member. The reporting student, lead instructor or staff member may submit an allegation of misconduct to the Chairperson of the Academic and



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Professional Misconduct Committee. The reporting student is expected to participate as a witness at the scheduled misconduct hearing.

The Faculty/Staff Member will:

1. **Maintain confidentiality at all times**; not discussing the student with anyone except those involved directly with Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee.
2. Meet with the Chairperson of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee who will determine the action to be taken.
3. Hold a conference with the student to discuss the alleged misconduct.
4. Submit all documents relevant to the incident to the Chairperson of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee within five (5) business days of the conference with the student.

The Chairperson of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee will:

1. Determine whether the alleged misconduct violates policy after receiving the written account and relevant documents.
2. If no alleged policy violation has occurred, the Chairperson will notify the faculty, staff or student and no record will be placed in the student's file.
3. If the Chairperson determines sufficient information exists to support an alleged policy violation, he/she will immediately schedule a hearing within ten (10) business days. The hearing will consist of all Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee members and the student.
4. The Chairperson will notify the student via email to pick up a packet containing a letter from the Chairperson and all documents related to the alleged misconduct. The letter will contain the following information:
 - a. The allegation of academic or professional misconduct;



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- b. The date and time of the hearing; and
 - c. Information about where and when the student can provide any mitigating evidence for the Committee's packet of materials prior to the hearing.
5. Once the Chairperson receives all of the relevant mitigating evidence from the student, the Chairperson will forward all documents to the Committee members prior to the hearing.

Please NOTE: The Director of Compliance must be informed by the Chairperson about the processes and procedures. Due to FERPA protections, only the Chairperson of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee or the Director of Compliance will have contact with the student or the students' parents. Faculty and staff who are contacted by the student or parents must immediately refer these individuals to the Chairperson or to the Director of Compliance for information.

The Student will:

1. Attend all meetings scheduled by the faculty or staff member or Chairperson as related to the alleged incident of academic or professional misconduct.
2. Cooperate with the faculty or staff member and the Chairperson.
3. Receive a letter from the Chairperson that contains the following information:
 - a. The allegation of academic or professional misconduct;
 - b. The date and time of the hearing; and
 - c. Information about where and when the student can provide any mitigating evidence for the Committee's packet of materials prior to the hearing.

Student Due Process within Policy:

Students alleged to have violated college policies and/or committed acts associated with academic and professional misconduct will have their cases heard before the



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Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee (see policies and procedures below). Students have a right to due process, or fair procedure, that includes:

1. Presumption of innocence until proven guilty.
2. Submission of reasonable standards of proof or evidence.
3. Right to an impartial hearing.
4. Freedom to appropriately defend themselves.

Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee

The Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee is composed of four faculty members, two students from the undergraduate program, and one student from the graduate program. The Chairperson must be a faculty member and will be selected by members of the Committee.

This Committee is charged with hearing allegations of misconduct and making recommendations to the Associate Dean of the appropriate program.

In the event that a Committee member is involved in a case of alleged misconduct, the Committee Chairperson shall appoint a substitute. The Chairperson is responsible to orient the alternate Committee member prior to the hearing. Should the Chairperson require substitution, the Chairperson shall appoint another faculty committee member to serve as Chairperson.

Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee Hearings

The Chairperson of the committee will schedule a hearing within ten (10) business days after determining that the student's alleged misconduct warrants a hearing.

The student accused of misconduct is encouraged by the Chairperson to attend the Committee hearing. Online education students may participate via teleconference, SKYPE, Google Talk/Hangouts, or Blackboard Collaborate (Method of communication is at the discretion of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee.)



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Hearings are considered closed meetings (i.e., only the Committee members, the

recorder, the student, and other individuals directly involved in the incident are permitted to attend). All persons involved in committee hearings are required to sign a statement of confidentiality.

The student is provided the opportunity to speak on his/her behalf, present a written statement, provide materials to be considered as mitigating evidence (character references, etc.) or invite witnesses directly involved with the case to present information at the hearing. The faculty/staff may also present witnesses, and both the student and the Committee members may question witnesses.

Legal counsel will not be permitted to attend the hearing.

The student's academic record is not available to the Committee unless a recommendation to sanction is made. Once the recommendation to sanction is made, the student's academic record is reviewed to assist in determining the type of sanction.

Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee Recommendations

The Committee will consider the following recommendations:

1. Dismiss allegations without any documentation in the student's record of the alleged misconduct; or
2. Recommend that the faculty member provide the student with a PIC and use this episode as a learning opportunity to discuss the student's performance or behaviors that are contributing to the student's lack of success. Use this opportunity to help the student improve; or
3. Sanction the student. Sanctions are placed in the student's academic record maintained in the Office of Records and Registration. Sanction recommendations may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Letter of warning admonishing the student for the violation;



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- b. Academic probation;
 - c. Dismissal from the education program and from the college.

All recommendations of this Committee will be forwarded to the appropriate Associate Dean for decision. The student, the Chairperson of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee, and the faculty or staff involved will be provided with a written letter outlining the decision of the Associate Dean within five (5) business days of the hearing. The appropriate Associate Dean will forward a copy of the notification letter to the Academic Dean of MCCN. In the notification letter the Associate Dean must address the decision and sanctions that result from the recommendations of the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee. The letter must also provide the student with information about the Appeals Process (see Appeals Process below).

Record of Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee Hearing

Academic and Profession Misconduct Committee minutes constitute the record of the hearing. Should the student decide to appeal the decision of the appropriate Associate Dean, a hard copy of the hearing record will be made available to the student. The student should contact the appropriate Associate Dean and schedule an appointment to read the hard copy of the hearing record while seated in the Associate Dean's office. The student will not be provided with an electronic or hard copy of the hearing record.

The hearing record and other related documents may be released only to individuals who have a valid reason to know the outcome, according to FERPA guidelines. The hearing record and documents related to a student's Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee hearing will be maintained in the office of the Academic Dean and a second copy maintained in the Office of Records and Registration.

Appeals Process

Students have the right to appeal the decision of the appropriate Associate Dean and may do so by submitting a written appeal to the Academic Dean of the College. The appeal must be filed in the Office of the Academic Dean as a formal, written letter within ten (10) business days from the date of the Associate Dean's decision letter. The appeals letter must be accompanied by and provide firm and persuasive evidence, in



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the form of data, letters, documents, etc., to support the written appeals letter. The

Academic Dean will review the Academic and Professional Misconduct Committee hearing record and relevant documents, as well as the appeal and evidence provided by the student, and will make a determination within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal. The Academic Dean's decision is final.