



CATAWBA COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

RN-BSN Nursing Student Handbook

2026-2027

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Catawba College Department of Nursing

The Department of Nursing (DON) is an integral part of Catawba College. The DON mission, philosophy, and outcomes are congruent with and support the value statements of Catawba College. The DON and Catawba College are committed to providing superior education grounded in the liberal arts to prepare graduates to make significant contributions for God and Humanity. Catawba College respects the value and individuality of every student and provides an environment that promotes a strong work ethic, Christian heritage and values, teamwork, and personal accountability.

Mission, Outcomes, Curriculum Framework, Guiding Principles

PURPOSE

The Catawba College Department of Nursing seeks to prepare competent, diverse nurse professionals to meet the holistic health care needs of a culturally diverse society by providing a solid foundation in liberal studies to prepare students for entry-level practice in the nursing profession.

The curriculum is based on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Baccalaureate Essentials and are supported by the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) qualities. The **Baccalaureate Essentials**, **Program Objectives**, and **Student Learning Outcomes** are listed in Figure 3.

Essentials, Program Learning Outcomes:

Essentials	Program Learning Outcomes
Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice	Prepare professional nurses to use clinical judgment and innovation in nursing practice, a distinct scientific discipline, while applying the foundation of a liberal arts education.
Domain 2: Person-centered Care	Prepare professional nurses to provide inclusive, holistic person-centered care through the development of a caring relationship, establishment of effective communication, and coordination of care to recognize and address complex health and wellness needs.
Domain 3: Population Health	Prepare professional nurses to manage population health and address social determinants of health through inclusion, development, collaboration, and promotion of safe, culturally appropriate nursing care.
Domain 4: Scholarship for Nursing Discipline	Prepare professional nurses with the theoretical and research skills necessary to promote evidence-based practice.
Domain 5: Quality and Safety	Prepare professional nurses to provide and model safe, quality patient care and promote a culture of safety in the practice environment.
Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships	Prepare professional nurses to demonstrate core professional values in collaboration with care-oriented teams to coordinate and manage person-centered care.
Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice	Prepare professional nurses to understand and work within a systems-based practice as a change agent in a leadership role with consideration of cost-effective care and evidence-based practice.

Domain 8: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies	Prepare professional nurses with knowledge and skills in informatics processes and technologies to manage and improve the delivery and evaluation of safe, high-quality, and efficient healthcare services in accordance with best practice and professional and regulatory standards.
Domain 9: Professionalism	Prepare professional nurses to demonstrate and employ ethical comportment, accountability, and integrity within one's practice.
Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development	Prepare professional nurses to develop a capacity for leadership, a spirit for inquiry, and a commitment to personal and professional health and well-being.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT

The Catawba College Department of Nursing seeks to prepare competent, diverse nurse professionals to meet the holistic health care needs of a culturally diverse society; using an interdisciplinary approach to blend the knowledge and competencies of liberal studies, and evidence-based practice healthcare models to embrace nursing education, nursing practice, critical thinking, scholarship, and service.

CORE VALUES (DEFINED)

Scholarship: (Evidence-based practice, research, and best practice models)

Character: (Professionalism; values of altruism, autonomy, caring, human dignity, integrity, and social justice)

Culture: (Arts, beliefs, customs, and other collective characteristics)

Service: (Provision of care, assistance, recommendations, counseling, education, and additional service provisions.)

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING VISION STATEMENT

The Catawba College Department of Nursing will be recognized for preparing professional nurse generalist to function at their highest level of excellence in education and practice. These nurse professionals will serve as leaders while meeting the complex health and wellness needs of individuals, local communities, societies, and global populations using evidence-based and best practice health care models in the provision and promotion of safe, culturally appropriate, and quality nursing care.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The curriculum is guided by the standards instituted by the *AACN Essentials*, which provides the educational framework for the preparation of professional nurse generalists, and the metaparadigm concepts of nursing, environment, person, and health.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Consistent with the mission and values of Catawba College and the Department of Nursing, the nursing faculty believe that baccalaureate nursing education provides the essential scientific, liberal arts, and professional foundation necessary for the preparation of competent, compassionate, and ethical professional nurse leaders. The faculty are committed to educating nurses who are prepared to provide, coordinate, and evaluate care for individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations within an increasingly dynamic, complex, and culturally diverse society at the local, national, and global levels.

The faculty believe that professional nursing education is grounded in the integration of evidence-based practice, clinical judgment, critical thinking, effective communication, ethical decision-making, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Through a foundation in the sciences and liberal studies, students develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional values necessary to promote health, prevent illness, restore wellness, and provide holistic, patient-centered care across the lifespan.

The Department of Nursing values lifelong learning as an essential component of professional nursing practice and leadership. Faculty believe that continuous intellectual, professional, and personal growth advances the nursing discipline and strengthens the profession's ability to respond to evolving healthcare needs. Therefore, the faculty support graduate education, scholarly inquiry, evidence-based practice, innovation, service, and active engagement with community and interdisciplinary partners.

The philosophy of the Department of Nursing is further guided by the nursing metaparadigm concepts of nursing, environment, person, and health. These interconnected concepts provide the framework through which nursing education, practice, scholarship, and service are understood and implemented.

METAPARADIGM

Nursing

Nursing is a professional discipline grounded in theoretical and scientific knowledge, clinical reasoning, ethical practice, and evidence-based care. Nursing knowledge and judgment are informed by the health sciences, liberal studies, and standards of professional nursing practice, including critical thinking, effective communication, leadership, and compassionate care.

Professional nurses integrate evidence-based practice, clinical expertise, and the nursing process to deliver safe, quality, and patient-centered care across diverse healthcare settings. Nursing practice involves the promotion of health, prevention of illness, management of disease, restoration of wellness, and support of individuals, families, communities, and populations throughout the lifespan.

Nurses provide holistic care that recognizes the spiritual, cultural, ethical, legal, developmental, psychosocial, and physiological dimensions of human experience. Through advocacy, education, collaboration, and leadership, nursing positively influences healthcare systems and environments to improve health outcomes and address the complex needs of a diverse and evolving society.

Environment

Environment is the dynamic and interconnected system of internal and external conditions that influence the health, wellbeing, and experiences of individuals, families, communities, and populations. Environment includes physical, social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and global factors that affect health behaviors, healthcare access, and quality of life.

The environment encompasses homes, communities, healthcare systems, workplaces, educational settings, and society. Environmental influences, including socioeconomic status, policy, cultural beliefs, technological accessibility, and social determinants of health, shape both healthcare experiences and nursing interactions.

Nursing practice seeks to create, modify, and support environments that promote safety, healing, health equity, wellness, and optimal health outcomes.

Persons

People are unique, holistic, and multidimensional beings with physiological, psychological, psychosocial, spiritual, cultural, developmental, and relational needs throughout the lifespan. Individuals continuously interact with their environment and with others, including families, groups, communities, and global populations.

Each person possesses inherent dignity, value, autonomy, and the capacity for growth and adaptation. Human responses to health and illness are influenced by life experiences, beliefs, culture, relationships, environment, and access to resources.

Nursing care recognizes and respects the individuality of each person and supports patient-centered partnerships that honor diversity, promote self-determination, and address holistic healthcare needs.

Health

Health is a dynamic and holistic state of wellbeing that exists along a wellness-illness continuum and encompasses biological, physiological, psychological, developmental, spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions. Health is influenced by individual perceptions, lived experiences, environment, healthcare access, and social determinants of health.

The faculty believe that health is a fundamental human right and that optimal health should be accessible to all individuals and populations. Because health experiences vary among individuals and communities, nursing care must be responsive to diverse values, beliefs, cultures, and socioeconomic conditions.

Nursing promotes health through evidence-based interventions, patient education, advocacy, disease prevention, health promotion, and compassionate care that supports individuals and populations in achieving and maintaining optimal wellbeing.

Program Accreditation and NCBON

Catawba College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award bachelor's and master's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Catawba College. This information is also located on the Colleges website at www.catawba.edu and on the SACSCOC website at www.sacscoc.org.

The Catawba College Department of Nursing received full program approval from the North Carolina Board of Nursing on May 24, 2019.

The baccalaureate degree program in nursing at Catawba College is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (www.ccneaccreditation.org).

Professional Standards:

The curricula content for the programs within the DON are guided by the following professional standards:

- North Carolina Administrative Code Title 21
- The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials*

Catawba College Department of Nursing Contact Information

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Academic Program

Catawba College RN to BSN Nursing Program

The RN to BSN Nursing Program at Catawba College, a degree completion program, is designed to allow registered nurses to achieve their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The Catawba College RN to BSN Program prepares registered nurses to practice professional nursing in a variety of settings and provides the foundation for graduate study in nursing. The Catawba College Nursing Program for RN students is offered online through the Blackboard Learning Program. The length of time required to complete the Catawba College RN to BSN Program varies for each individual due to differences in educational backgrounds. The Catawba College RN to BSN Nursing Program serves to:

1. Provide baccalaureate nursing education in a Christian environment to registered nurses with varying educational, experiential and cultural backgrounds.
2. Prepare a generalist who can deliver professional and holistic nursing care in a variety of settings.
3. Prepare a nurse who is accountable to the profession and society.
4. Provide the foundation for graduate education in nursing.

Catawba College RN to BSN Program Outcomes

The Catawba College RN to BSN program seeks to meet the following program outcomes:

1. 70% of students entering the program will graduate within 1.5 times the length of the program.
2. 80% of students will maintain employment as a RN following graduation.

Catawba College RN to BSN Curriculum

Requirements for Admission

1. Graduate of an Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) program or have a Nursing diploma
 2. RNs seeking to enhance their current knowledge, and to broaden their career options and levels of responsibility
 3. Application form (**no application fee required**) approval
 4. Official transcripts from all colleges attended
 5. *An active and unencumbered (unrestricted) North Carolina RN license
 6. *An acceptable criminal background history
 7. Successful completion of general pre-requisite courses
 8. *Completion of a drug screening
 9. *Current CPR card and liability insurance (for clinical practicum courses)
 10. *Demonstrate a sound physical and emotional health status compatible with the ability to provide safe nursing care and to meet the program's learning outcomes
- *Must occur throughout enrollment in program

General Education Requirements

The following core courses are transferrable from another college or may be completed at Catawba College:

- Anatomy and Physiology I with Lab
- Anatomy and Physiology II with Lab
- Fundamentals of Microbiology
- Principles of Chemistry
- General Psychology
- Introduction to Sociology
- Human Growth and Development/Developmental Psychology
- Introduction to Statistics

Nursing Program Requirements

The RN-BSN program requires a minimum of 120 credit hours, including 60 hours in the Nursing major. RN students can complete their BSN Degree (start to finish) in approximately one year by attending classes throughout the entire calendar year. General pre-requisite courses can be completed along with nursing courses.

Curriculum Plan at Catawba College			
Term	Weeks	Courses	Hours
1	8	NURS 3301: Transitioning to Baccalaureate Nursing Practice	3
		NURS 3302: Holistic Health Assessment for RNs	4
2	8	NURS 3511: Community Health Nursing	5
3	8	NURS 3306: Nursing the Gerontological Population	2
		NURS 4202: Nursing Informatics	2
		NURS 3303: Nursing Research	3
4	8	NURS 4405: Leadership and Management in Nursing	3
		NURS 4204: Global Health Studies	2
5	8	NURS 4306: Healthcare Promotion across the Lifespan	3
		NURS 4511: Nursing Capstone Practicum	5
Total Hours			32

NURS 3301 **must be taken in your first semester of nursing courses.

NURS 4511 **must be taken in your last semester of nursing courses.

RN-BSN Course Descriptions

NURS 3301: Transitioning to Baccalaureate Nursing Practice (3 CH)

This course will assist the licensed RN with transitioning to professional nursing practice at the baccalaureate level. The focus will be on the application of curricular concepts to nursing practice, role differentiation, and contribution of the BSN prepared nurse to healthcare.

NURS 3302: Holistic Health Assessment for RNs (4 CH)

This course will focus on physical assessment skills of individuals across the life span based on normal physiological and pathophysiological mechanisms of disease and their relations to human responses. A lab practicum will enhance these skills.

NURS 3303: Nursing Research (3 CH)

This course will introduce concepts commonly associated with nursing research, data collection and analysis, and the importance of its use when allowing evidence-based practice (EBP), and Best Practice models guide patient care. (Prerequisite: Admission to RN-BSN option; successful completion of statistics course)

NURS 3306: Nursing the Gerontological Population (2 CH)

This course will focus on theories of aging and nursing care of the older adult population. (Prerequisite: Admission to RN-BSN option; NURS 3301; or special permission from the instructor)

NURS 3511: Community Health Nursing (5 CH)

This course will use the nursing process to develop and implement care for individuals, families, and groups in a disadvantaged community setting. A clinical practicum will enhance these skills.

*NURS 4201: Ethical and Legal Issues in Nursing Practice (2 CH)

This course will focus on the nursing care associated with ethical and legal issues common to healthcare environments.

NURS 4202: Nursing Informatics (2 CH)

This course will explore common concepts and applications related to the nurse's role in using informatics for decision-making via messaging, documentation, information retrieval, and other methods associated with healthcare information exchange.

***NURS 4204: Global Health Studies (2 CH)**

This course will focus on concepts that will enhance nursing care of different cultures.

NURS 4306: Healthcare Promotion across the Lifespan (3 CH)

This course will examine foundations of family theory and its relations to health disparities, disabilities, and chronic conditions and illnesses across the lifespan.

NURS 4405: Leadership and Management in Nursing (3 CH)

This course will focus on theory and concepts associated with leadership and management in the professional nurse's role.

NURS 4511: Nursing Capstone Practicum (5 CH)

This practicum course will build on the concepts and knowledge gained from previous nursing courses allowing for the application of theories and concepts associated with nursing leadership, nursing research, and management of care. A clinical practicum will enhance these skills.

**Students are required to complete only one of the two nursing electives*

UNIFORM NC COMMUNITY COLLEGE ARTICULATION PLAN

Uniform Articulation Agreement between NC Independent Colleges and Universities RN to BSN Programs and NCCC-System Associate Degree Nursing Programs

The following presents a uniform, statewide academic progression agreement that will promote educational advancement opportunities for registered nurses moving between North Carolina community colleges and the constituent institutions of the NC Independent Colleges and Universities in order to complete BSN degrees.

Registered Nurse (RN) to BS in Nursing Articulation Agreement Curriculum Plan

Block 1: 23 Course Credits			
Consists of certain prerequisite nursing courses that are taken as part of all NCCC AAS nursing programs.	Course Category	Transferrable Courses	Credits
	English Composition	Select 2: ENG 111, 112, 114	6 (3,3)
	Human Anatomy & Physiology with Lab	BIO 165 & 166 or 168 & 169	8 (4,4)
	Humanities/Fine Arts	Select 1: ART 111, 114, 115; MUS 110, 112; PHI 215, 240; HUM 115	3
	Psychology	PSY 150, 241	6 (3,3)
Block 2: 18-19 Course Credits			
○ Consists of additional university general education courses that are not part of an AAS degree, but	Course Category	Transferrable Courses	Credits
	English Literature	Select 1: ENG 231, 232	3
	History	Select 1: HIS 111, 112, 131, 132	3
	Fine Arts	Select 1 additional course not taken in Block 1: ART 114, 115; MUS 110, 112	3

are required to earn a BSN ○ These general education requirements will be met by completing one listed course in each of the first four categories and two in the last	College Transfer Math	MAT 143 or 171	3 or 4
	Sociology	SOC 210 and 1 from : SOC 213, 220, 225, 230 240	6 (3,3)

Block 3: 17-18 Course Credits

Consists of additional nursing or other requirements that are not part of an AAS degree, but are required to earn a BSN ¹	Course Category	Transferrable Courses	Credits
	Statistics	MAT 152	4
	Microbiology with Lab	BIO 175 or 275	3 or 4
	Chemistry with Lab	CHM 151 or 130 and CHM 130A, or CHM 131 and 131A	4
	Social Science/Elective	Select 2 from either category or 1 from each: ECO 251, 252; POL 120; Suggested electives include but are not limited to foreign language, speech, culture, and computer science. <u>Electives must be selected from the Transfer Course List in the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement.</u>	6 (3,3)

Block 4: 30-34 Course Credits

Consists of credit awarded by the constituent institutions for nursing core (NUR) content taken as part of the AAS degree program. These credits are awarded only after an RN student has successfully completed one or two initial nursing courses. Credits may vary depending on credit allocation in Block 5.

Block 5: 30-34 Credits

Curriculum Plan at Catawba College

Term	Weeks	Courses	Hours
1	8	NURS 3301: Transitioning to Baccalaureate Nursing Practice NURS 3302: Holistic Health Assessment for RNs	3 4
2	8	NURS 3511: Community Health Nursing	5
3	8	NURS 3306: Nursing the Gerontological Population NURS 4202: Nursing Informatics NURS 3303: Nursing Research	2 2 3
4	8	NURS 4405: Leadership and Management in Nursing NURS 4204: Global Health Studies	3 2
5	8	NURS 4306: Healthcare Promotion across the Lifespan NURS 4511: Nursing Capstone Practicum	3 5
Total Hours			32

The number of awarded credits in Blocks 1-5 must total between 120-128, which is the number of credits required to earn a BSN from the constituent institution of the NC Independent Colleges and Universities' RN-BSN Program.

¹ Individual nursing programs may require a maximum of 2 course or 6 credits to meet school specific degree requirements that are not part of the RN to BSN AA. In no case will these additional requirements

necessitate completing more than 128 credits in order to earn a BSN. Catawba College does not require courses beyond those reflected in the RN to BSN Articulation Agreement.

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for admission to Catawba College.

Grade of "B" or higher required to receive credit in transferrable courses. Catawba College requires a minimum 3.0 GPA for graduation. A student's cumulative GPA (including community college courses) will be calculated in the admissions decision.

[Visit the NCCC website for more information about the RN to BSN Articulation Agreement.](#)

PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in the RN-BSN option are expected to adhere to the following:

1. Maintain an active, unencumbered RN license in the State of North Carolina
2. Maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA)
3. Achieve "satisfactory" completion (80 (B) weighted average) of all course and practicum competencies and related proficiencies (for pass/fail grading)
4. Achieve "satisfactory" performance evaluations in practicum settings during off-campus rotations (for pass/fail grading)
5. Attain a "B" or better in all nursing courses

A student falling below a 3.0 cumulative GPA will be placed on probation during the following term of enrollment. A student's GPA must increase to a 3.0 (or above) by the end of the probationary term to remain in the program. Failure to meet the 3.0 GPA requirement after one probationary term will lead to dismissal from the program. In certain circumstances, students who have been dismissed may reapply to the program. The Chair of Nursing has the final say in this matter.

Catawba College RN to BSN Academic Procedures

Academic Advisement

Students are registered for their first semester of courses upon admission. Students are expected to review the required course of study for their concentration at the time of enrollment. The following semester students are responsible for communicating with their assigned Academic Advisor who will advise them on the courses being offered the next semester, the courses they need, and their personal identification number (PIN). Students are responsible for registering for their classes utilizing their PIN through CatLink. Advising takes place once each semester prior to registration beginning. Students are advised in the Fall for Spring registration and in the Spring for Summer and Fall. Faculty email advising materials and it is in the student's best interest to communicate with their advisor especially during this pre-registration period. The advisor can then review the student record and anticipate possible areas of concern or discussion based on the student's work and grade point average. The final responsibility for meeting degree requirements rests with the student. Students are expected to get a degree evaluation online through CatLink to assess their ongoing progress toward degree completion.

Appeals Policy

Students wishing to appeal a grade must adhere to the policy as outlined in the *Catawba College Academic Catalog*. Students should first inform the course professor of their intent to appeal.

Students should not contact the faculty member in regard to the appeal while the appeal is in process.

Students will be allowed to continue in the program during the appeal process. If a student's appeal is denied through the College appeals process, the student may be dropped from nursing course rolls. If the student's appeal is granted through the College appeals process, the student will continue without a lapse in study.

Attendance Policy (Online)

In accordance with Catawba College's academic attendance policy, a student must be present for at least 75% of each scheduled class, lab, or clinical experience in order to receive credit for the course. All RN-BSN students are expected to be present for all scheduled practicum experiences. A tentative schedule for completion of clinical practicum hours should be approved by preceptors. Changes in the schedule are permitted as necessary and approved by the preceptors and student. Students are expected to adhere to scheduled practicum days and approach scheduled practicum days as they would any type of employment with plans in place for sick children, etc. Preceptors should be contacted before any missed clinical practicum. The student is responsible for making arrangement with the preceptor to reschedule missed clinical practicums. Students should notify professors of any changes or absences immediately through Catawba email.

In an online course attendance will be determined by activity in the class. An absence of activity during any week (example Monday to Sunday) will count as an absence for the period of measuring attendance. Activity includes mail correspondence, discussion board postings, submitted assignments and assessments.

Make-up work and any associated penalties are at the discretion of the professor and will be explained in the course syllabus. The student is expected to initiate the process and contact the professor prior to any missed course assignments. Make-up will depend upon the reason for missing the work, whether the student followed protocol regarding contacting the professor, nature of the missed experience, and availability of necessary resources.

Conflict Resolution

If a student encounters conflicts or concerns in a nursing class or practicum area, the student should first approach the faculty member involved in the class or practicum experience. If an acceptable resolution is not achieved, the student should follow the hierarchical listing below:

1. Course Professor
2. Chair of Department of Nursing
3. Dean, School of Health Science and Human Performance
4. Provost for College

WRITING, SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION, and ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE

The Catawba College Department of Nursing utilizes the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) as the standard guide for scholarly writing, formatting, citation, and documentation in nursing courses and related academic assignments.

Effective written communication is an essential competency in professional nursing practice. Written assignments should demonstrate clarity, organization, professionalism, critical thinking, and scholarly integrity. Students are expected to develop ideas logically, communicate effectively, and adhere to appropriate standards of grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and academic formatting.

Assignments containing excessive grammatical errors, poor organization, improper citation practices, inadequate scholarly support, or failure to follow APA guidelines may result in grade deductions or other academic consequences as determined by course faculty.

Students are encouraged to seek academic support when needed. The [Catawba Writing Center](#) is available to assist students with writing development, organization, grammar, APA formatting, and scholarly communication. The Writing Center is located on the Library Mezzanine.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Academic Work

The Department of Nursing recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and generative AI tools may serve as supplemental resources to support learning, organization, brainstorming, grammar review, and academic skill development when used ethically and appropriately.

However, students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and scholarly quality of all submitted work. The use of AI tools does not replace the student's responsibility to demonstrate independent critical thinking, academic engagement, clinical reasoning, and mastery of course content.

Unless otherwise prohibited or restricted by course faculty, acceptable AI use may include:

- Grammar and spelling review;
- Organizational assistance or outlining;
- Idea generation or brainstorming;

- APA formatting guidance; and
- Study support or clarification of concepts.

Unacceptable use of AI includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting AI-generated work as one's own original work;
- Using AI to complete assignments, examinations, discussion posts, care plans, reflections, or clinical documentation without faculty permission;
- Fabricating references, citations, patient information, research findings, or scholarly sources;
- Misrepresenting AI-generated content as independent scholarly work; or
- Violating course-specific policies regarding AI or academic integrity.

Faculty may require disclosure of AI use in assignments and may establish course-specific limitations or expectations regarding acceptable AI use. Students are expected to comply with all faculty instructions regarding the use of AI technologies in coursework.

Improper or unauthorized use of AI may constitute academic dishonesty and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Department of Nursing and [Catawba College Academic Integrity policies](#).

Dismissal from the Program

The Department of Nursing Administration reserves the right to dismiss from the program any student who fails to meet academic and/or non-academic behavioral, attitudinal, ethical, and/or practice standards. Further, students who present physical or emotional problems which conflict with safety essential to nursing practice and do not respond to appropriate treatment or counseling within a reasonable period of time will be dismissed from the program. Students will be dismissed if they demonstrate behavior that is a threat to public health and safety. Unsatisfactory behavior may consist of a pattern of behavior or performance or a single incident, depending on the incident. Dismissal may occur at any point in any course in the program, which includes immediate dismissal if indicated.

Electronic Device Usage in Classroom and Practicum Experiences

To promote professionalism, patient safety, confidentiality, and effective learning, students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines regarding the use of electronic devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other mobile devices) in classroom and practicum settings:

1. **Professional Conduct and Digital Etiquette**
Students must demonstrate professional behavior and appropriate digital etiquette at all times when using electronic devices.
2. **Authorized Educational Use Only**
Electronic devices may be used only for educational purposes and when authorized by faculty, preceptors, or agency personnel. Personal use is prohibited during classroom instruction and practicum experiences.
3. **Personal Communications During Practicum**
Personal phone calls, texting, social media use, and other non-educational communications are prohibited during practicum hours. Electronic devices should be placed in airplane mode or otherwise silenced, unless otherwise directed. A written warning will be issued for a first violation. A second violation will result in a practicum failure.
4. **Compliance with Agency Policies**
Students must comply with all practicum agency policies regarding electronic device use. When agency policy requires devices to be powered off, students are expected to do so and may access electronic information only in designated areas.

5. **Patient-Centered Care**

Students must maintain full attention on patients and demonstrate respect at all times. If electronic device use is necessary during patient care, students should explain the purpose of the device use and how it supports patient care, while minimizing interruptions.

6. **Protection of Patient Confidentiality**

Electronic devices may facilitate timely access to clinical information; however, students are responsible for safeguarding all patient information and maintaining strict compliance with HIPAA and other applicable privacy regulations.

7. **Monitoring of Device Use**

Faculty, preceptors, and agency personnel reserve the right to review the applications, programs, or resources being accessed on a student's electronic device during educational or practicum activities.

8. **Responsibility for Personal Property**

Students are responsible for maintaining possession and security of their electronic devices at all times. Catawba College and the Department of Nursing assume no responsibility for devices that are lost, stolen, or damaged while on campus or at practicum sites.

9. **Device Readiness**

Students are required to bring their designated electronic device to practicum experiences and ensure it is fully charged and operational.

10. **Infection Prevention and Device Hygiene**

Electronic devices may serve as reservoirs for microorganisms and contribute to the transmission of pathogens. Students are expected to clean, disinfect, and decontaminate their devices regularly and in accordance with infection control guidelines.

11. **Privacy Violations and Disciplinary Action**

Any violation of patient privacy involving the use of an electronic device may result in HIPAA-related sanctions by the practicum agency and may lead to disciplinary action by the Department of Nursing, including possible dismissal from the nursing program.

Electronic Mail

Most communication between faculty members and students occurs via email. Faculty will contact students at their assigned Catawba College email address and through the Blackboard Course Messaging System. Students should check their Catawba College email and Blackboard Course Messaging System several times each week. Do not share your passwords with others.

Graduation Requirements and Application Procedure

All students must apply online for graduation the semester prior to completing degree requirements. Students are responsible for applying online for graduation through CatLink. A graduation fee will be applied to the student's account upon applying for graduation. Students who fail to meet graduation requirements in the semester they apply for graduation are required to reapply for graduation the next semester they plan to graduate.

Requirements for Graduation from the RN-BSN program include:

1. Satisfactory completion of all required courses.
2. A minimum of 128 credit hours.
3. The final 32 credit hours must be completed with Catawba College.
4. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on each course counted toward the major.
5. Submit online application for graduation by the designated date.

Grievance Procedures

Students will follow the Catawba College procedure for all grievances.

<https://catawba.edu/catalog/>

Behavior Policy for the Department of Nursing

Practicum Experience Behavior

Nursing students are expected to arrive on time to all practicum experiences, fully prepared to achieve maximum learning. Nursing students are expected to prepare for practicum experiences through reading, writing, research, and activities that will enable them to achieve practicum objectives successfully. Unsatisfactory practicum performance will be addressed according to program and course policies.

Use of cell phones or other electronic devices is prohibited during practicum experiences, unless allowed by the preceptor. Students who allow ringing cell phones during practicum experiences will receive an unsatisfactory grade.

Culture of Civility

The Department of Nursing promotes a culture of caring, kindness, and civil discourse. Any form of incivility is unacceptable in the Catawba College Department of Nursing. Incivility is defined as disruptive, ill-mannered, or offensive behavior contrary to the well-being of the learning environment. This includes any and all forms of disrespect or disregard for instruction, the instructor, or a fellow student.

The Department of Nursing abides by the American Nurses Association (2015) Position Statement on Incivility, Bullying, and Workplace Violence:

ANA's *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* states that nurses are required to "create an ethical environment and culture of civility and kindness, treating colleagues, coworkers, employees, students, and others with dignity and respect" (ANA, 2015a, p. 4). Similarly, nurses must be afforded the same level of respect and dignity as others. Thus, the nursing profession will no longer tolerate violence of any kind from any source.

All RNs and employers in all settings, including practice, academia, and research, must collaborate to create a culture of respect that is free of incivility, bullying, and workplace violence. Evidence-based best practices must be implemented to prevent and mitigate incivility, bullying, and workplace violence; to promote the health, safety, and wellness of RNs; and to ensure optimal outcomes across the health care continuum.

This position statement, although written specifically for RNs and employers, is also relevant to other health care professionals and stakeholders who collaborate to create and sustain a safe and healthy interprofessional work environment. Stakeholders who have a relationship with the worksite also have a responsibility to address incivility, bullying, and workplace violence.

Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening Policy

The Catawba College Department of Nursing is required to comply with the regulations of the North Carolina State Board of Nursing (NCBON) and The Joint Commission (TJC) for student placement in healthcare facilities that require drug screening and criminal background checks for all healthcare workers, volunteers, students, and faculty. As a condition of participation in practicum educational experiences, students may be required to submit a satisfactory drug screen and criminal record history. All students must read the *Patient Information Confidentiality Commitment for Nursing Students* (Appendix A), sign the *Department of Nursing Confidentiality and Consent Form* (Appendix B) and submit it to the Department of Nursing.

Criminal Background Check Policy

1. Students in the Department of Nursing must submit a satisfactory criminal background check prior to full acceptance into the program.
2. All students will be required to sign a consent form that allows for disclosure of information related to criminal background checks to the State Board of Nursing, and any agency under contract with the Department of Nursing.

3. Criminal background checks may be obtained through established Department of Nursing designated agencies (Castlebranch) or State Law Enforcement Agencies and all costs incurred are the responsibility of the student.
4. The student's criminal background checks will be reviewed by a Program Admissions personnel. Criminal background checks that indicate an offense will be evaluated by a designated Department of Nursing faculty committee for recommendations. The committee will review all reports and may interview the student. The faculty committee is composed of three members appointed by the Chair of the Department of Nursing. The responsibility of the committee is to evaluate information obtained from the student's criminal background check and student interview. The following criteria will be used to guide the evaluation of an unsatisfactory criminal background check:
 - a. Severity and nature of offense as it applies to nursing
 - b. Date of offense
 - c. Comparison of offense to any established statutory law
 - d. Verification of offense through public records
 - e. Student responsibility and punishment associated with the offense.
5. The final decision of the committee will be communicated to the Program Chair, who will notify the appropriate admissions office.

Drug Screen Policy

1. Students in the Catawba College RN-BSN Program may be required to submit a satisfactory drug screen to meet the requirements of their site upon enrolling in a practicum course.
2. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to request students to provide a current urine drug screen at any time during their enrollment in a Department of Nursing Program at Catawba College.
3. All students will be required to sign a consent form that allows for disclosure of information related to drug screen analysis to the State Board of Nursing, and any agency under contract with Department of Nursing.
4. Students may contract with a private or local physician or other healthcare facility to obtain a chain of custody urine drug screen. Students are responsible for all costs associated with drug screening.
5. The initial review of the student's urine drug screen analysis will be by the Coordinator of Student Records. Urine drug screen analysis with confirmed positive results for controlled substances will be evaluated by a designated Department of Nursing faculty committee for recommendations. The committee will review all reports and may interview the student. The faculty committee is composed of three members representing pre- licensure, post-licensure, and graduate programs appointed by the Chair of the Department of Nursing. The responsibility of the committee is to evaluate information obtained from the students' drug screen, academic performance and student interview. The following criteria will be used to guide the evaluation of an unsatisfactory urine drug screen:
 - a. Valid and verified physician prescription for substance.
 - b. Dosage and treatment regimen according to physician orders.
 - c. Use of illegal substance.
6. The final decision of the committee will be communicated to the student in writing with sanctions including but not limited to: Dismissal from the clinical site, dismissal from the nursing program, notification to the State Board of Nursing, referral for counseling and/or other appropriate measures.

Following notification of the committee's decision, the student can choose to accept the sanctions, leave the program pending confirmation testing, or appeal through standard College procedure. All costs incurred for confirmation drug screening procedures are the student's responsibility.

Exposure Policy

When there is a parenteral (such as a needle stick or cut) or mucous membrane (such as a splash to the eye or mouth) exposure to blood or other body fluids, the student is to do the following:

1. Wash the skin exposure site well with soap and water. Flush eye with water. Do not bleed tissue. Rinse well.
2. Inform the preceptor who will guide you on procedure to follow according to agency policy.
3. Inform the facility director and course faculty member.
4. Complete necessary incident or agency reports as soon as possible or at a later date, based on exposure risks. Students are responsible for complying with clinical agency exposure policy and recommended follow up.
5. Leave the practicum site as soon as possible to obtain medical consultation and evaluation.
6. Submit copies of the medical consultation and evaluation to the Department of Nursing, who will monitor compliance or any necessary follow-up.
7. Neither the clinical agency nor Catawba College is responsible for the cost of the care that is involved in the treatment, maintenance, or surveillance of exposure to blood or body fluids. For that reason, the Department of Nursing strongly recommends that all students have personal health insurance.

Undergraduate Grading and Progression Policy

1. RN-BSN Grading Policy

a. Grading Scale

The following grading scale will be used in all undergraduate didactic and laboratory nursing courses:

Grade	Percentage
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A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 and below

b. Grade Calculation and Assignment

Final course grades will be calculated to one decimal place (tenths). Numerical grades will not be rounded upward. Final recorded grades will be reported as whole numbers by truncating the decimal value. For example, a final grade of 79.6 will be recorded as 79.

This policy reflects the Nursing Program's commitment to maintaining clearly defined academic standards that support student achievement and professional accountability, consistent with the expectations of nursing practice.

c. Course Evaluation Criteria

The percentage weight assigned to examinations, assignments, projects, participation, and other course requirements will be specified in the individual course syllabus.

2. RN-BSN Progression Requirements

a. Minimum Course Grade Requirement

To progress in the Catawba College RN-BSN Program, students must earn a minimum grade of “B” in all nursing courses.

b. Course Repetition Policy

A nursing course completed while enrolled in the Catawba RN-BSN Program may be repeated only once.

c. Maximum Number of Repeated Nursing Courses

Students may repeat no more than two nursing courses during their enrollment in the Catawba RN-BSN Program.

3. Academic Standing

Students are responsible for complying with all institutional academic policies. Policies regarding academic probation, suspension, and dismissal are outlined in the Catawba College Academic Catalog and should be consulted for additional information.

Honor Code

As a community of scholars founded upon the ideals of Christianity, Catawba College expects its students to develop and display a strong sense of academic integrity. As in any community, this institution must be governed by regulations; and like the laws of any community, these rules function best when they are fully understood, accepted and cherished by each and every individual member of the community. The Department of Nursing adheres to and supports the Academic Honor Code of the institution. This Academic Honor Code is in the *Catawba College Academic Catalog*. Students in the Department of Nursing may be asked to sign a statement about academic honesty when completing tests, papers, and other assignments.

Information Technology Competencies

Competency	Placement	Student Outcome
Use basic email • Send-receive email • Send attachments	Prerequisite	Students will utilize email in communication with peers, faculty, and advisors.
Word processing	Prerequisite	Students will utilize a word processing program to complete written assignments.
Internet	Prerequisite	Students will utilize an internet browser to access and retrieve information.
Advanced Internet • Blackboard Distance Learning System	Online courses Blackboard orientation and Student user guide	Student will utilize Blackboard Learning Systems to participate in discussion groups, online testing, email and various course assignments.

Electronic Presentations • Slides • Audio Recording • Video Recording	Prerequisite	Student will utilize electronic media (PowerPoint, etc.) to support presentations if applicable and appropriate to course content.
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Name and Address Changes

Students need to keep both the Catawba College and the Department of Nursing informed about changes in their name, address, and telephone number. Changes should immediately be reported through CatLink, *Maintain Information*. Students should also notify Lauren Williams, Administrative Assistant for the Department of Nursing.

Non-Discrimination

Catawba College admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. Catawba College nursing students will care for assigned patients regardless of their race, religion, ethnic background, or pathophysiology.

The faculty members of the Department of Nursing have an academic, legal, and ethical responsibility to prepare graduates who are competent, as well as safe to protect the public and health care community from unsafe nursing practice. It is within that context that students can be disciplined or dismissed from the Department of Nursing for practice or behavior which threatens or has the potential to threaten the safety of a client, family member, another student, faculty member, or health care provider.

Nursing Practice in the Practicum Setting

The faculty members of the Department of Nursing have an academic, legal, and ethical responsibility to prepare graduates who are competent, as well as safe to protect the public and health care community from unsafe nursing practice. It is within that context that students can be disciplined or dismissed from the Department of Nursing for practice or behavior which threatens or has the potential to threaten the safety of a client, family member, another student, faculty member, or health care provider.

Safe Practice

To ensure safe nursing practice is maintained and upheld, the student should adhere to the following at all times:

1. Practice according to the current Nursing Practice Act in the state where the practicum is completed.
2. Practice within the guidelines and outcomes of the Catawba College Department of Nursing.
3. Practice within the rules and regulations of affiliating health care agencies.
4. Practice within the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics.
5. Remain accountable for continuity in preparation, care of patients, and communication.

Unsafe Practice

Students who demonstrate behavior which conflicts with safe nursing practice will be dismissed from the program. Incidents involving unsafe behavior will be considered by the instructor, Chair, Dean, and, if necessary, by other faculty members. Actions will depend upon circumstances, level of student, and actual or potential consequences of the incident.

Unsafe practice includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to use the nursing process effectively, demonstrated by such behaviors as a lack of knowledge of the client's diagnoses, treatments, or medications; failure to follow safety precautions for clients such as side rails, restraints, and position of the client; and acts of omission including utilization of correct principles in the implementation of medication.

2. Failure to take nursing action when such action is essential to the health and safety of the client.
3. Performing nursing activities that are detrimental to the health and safety of the client.
4. Attending any Catawba College Department of Nursing RN to BSN learning experience, including clinical, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
5. Failure to recognize the influence of one's own attitude, values, beliefs, and behavior on the care of clients.
6. Deliberately giving false or inaccurate information regarding nursing care.
7. Failure to assume responsibility for completing nursing care.
8. Performing interventions without adequate preparation or needed supervision.
9. Performing a breach of confidentiality and/or privacy.

Consequences of Unsafe Practice

The consequences of unsafe practice are determined by the nature of the behavior exhibited and the situation in which it occurs and include the following:

1. Dismissal from the practicum experience.
2. Failing grade for the course.
3. Dismissal from the program.
4. Legal action by clinical facility, patient, or other parties.

Patient Confidentiality and Compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Consistent with the ethical and legal standards of professional nursing practice, students are required to maintain the highest level of confidentiality regarding all patient information encountered during classroom, laboratory, simulation, and practicum experiences. All students must comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 (Public Law 104-191) and all applicable federal, state, and agency privacy regulations.

Students must safeguard patient privacy and confidentiality at all times when collecting, documenting, discussing, transmitting, or storing patient information. Access to patient information is permitted only as necessary to fulfill educational and clinical responsibilities and must be limited to information relevant to assigned learning activities.

Any unauthorized disclosure, use, or transmission of patient information, whether intentional or inadvertent, constitutes a breach of confidentiality. Students who violate patient privacy may be subject to disciplinary action by the practicum agency, civil or legal penalties, and sanctions by the Department of Nursing, up to and including dismissal from the nursing program.

Prior to participating in clinical or practicum experiences, all students must:

1. Review the **Patient Information Confidentiality Commitment for Nursing Students** (Appendix A).
2. Sign the **Department of Nursing Confidentiality and Consent Form** (Appendix B).
3. Submit the completed form to the Department of Nursing.

Social Media and Electronic Communication

Catawba College supports the responsible, ethical, and professional use of social media and electronic communication technologies. Nursing students are expected to exercise sound judgment and maintain professional standards when engaging in online activities, including but not limited to social networking sites, blogs, discussion forums, messaging applications, and other electronic communication platforms.

Student Responsibilities

1. Professional Online Conduct

Students are expected to represent themselves professionally in all electronic communications and social media activities. Communications should reflect respect, integrity, and professional values consistent with the standards of the nursing profession.

Students should carefully consider the content they post online and recognize that digital communications may have lasting personal, academic, legal, and professional consequences. Images, videos, comments, and other electronic content should be appropriate and consistent with professional expectations.

2. Protection of Confidential Information

Students must not post, share, transmit, or discuss any information related to patients, clinical agencies, healthcare facilities, faculty, staff, fellow students, or the University through social media or other electronic communication platforms. This prohibition applies regardless of whether identifying information has been removed.

Students are responsible for complying with all HIPAA requirements, confidentiality policies, and professional standards regarding the protection of sensitive information. Copyrighted materials may not be posted, shared, or distributed without appropriate authorization or written permission.

Violations and Disciplinary Action

The Department of Nursing reserves the right to investigate reports of inappropriate, unprofessional, or confidential communications disseminated through social media or electronic platforms. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to remediation, course failure, suspension, dismissal from the Department of Nursing, or other sanctions deemed appropriate by the College and/or practicum agency.

Students are accountable for all content they create, post, share, or otherwise distribute through electronic media.

Faculty-Student Electronic Communication

Department of Nursing faculty, including full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty members, are expected to maintain professional boundaries in all interactions with students.

Faculty members shall not initiate or engage in personal social networking relationships with currently enrolled nursing students, including "friending," following, or similar connections through personal social media accounts, except when required for approved educational activities, official College business, or course-related assignments.

Official College communication channels should be used whenever possible. Faculty contact information, including office telephone numbers and email addresses, will be provided in course syllabi. Catawba College email shall serve as the primary method of communication between faculty and students. Faculty should exercise professional judgment and discretion when communicating with students via personal mobile devices.

Technical Standards Policy

These technical standards are required abilities for effective performance in Catawba College Department of Nursing (DON) programs. The following general abilities have been identified as necessary to meet the

technical standards of progression in the nursing programs. The student will read and sign the Confidentiality and Consent form and submit to the DON. Any change in abilities will require written notification to the DON accompanied by healthcare provider documentation. A student is expected to perform these standards independently. The following general abilities will be evaluated throughout the program.

1. Visual, Auditory, Tactile and Olfactory Abilities
 - a. Sufficient abilities to allow him/her to gather data from written reference materials, oral presentations, demonstrations and observations of a patient and his/her environment.
 - b. Sufficient ability to perform health assessment and interventions; obtain diagnostic specimens and information from digital, analog, waveform representations of physiologic phenomena to determine a client's condition.
 - c. Example of relevant activities:
 - i. Detect changes in client and environment through chart review, physical assessment, and other health parameters
 - ii. Assess and intervene safely on the client's behalf
2. Communication Abilities
 - a. Ability to communicate, comprehend, read, and write in English at a level that allows for accurate, clear, and effective communication.
 - b. Ability to communicate with accuracy, clarity and efficiency with patients, their families and other members of the health care team (including spoken and non- verbal communications, such as interpretation of facial expression, affect and body language).
 - c. Required communication abilities, including reading, writing, language skills and computer literacy.
 - d. Examples of relevant activities:
 - i. Retrieve, understand, and use information (e.g. lab reports, computer data, progress reports, care plans) to communicate effectively with others.
3. Motor Abilities
 - a. The student must have the strength, mobility, and endurance to perform psychomotor skills required for nursing care in any setting.
 - b. Examples of relevant activities:
 - i. Perform CPR
 - ii. Safely move or transfer clients
 - iii. Lift or carry objects weighing 25 pounds
 - iv. Manipulate small equipment such as syringes, vials, and ampules
 - v. Complete assigned period of clinical practicum (from 5 to 12 sequential hours).
4. Behavioral, Interpersonal, and Emotional Abilities
 - a. Student must be able to adapt to ever-changing environments displaying flexibility, and function effectively during stressful situations inherent in clinical situations involving clients and families.
 - b. Student must be able to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior.
 - c. Examples of relevant activities:
 - i. Adhere to the professional nursing and student honor code
 - ii. Remain calm, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities in care of clients
 - iii. Exhibit a mature, sensitive, and effective therapeutic relationships with others

5. Cognitive, Conceptual and Quantitative Abilities
 - a. Student must have the ability to read and understand written documents in English including measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis.
 - b. Student must have the ability to process and understand information and demonstrate the ability to establish a plan of care and set priorities, develop problem-solving skills, and make decisions reflecting consistent and thoughtful analysis of appropriate information throughout the course of study.
 - c. Examples of relevant activities:
 - i. Accurately calculate and administer medications
 - ii. Collect, analyze and prioritize data
 - iii. Synthesize and apply theory to client situation

Student Resources: Department of Nursing

Student Organizations

Student Nurses' Association (SNA)

Additional information regarding membership may be obtained from an organizational officer.

Textbook Procurement

Textbooks may be ordered online through the Campus Bookstore. Professors will not distribute textbooks. For questions contact the Campus Bookstore at 704.637.4470.

<https://www.bkstor.com/catawbastore/home/en>

Support Services

Catawba College offers support services to students, such as The Corriher-Linn-Black Library, Academic Success Services, Counseling Services, and the Catawba College Writing Center. A full list of Support Services can be found under the Support Services link located within each Blackboard course or on the Catawba College website at <http://www.catawba.edu/students>

Schedule Changes

A calendar is provided for each nursing course the first day of class. It is the student's responsibility to follow the schedule as planned. The date, time, and location of learning experiences are subject to unavoidable changes due to inclement weather or other events at the professor's discretion. If schedule changes are necessary, the professor will notify students as soon as possible.

Withdrawal from Courses

Students should only withdraw from courses after consultation with their advisor and course professor. Withdrawal from courses will impact program progression. Students who must withdraw from courses should proceed through the official withdrawal process via CatLink, as stated in the *Catawba College Academic Catalog*. Student are subject to procedures established by the College for schedule modification deadlines, WP/WF deadlines, and grading deadlines. **It is the student's responsibility to complete all requirements of the withdrawal process with the Registrar's office.** Otherwise, grades of "F" will be assigned and the student will maintain financial responsibility.

Patient Information Confidentiality Commitment for Nursing Students

Purpose

Patients have the right to privacy and confidentiality regarding all aspects of their care, including their medical condition, treatment, medical history, personal information, and financial affairs. Nursing students are entrusted with access to sensitive information and are expected to uphold the highest standards of confidentiality and professional conduct in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards.

The Catawba College Department of Nursing is committed to protecting patient privacy and ensuring compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), applicable state and federal regulations, and healthcare agency policies.

Definition of a Breach of Confidentiality

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), a breach of confidentiality occurs when protected health information (PHI) is accessed, used, disclosed, or transmitted in a manner not permitted by applicable privacy regulations, resulting in the compromise of an individual's privacy.

Examples of breaches of confidentiality include, but are not limited to:

- Posting patient information or identifiers on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, CaringBridge, blogs, or similar sites.
- Posting comments, photographs, videos, or personal accounts regarding patients, healthcare facilities, clinical experiences, or the College, regardless of whether identifying information is included.
- Discussing confidential patient information in public settings or through electronic communications.
- Violating HIPAA, agency confidentiality policies, or Department of Nursing confidentiality requirements through verbal, written, electronic, or social media communications.
- Accessing patient records or health information that are not directly related to assigned educational or clinical responsibilities.
- Sharing passwords, login credentials, or other secure access information.
- Improperly storing, transmitting, printing, or disposing of confidential patient information.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Department of Nursing maintains procedures to identify, investigate, and address potential breaches of confidentiality. These procedures may include, but are not limited to:

- Review of student assignments and academic submissions.

- Observation of student interactions in classroom, simulation, and clinical settings.
- Investigation of reports from faculty, staff, students, healthcare agencies, or other individuals.
- Follow-up of suspected or confirmed confidentiality violations.

All students are required to sign the Department of Nursing Confidentiality Agreement prior to participation in clinical or practicum experiences. Signed agreements will be maintained in the student's academic file.

Students, faculty, and staff have a professional and ethical obligation to report any suspected breach of confidentiality that may violate HIPAA, healthcare agency policies, or applicable state or federal laws.

Procedure for Reporting Suspected Breaches

Any student who becomes aware of or suspects a breach of confidentiality must immediately notify a Department of Nursing faculty member.

Upon receiving a report, the faculty member shall promptly notify the Chair of the Department of Nursing. The Chair will coordinate the investigation and notify appropriate representatives of the affected healthcare agency and, when applicable, the student's home institution.

All reporting and follow-up actions will be conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures of the healthcare agency, the College, and applicable legal requirements.

Documentation related to suspected or confirmed breaches will be maintained by the Department of Nursing and may include:

- A description of the incident;
- Documentation of notifications and communications;
- Investigation findings;
- Corrective actions implemented; and
- Final resolution of the matter.

Student Responsibilities

Consistent with professional nursing standards, students must maintain strict confidentiality regarding all patient information encountered during classroom, simulation, laboratory, practicum, and clinical experiences.

Students shall:

- Access only the information necessary to fulfill assigned educational and clinical responsibilities.
- Protect confidential information from unauthorized access, disclosure, or use.
- Refrain from discussing patient information in public or unsecured environments.
- Maintain compliance with HIPAA, healthcare agency policies, and Department of Nursing requirements.

- Exercise professional judgment when using electronic devices, social media platforms, and communication technologies.

Failure to comply with confidentiality requirements may result in disciplinary action, including probation, course failure, suspension, dismissal from the nursing program, loss of clinical placement privileges, legal penalties, or other sanctions deemed appropriate by the College or clinical agency.

The patient's right to privacy and confidentiality must be protected at all times.

Student Confidentiality Agreement

I acknowledge and understand that all information concerning a patient's medical condition, treatment, medical records, personal affairs, financial information, or other protected health information, whether written, verbal, electronic, visual, or otherwise obtained, is confidential.

I agree that I will not access, disclose, discuss, transmit, copy, photograph, record, or otherwise share confidential patient information except as required to fulfill authorized educational or clinical responsibilities and only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know such information.

I understand that unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of confidential information may result in disciplinary action by the College and clinical agency, civil liability, criminal penalties, and dismissal from the nursing program.

Confidential Business Information

I understand that healthcare agencies maintain confidential and proprietary business information. Such information may include, but is not limited to:

- Patient and vendor information;
- Financial and billing records;
- Marketing and public relations materials;
- Operational procedures and training materials;
- Internal policies and manuals;
- Personnel information; and
- Other proprietary business records.

I acknowledge that such information is the property of the healthcare agency and agree not to disclose, reproduce, distribute, or use confidential business information except as authorized in the performance of my educational responsibilities.

Electronic Access and Computerized Information

Electronic information systems include, but are not limited to, electronic health records, computer networks, databases, email systems, voice mail systems, mobile applications, facsimile systems, and other electronic communication platforms.

I understand that information created, transmitted, received, or stored within agency systems is the property of the healthcare agency and may be monitored, reviewed, or audited in accordance with agency policy and applicable law.

I agree to use agency electronic systems solely for authorized educational and clinical purposes and will not copy, modify, install, download, or access software, data, or records without proper authorization.

I further acknowledge and agree to the following:

- I am responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and security of my passwords, login credentials, and access codes.
- My password or access code serves as my electronic signature, and I am accountable for all activity conducted under my credentials.
- I will log out of electronic systems when access is no longer required.
- I will not attempt to obtain, use, or share another individual's password or access credentials.
- I will access only those records necessary to fulfill my assigned educational and clinical responsibilities.
- I will immediately report any suspected unauthorized access to or use of my credentials.
- I understand that all patient information maintained electronically is confidential and must be protected to the same extent as information contained in a paper medical record.
- I am responsible for safeguarding any printed patient information and ensuring its proper handling, storage, and disposal.
- I will comply with all agency information security, privacy, and confidentiality policies.

Acknowledgment

I have read and understand the Patient Information Confidentiality Commitment for Nursing Students. I agree to comply with all confidentiality, privacy, information security, and HIPAA requirements established by Catawba College, the Department of Nursing, and affiliated healthcare agencies.

I understand that violations of this agreement may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from clinical experiences and/or the nursing program, as well as potential civil or criminal penalties under applicable laws and regulations.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Confidentiality and Consent Form

Patient Information Confidentiality Commitment for Nursing Students

I have read and have understood the policy statement on confidentiality. I understand and agree that in the performance of my duties as a student at Catawba College (*at a clinical agency*), I must and will hold in strict confidence all patient information. Further, I understand that violation of this policy, whether intentional or unintentional, may result in disciplinary action, including termination of my enrollment in the Catawba College RN-BSN Program.

Permission for Photography

I grant to Catawba College ("Photographer") and representatives and assigns, the irrevocable and unrestricted right to use and publish photographs of me, or in which I may be included, for editorial, trade, advertising, and any other purpose and in any manner and medium; and to alter and composite the same without restriction and without my inspection or approval.

I hereby release Catawba College and his/her legal representatives from any liability and claims relating to said photographs.

Consent form for Disclosure of Information

I hereby give my consent to Catawba College Department of Nursing to disclose information included in my criminal background check and drug screening to the North Carolina Board of Nursing and clinical agencies under contract with Catawba College Department of Nursing. The information requested will be used only to comply with clinical agency policy and the North Carolina Board of Nursing practice laws and regulations and will be considered confidential. I understand that it is my responsibility to report to the Catawba College Department of Nursing any pending legal action or conviction occurring while enrolled as a student in the Department of Nursing RN-BSN Program.

Acknowledgement of Catawba College Department of Nursing RN-BSN Student Handbook and Technical Standards

I have received a copy of the Catawba College and Department of Nursing RN-BSN Student Handbook. I have read and understand the Handbook and agree to follow Department of Nursing and Catawba College guidelines and policies, including but not limited to, the Student Affiliation Agreement for Healthcare Agencies and the Department of Nursing Grading System and Progression Policy and

Standards. I have read, understand and can perform the technical standards of a student in the Catawba College Department of Nursing.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Date: _____