



ASPEN
UNIVERSITY

2023-2024

Texas

**BSN Pre-Licensure
Handbook**

101 W. Louis Henna Blvd.
Austin, TX 78728

Purpose of the Handbook

The BSN Pre-Licensure Student Handbook has been developed to assist students as they progress through the Core. This Handbook is intended to highlight information specific to the School of Nursing and Health Sciences (SONHS) and the BSN Pre-Licensure program. The information is only a supplement to the Aspen University Academic Catalog and does not supersede information, policies, or procedures found in the current Aspen University Academic Catalog.

As a student, it is expected that you become familiar and comply with information, policies, and procedures of Aspen University SONHS and the BSN Pre-Licensure program. Failure to read this Handbook does not excuse a student from the requirements and regulations described herein. Any updates to the Handbook will be published on the Aspen University website. Aspen University reserves the right to update the Handbook at any time. Students are responsible for reviewing the Handbook regularly.

Certified as true and correct in content and policy by

Joanne Weiss, Provost

August 31, 2023

University and Program Information

The following information can be found in the Aspen University Academic Catalog.

- BSN Pre-Licensure program description and Program Learning Goals
- Aspen University Accreditation and Authorizations
- Aspen University Mission Statement, University Mission Based Outcomes, and Diversity and Equity Statement

Program Approval

The Aspen University School of Nursing and Health Sciences Bachelor of Science (BSN) Pre-Licensure Program is approved by the Texas Board of Nursing. Inquiries and comments can be forwarded directly to the Texas Board of Nursing, 1801 Congress Avenue, Suite 10-200 Austin, TX 78701.

Academic Policies and Procedures

All academic policies and procedures contained in the recent edition of the Academic Catalog apply to this program.

Nursing Code of Ethics

Faculty

Students

Faculty

As nursing faculty at Aspen University, we embrace our responsibility to all clients entrusted to our care and with those with whom we work and are committed to the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses.

- The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
- The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
- The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.
- The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
- The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
- The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
- The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
- The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and

integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

Students

Students enrolled in a nursing program have a responsibility to society in learning the academic theory and clinical skills required to provide safe, quality nursing care. As Aspen University SONHS students, you will engage in an exciting and dynamic culture of learning that will enable you to acquire and integrate new knowledge and develop core competencies for nursing practice. The expectations of a nursing student are to exercise the same responsible and accountable behavior that will be expected of you upon entering your first job as a registered nurse. The SONHS expects you to engage in professional behaviors as shown by your relationships with faculty, staff, other students, by your professional demeanor in lab, simulation, and clinical experiences, in appearance, and in all forms of communications. The SONHS holds all students accountable for their behavior in these areas.

As nursing students at Aspen University, it is the expectation that you will embrace your responsibility to all clients entrusted to your care and with those with whom you work throughout the program. It is the expectation that you will commit to the National Student Nurses' Association Code of Ethics.

- Advocate for the rights of ALL clients.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of clients, self, and others.
- Provide care for the client in a timely, compassionate, and professional manner.
- Communicate client care in a truthful, timely, and accurate manner.
- Actively promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Promote excellence in nursing by committing to lifelong learning and professional development.
- Treat others with respect and promote an

environment that respects human rights, values, and choice of cultural and spiritual beliefs.

- Collaborate in every reasonable manner with faculty to ensure the highest quality of client care.
- Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which you have not been adequately trained.
- Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care that creates unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
- Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substances in the academic and clinical setting that impairs judgement.
- Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
- Uphold Aspen University and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance.

Curriculum

The SONHS utilizes the following Professional standards to guide the BSN Pre-Licensure curriculum: AACN Baccalaureate Essentials, the Massachusetts Nurse of the Future (NOF) Core Competencies, American Nurses Association (ANA) Standards and Professional Practice Guidelines, and the National Council of State Boards (NCSBN) NCLEX-RN Exam Blueprint.

The curriculum is designed to empower students to develop competencies to provide excellent, safe, and professional Nursing care. These critical competencies are based on knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Nursing knowledge, attitudes, and skills are based on ten competencies: patient-centered care, professionalism, leadership, system-based practice, informatics and technology, communication, teamwork and collaboration, safety, quality improvement, and evidenced-based practice. These competencies assist in preparing students for the NCLEX-RN.

The BSN Pre-Licensure program includes student access to Elsevier's electronic resources in didactic, lab, and clinical courses. Some courses include Sherpath, which is a personalized, integrated digital teaching, and learning ecosystem for healthcare education.

Progression and Retention

Progression: Students are required to pass previous courses in a topic sequence prior to moving on to the next in the sequence (e.g., Community Health I & Community Health I Clinical must be completed prior to Community Health II & Community Health II Clinical; Adult Health I, II, III, and IV must be taken and successfully passed in sequence).

Students must earn a minimum grade of 75% to pass all required nursing core courses. There is no rounding of grades. When there is a decimal attached to an earned grade, the final grade will be recorded as the whole number. For example, a student who earns a 73.8% will earn a final grade of 73%. Please refer to the Grading

Policy for the Nursing Grade Scale.

Students who are unsuccessful in a nursing core course must submit an appeal to be added to a ranking list or a subsequent cohort. Please refer to the Ranking Appeals section of the Appeal Policy, for more information.

Students who fail or withdraw from nursing core courses are not guaranteed a spot in another cohort. Every effort should be made to pass a course successfully the first time. For more information about nursing core course withdrawals and failures, see the Nursing Core Course Withdrawals and Failures section of the Grading Policy.

Retention: Completion of the BSN Pre-Licensure Program requires that all elements (courses, course work, assignments, clinical experiences, etc.) of the Program of Study be met following the required sequence of courses and within the required time frames established by the SONHS and Aspen University.

Students in the BSN Pre-Licensure program who withdraw from the program, are administratively dropped from the program, or who are dismissed from the program may be considered for re-entry. Students out of the program for any period of time will have their general education courses reevaluated; students may have to retake general education requirements as a refresher if they do not meet the standards in place at the time of readmission. Students who are out of the program for a period of up to 16 weeks will be required to pass an assessment checkoff for each nursing core course completed; if a student does not pass the assessment checkoff on the first attempt, they will have to retake the course before they can continue to progress in the program. Students who are out of the program for a period longer than 16 weeks will be required to start the nursing core portion of the program over; no previously completed nursing core courses will be counted toward program progression and completion.

National Council Licensure Examination-RN

Upon completion of the BSN Pre-Licensure Program, graduates are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) for initial licensure. Initial licensure is granted upon successful completion of the NCLEX-RN Examination. To be eligible to take the NCLEX-RN after graduation, students must have completed the BSN Pre-Licensure program and have had their degree conferred. NO exceptions are made to this policy.

Academic-NCLEX Success Coaching

Academic/NCLEX Success Coaching promotes student success by increasing the connection points between the student and their first nursing course to graduation. Coaching is an individualized process that facilitates goal clarification and achievement.

Academic/NCLEX Success Coaching guides students to success through development and application of personal wellbeing, motivation, identification of gaps, goal planning, study strategies, time management and resource referrals.

The coach works with you to develop action plans that help you meet your academic goals and success to reach your full potential.

Students virtually meet to participate in one-on-one coaching sessions with the Academic /NCLEX Success Coach. Students may schedule a virtual session any time during their Nursing Program. Students will have access to the Academic/NCLEX Success Coach after graduation to assist in preparation for the NCLEX Exam.

The Academic/NCLEX Coach can assist you in creating a personalized study plan for more effective learning. Not only will the coach assist you in creating your individualized study plan but will also meet with you on a consistent basis to support you in its implementation.

The individualized study plan session often includes learning strategies and test taking techniques to help you with:

- Managing your time

- Organizing your academic materials
- Taking notes during class
- Studying for quizzes, tests, and exams
- Confidence building

The final 16 weeks begins the final preparation towards the NCLEX Exam. The emphasis is on gaining proficiency in utilizing the Kaplan NCLEX resources and Study Plan. Focus is on becoming proficient in the steps of review and remediation, identifying areas of individual strengths and weaknesses in critical thinking and content, understanding the NCLEX test blueprint, and developing a foundation related to the Kaplan Decision Tree strategies and NCLEX style questions. In addition, during these 16 weeks, NCLEX Coaches are available in class and out of class for 1:1 virtual sessions to individually assist students on their NCLEX preparation journey. Finally, students are directed on how to analyze their personalized study journey while evaluating their own readiness for the NCLEX exam as they move beyond class after graduation and continue preparation for test day.

NCLEX Coaching continues post-graduation. NCLEX Coaches complete outreach with all graduates and meet 1:1 virtually to further develop preparedness on an individual level and to assist in completing the preparation process - offering guidance, tips, tutoring, and NCLEX knowledge prior to test day.

Kaplan NCLEX Prep

Kaplan's NCLEX Prep program is incorporated into the final two sessions of the program. Additionally, after graduation students are provided with an NCLEX Coach who will meet with them individually to assist with their preparation for NCLEX. These resources are provided to students to help them be successful on their first attempt of the NCLEX-RN exam.

Pinning and Commencement Ceremonies

A formal pinning ceremony is held multiple times per year to recognize the BSN Pre-Licensure students completing program requirements and preparing to enter the Nursing Professions. The actual tradition of the nursing pin, a medal of excellence and ceremonial pinning originated in the 1860's at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas Hospital in London. The nursing pin, a proud symbol and tradition shared by nurses, represent where

your professional education and experience were earned. Students may purchase their pin via Jostens. Aspen University does not provide pins for students.

Aspen University holds an annual Commencement ceremony. More information can be found on the Commencement page on the website.

Testing Policy

Some nursing core courses have a proctored midterm and a proctored final exam. Students must attain a 75% on both the midterm and final exam to progress in the program. Any student who does not score 75% on the first attempt will be offered a second attempt at the exam. Remediation is required and must be completed prior to the second attempt. First and second attempts are preset in the session schedule that all students receive. Remediation will occur with an assigned faculty member.

Midterms will consist of 50 questions and include content from Modules 1 through 4. The midterm will be administered at or near the midway point of the course. Students will be given 65 minutes to complete the midterm exam.

Finals will consist of 100 questions and will include 50% of the questions based on content from Modules 5 through 8, and 50% cumulative from Modules 1 through 8. The final will be administered at or near the end of the course. Students will be given 130 minutes to complete the final exam.

Students must arrive to the testing center at least 15 minutes prior to the start time of the scheduled exam. Student ID or state issued picture ID must be in hand to enter the testing environment.

Students must notify the nursing faculty for their course and their Program Director if they are running late for an exam. No student will be allowed into an exam after the first student completes the exam and has left the testing room. If arriving late and entry to test is granted, the student will only have the remaining time left to complete their test. No additional time will be provided. If the student arrives late and entry is not granted, the student will forfeit the exam attempt. In this case, the second exam attempt will be the student's final score for the exam.

If an extenuating circumstance occurs that does not allow a student to sit for a scheduled exam, the student must reach out to the nursing faculty for their course and Program Director prior to the scheduled exam. The excuse must be verifiably documented and must be approved by the

Program Director and Dean of Nursing.

Books, papers, any electronic devices, cell phones, smart phones, smart glasses, ear buds, smart watches, or any other Wi-Fi/Bluetooth or internet accessible devices must be placed at the front or back of the room as designated by the proctors in the room. Students should not have anything in their pockets during the exam, without prior approval from the Program Director. No hoods or hats are allowed to be worn during the exam. Personal ear buds and noise cancelling headphones are not allowed to be worn. No food or drinks are allowed in the testing room.

Calculators and ear plugs will be provided by the school.

Scratch paper will be provided by the proctor. Students should bring only a pen or pencil with them and have that available. The student will put their name on the scratch paper. All scratch paper will be collected as the student leaves the room.

If a student needs to take a bathroom break, they should raise their hand to alert the proctor. The time taken for bathroom breaks is not added to the remaining testing time. Only one student at a time is allowed to go and return to the bathroom during the testing period.

Students are to remain quiet once they have entered the testing area. Any student who is disruptive to the testing environment in any way can be removed by the faculty or proctor. The exam of the offender will be stopped, and the student will receive a zero grade for that attempt.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The University strives to treat students and student organizations in a consistent and fair manner while respecting their rights and responsibilities as members of the Aspen University community. We are committed to balancing the interest of the individual student or student organization with the needs of the community at large. Our goal is to uphold our institutional values.

Students should refer to the Academic Catalog for the Academic Integrity Policy, Disability Policy, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Student Identity Policy, Testing Policy (p. 9), and Substance Use and Abuse Policy.

Students are responsible for:

- **Active Learning:** Active learning is learning that requires student engagement. Students will be required to participate in active learning throughout the nursing core curriculum. Active learning activities include but not limited to, pre-class assignments, unfolding case studies, NCLEX practice questions, role playing, concept maps, peer teaching, or simulation. Active learning promotes higher order of thinking thus enhancing the student's ability to critically think, increasing retention of information, and improving performance on exams and evaluations. Participation is formally recorded via the D2L Online Classroom; students must participate in D2L at least once during the first week of the course and at least once every subsequent 14 days or they will be administratively withdrawn from the course.
- **Time Management:** Time management will be one of the biggest challenges students must conquer to be successful in the SONHS BSN Pre-Licensure Program. In addition to scheduled classroom time, students will also have assigned clinical rotations. Clinical rotations are scheduled for students and there are no guarantees that clinicals can be rescheduled once assigned. Missing a clinical could result in failure of the course. Students can use the following to assist in managing their time in the smartest, healthiest, and rewarding way: Get a planner and keep track of all assignments, exams, class/lab/clinical times, study times, social events, etc.; make "to-do" list that includes everything due for the week, students feel a sense of satisfaction when marking completed items off the "to-do" list; banish things that waste your time (i.e. Social Media); maximize use of downtime by downloading a NCLEX question app and completing practice questions; adopt a "One-and-Done" approach by going into performance based assessments with the attitude of passing on the first attempt.
- **Communication:** Communication is interacting effectively with clients, families, faculty, staff, and colleagues and fostering mutual respect and shared decision making. Effective and professional communication between students, students and faculty/staff, students and clients, and students and healthcare providers are incredibly important. Faculty will provide students with an email address for communication; occasionally faculty may provide students with a phone number. Email is generally the preferred method of communicating with faculty unless otherwise specified. Students should think about the best way to communicate with faculty prior to making contact. For instance, if you are studying for an exam and have a question and send an email at 2:00am, it is unlikely you will receive an answer until the next day or potentially not before the exam. When sending an email ensure to address the faculty in a professional manner (i.e., Mr., Mrs. Dr.; not by first name or just the last name), ensure to include the cohort name, class and section number in the subject line of the email, review the email before sending to ensure the correct message and tone are getting across to the faculty, check the email for grammar and spelling, and ensure the question is not found within the course information in D2L.
- **Professionalism:** Professionalism is demonstrating accountability for one's actions and ensuring one's actions are consistent with moral, legal, ethical, regulatory, and humanistic principles. The purpose of professionalism in nursing is to provide top-quality client care while upholding the values of accountability, respect, and integrity. Students can demonstrate professionalism in nursing by advocating for clients; communicating effectively with faculty, staff, colleagues, clients, and other healthcare providers; working together as a team by collaborating with and mentoring others; keeping a positive attitude; practicing evidence-based care by keeping up with course information and practicing skills; and maintaining integrity by taking personal responsibility and holding yourself accountable for any mistakes or near misses.

Should students require assistance in developing any of the above or have concerns they are encouraged to contact their course faculty or academic advisor.

Expectations for Professional Behaviors for Nursing Students

Nursing students are held to a high level of professional conduct.

- **Plagiarism**
- **Academic Integrity Concerns**
- **Discrimination:** The unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, or sexual orientation. (American Psychological Association (2022), *Discrimination: What it is, and how to cope.*)
- **Incivility:** Engaging in one or more rude, discourteous, or disrespectful actions that may or may not have a negative intent behind them. (American Nurses' Association (n.d.) *Violence, Incivility, & Bullying.*)
- **Bullying:** Engaging in repeated, unwanted, harmful actions intended to humiliate, offend, and cause distress in the recipient. (American Nurses' Association (n.d.) *Violence, Incivility, & Bullying.*)
- **Unethical Use of Social Networks:** Communicating negative, harmful, demeaning, and libelous comments, photographs, etc. about students, faculty, staff, clinical affiliates, SONHS, Aspen University, or anyone else associated with Aspen University, including HIPPA-protected information.
- **Nurse-Client Relationships:** Students must assume personal responsibility for being in physical and mental condition to give safe nursing care and for the knowledge and skills necessary to give this care.

- **Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:**

- Providing client care in a predictably unsafe or harmful manner, for example:
 - carrying out a procedure without competence or without guidance of a qualified person.
 - willfully or intentionally carrying out physical and/or mental harm to a client.

- exhibiting careless or negligent behavior in connection with the care of a client.
- refusing to assume the assigned and necessary care of a client and failing to inform the faculty with immediacy so that an alternative measure for care can be found.
- Disrespecting the privacy of a client, classmate, faculty, or institution:
 - using the full name of a client in a written assignment and/or removing any data generated by the clinical facility of any sort and in any form and by any means (electronic; photographs; paper copies) from the clinical area.
 - discussing confidential information in inappropriate areas, such as elevators, cafeteria, parking structures, etc.
 - discussing confidential information about a client with third parties who do not have a clear and legitimate need to know.
- Falsifying client records or fabricating client experiences.
- Failing to report omission of or error in treatments or medications.
- **Disruptive Behavior in the Learning Environment:** Conduct that is hostile, uncivil, disrespectful of the rights and property of others, denotes a clear uncooperative demeanor with Aspen University or SONHS policy or any behavior that obstructs or disrupts the learning environment (e.g., offensive language to include cursing, harassment, bullying, repeated outbursts which disrupts the flow of instruction, excessive talking amongst peers verbal, written or via chat, or the use of any electronic device which disturbs others).

Violations of Code of Ethics or Professional Expectations

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to verbal or written reprimand, immediate removal from the classroom, lab, simulation, clinical setting, or campus, expulsion from the University or any other action deemed appropriate for violations of the student's responsibilities. Each incident and each individual involved are unique, and all mitigating circumstances

should be considered with each violation. This does not, however, suggest that violations can be dealt with lightly. Refer to Violations of Code of Conduct Policy for more information.

Professional Dress and Behavior

Students must obtain and wear an official Aspen University uniform and identification badge. For more information, please contact Clinical Coordination Office. Nursing students have a specific dress code listed below. All students are expected to present themselves as representatives of Aspen University's program. All students are expected to be respectful to faculty, student colleagues, staff, patients, and their families. Reports of unprofessional behavior will result in your being counseled by the clinical faculty and/or the Program Director/Clinical Practice Manager and initiation of a Code of Conduct violation which is subject to review by the School of Nursing & Health Sciences. You are expected to follow Aspen University's official [Code of Conduct](#) policy identified in the University Academic Catalog.

Student Nurse Uniform Attire

The student uniform should be worn for all on campus or clinical activities, unless otherwise specified by the clinical site. Any deviations in dress at clinical including simulation lab will result in a Code of Conduct violation or the student being sent home from clinical and placed on clinical probation. Proper identification **MUST** be worn at all times in all clinical, lab/skills simulation and classroom settings. The uniform and identification requirements of the clinical agency are to be followed.

The uniform consists of:

- Wrinkle free black scrub pants
- Wrinkle free Aspen blue scrub tops, embroidered with the University logo
- Wrinkle free white lab jacket (optional)
 - A white lab jacket must be worn if appropriate street clothes are worn in place of the uniform for patient selection. Shorts, very short skirts, jeans, tank tops, tube tops, see-through clothing, exercise clothes (sweats), and open-toed shoes are not acceptable attire in any clinical agency. Clothing depicting offensive language or pictures is not acceptable.
- Scrubs and white lab jackets may be purchased

through the Apparel Pro.

- Name Badge, available from the SONHS Clinical Coordination Office. The name badge will show your picture and lists your legal first name, and "Student Nurse" or "Nurse" as required by the Clinical Partner. The name badge must be worn while attending any clinical activity, lab/simulation or classroom. Name badge will not be worn outside of the clinical agency or campus.
- White, black or neutral socks or hose are to be worn with the uniform.
- Shoes are to be predominantly white or black, duty leather shoes with predominantly white or black soles, closed heels or predominantly white or black, clean athletic shoes (no mesh). Shoelaces must also coordinate.
- Undergarments will not be visible through the uniform.
- Additional items included as part of the uniform are:
 - Stethoscope with a bell and diaphragm head
 - Penlight
 - Bandage scissors
 - Black pens
 - If a belt organizer is used, it must be white or blue.
 - Watch with a second hand.
- Optional items:
 - White or black cotton tee shirts, crew neck or turtleneck, may be worn under uniforms for warmth or modesty.
 - A white scrub jacket may be worn in the clinical setting for warmth.

Professional Appearance

- Hair should be short or pulled back and styled neatly. Natural hair color is required; no purple, green, pink, blue or similar hair color is permitted. Beards or mustaches, if worn, should be neatly trimmed. Artificial eyelashes or eyelash extensions are not

permitted.

- Fingernails should be neatly trimmed and free of cracked nail polish. Only clear or neutral nail polish may be used, if desired. Acrylic nails, gels, overlays, dips, powders or any other nail enhancements are not permitted.
- Permitted jewelry includes one pair of studded earrings, a watch, and a plain ring band. No other visible jewelry is acceptable including tongue rings or other facial jewelry. Clear spacers may not be worn in place of facial piercings.
- Tattoos and any other body art should be covered. (Students are directed to follow the agency guidelines when in specified areas such as nursery, labor and delivery, and operating room.)
- Perfume, after-shave lotion, scented lotions, and heavy makeup are not acceptable in the clinical area.
- Gum chewing is not acceptable.
- Clothing worn in non-clinical setting activities not requiring student uniform should adhere to professional standards.
- Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom, Lab/simulation or in the patient clinical setting. Students are expected to follow agency guidelines and clinical faculty directions regarding appropriateness of cell phone usage in the clinical setting.
- Please remember that students represent Aspen University. Your appearance must be clean, neat, and professional.

Professional Attire for Specific Community Health Experiences, Presentations, Behavioral Health Clinical, or as Indicated by Faculty

Please check with your Community Health faculty on agencies that require “street clothes,” also known as business casual. Business casual is acceptable and can be interpreted as:

- Women: wrinkle free slacks (dress pants), skirts (mid-calf to about two inches above the knee), blouses, shells, cardigans, blazers or dresses, shoes that cover the entire foot.

- Men: wrinkle free dress pants, button down shirts, polo shirts (short sleeved shirts with a collar), blazers, shoes that cover the entire foot.
- Do not wear:
 - Denim material
 - Anything that is see-through, short, tight, or shows too much skin.
 - Flip-flops or tennis shoes/sneakers.

Attendance and Punctuality

Each course in the BSN Pre-Licensure Program contains very significant content that builds on previous content. Students are required to be prepared, attend, and actively participate in all online class assignments, seminars, lab, simulation, and clinical experiences. Attendance and punctuality are professional behaviors correlated to the student’s success. Absences from seminar, lab, simulation, or clinical experiences compromises the student’s ability to demonstrate achievement of course outcomes and puts the student in jeopardy being unsuccessful in the course. Failure to participate in the online classroom during the first week of the course and at least once every consecutive fourteen days thereafter will result in administrative withdrawal from the course.

Extenuating Circumstances

Occasionally, extenuating circumstances (i.e., personal illness, death in the immediate family, court subpoena, jury duty, severe weather, or military service) occur that prevent a student from attending seminar, lab, simulation, or clinical. These absences are to be discussed with the course faculty & Program Director in order to assure course outcomes are met.

Students experiencing variances in health status that interferes with the ability to provide safe nursing care should not attend seminar, lab, simulation, or clinical experiences. The student is to notify the faculty in person, by email, or by phone at least one (2) hours prior to the scheduled time. Students may be required to submit documentation of the illness from a healthcare provider. Any student experiencing an emergency department visit or hospitalization must provide a release to return and status of participation in direct client care. Students experiencing pregnancy or an extended illness should

contact their Academic Advisor or the Office of Disability Services to discuss their situation. Students are responsible for any content missed during the absence.

Leaving Clinical Site

During a clinical rotation, a student may not leave the clinical site. If a student has an emergency, such as an illness, family situation, or other extenuating circumstances, they must communicate with their clinical instructor. The clinical instructor will communicate with program leadership and receive further instructions and guidance. Only with permission from the clinical instructor may the student leave the site. Actual clinical hours attended should be documented and the missed hours will need to be made up during the same session.

Refusing a Clinical

A student must accept a clinical assignment when given advance notice of the clinical site, date, and time. If the student has questions or concerns, they need to discuss this with the program director prior to the first assigned clinical day. Any decision made will be at the discretion of the program director overseeing the student. Once a decision is made, that student is committed to that clinical rotation and must attend all the dates required of them.

Missed Lab, Simulation, and Clinical Hours

Students are provided with lab, simulation, and clinical opportunities and are expected to attend all events. Students must appropriately notify their faculty, clinical coordinator, and program leadership if there are extenuating circumstances preventing them from attending. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by program leadership. The excuse must be verifiably documented and must be approved by the Program Director and Dean of Nursing. Any approved makeup hours will be under the direction of the program director. All course requirements, including lab, simulation, and clinical hours, must be met prior to course completion. Failure to complete required hours will result in failure to progress in the program.

Lab, Simulation, and Clinical Make Ups

If a student is granted make up hours, these must occur before course completion. If a student fails to attend make

up hours prior to the course completion date, the course requirements have not been met. This will result in course failure and the student will not progress in the program.

Documenting Hours

The hours for all lab, simulation, and clinical experiences required are required to be documented in Project Concert. Students must follow the instructions in the lab or clinical course syllabus.

Tardy Policy

Tardiness is defined as being late to seminar, lab, simulation, or clinical. Students are expected to be prompt to seminar, lab, simulation, and clinical. Any anticipated tardiness is to be reported to the faculty prior to the scheduled start time of seminar, lab, simulation, or clinical.

Consequences of being tardy within the same course:

- First occurrence – Student will receive a warning.
- Second occurrence – Student will be placed on clinical probation.
- Any subsequent occurrences will result in course failure.

Smoking

Aspen University campuses are designated as non-smoking environment. Students are not to smoke anywhere on site.

Aspen University SONHS students are to refrain from smoking at clinical facility sites. Students are to maintain professional presentation during all clinical experiences. Students with noticeable smoke odor are subject to removal from the clinical site by the faculty. Repeated violations will be reported to the Code of Conduct Committee.

**Please note certain clinical facilities include nicotine as part of their screening and will not allow students to rotate at their facility who test positive from nicotine or its byproduct, cotinine.*

Student Drug and Alcohol Screening

The practice of professional nursing demands that the

clinician be free from the influence of any substance that would impair judgment and thinking ability. As a result, health care agencies are requiring students who work directly with patients to undergo drug screening. Nursing students must also be free from impairing substances. Health care agencies and the SONHS require drug screening of all nursing students prior to their first clinical experience. In addition, SONHS students are subject to screening if either the faculty suspects that the student is impaired at any time on campus, or during any health care experience or any other university or work-related activity. Any student whose test is deemed positive will be reported for Code of Conduct. Determination will be made by the Program Director. The SONHS is required to report any positive screens and/or suspicion refusal to the appropriate board.

This policy is designed to identify the procedures to be followed for both types of testing as well as to outline the appeal and readmission to the program.

Initial Urine Drug Screening

- Prior to the first clinical course students will be randomly given a drug screen authorization form and a 24-hour time frame to complete a urine drug screen at one of the laboratory options provided.
- Students will be required to show picture identification upon arrival. A driver's license or passport are acceptable forms of identification.
- The cost for all screening and medical review (if deemed necessary) is the students' responsibility.
- A negative report is necessary to continue in the program of study in the SONHS.
- This screen need not be repeated as long as the student maintains continuous enrollment. Continuous enrollment is defined as enrollment in nursing classes during all consecutive semesters until graduation.
- Students may be re-tested for cause or reasonable suspicion.

Substances Included in Urine Drug Screen

Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Cannabinoids, Cocaine metabolite, Cotinine (tobacco/nicotine), Fentanyl, Meperidine, Methadone,

Opiates, Oxycodone, Phencyclidine, Propoxyphene

For Cause or Reasonable Suspicion Drug Nicotine and Alcohol Screening

The SONHS may ask a student to submit to a drug and alcohol screening at any time a faculty member believes that the student may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This includes but is not limited to the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the student's person or in the student's possession, unusual conduct on the student's part that suggests possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol, negative performance patterns, or excessive and unexplained absenteeism or tardiness. Determination will be made by the Program Director after consultation with the clinical faculty.

- Students will be asked to submit to an immediate urine drug and alcohol screening test conducted at one of the laboratory options provided.
- Students will be required to show picture identification upon arrival. A driver's license or passport are acceptable forms of identification.
- The costs for all screening are the students' responsibility.
- A negative report, excluding a positive nicotine result, is necessary to continue in the program of study in the SONHS.

Students Who Refuse Drug Screening

Students who refuse to participate in screening will be required to leave the clinical area and make an appointment with the BSN-PL Program Director. The student will remain out of the clinical area until an investigation has been done and a recommendation has been made by the Program Director. Students who refuse screening will be reported to the Code of Conduct Committee.

A student who refuses will not be allowed into clinical courses; therefore he/she cannot complete the nursing program.

Media Usage

Students may not post to social media or comment on other posts about a lab, simulation, or clinical event for any reason. These may include FERPA or HIPAA violations.

Students are school representatives and are held accountable as such. Violations of this policy will be reviewed by the Code of Conduct Committee. The Code of Conduct Committee can impose punishment up to and including program dismissal.

Communication

As a Nursing Student at Aspen University, it is expected that you emulate the characteristics and traits befitting of a professional nurse, which is the end goal you have identified. It is expected that you will be honest, accountable, respectful, and trustworthy in all aspects of student and academic life, and with all persons that you come in contact within the academic community. Communication is expected to always be respectful, with kindness and the intent that at minimum a neutral resolve will be the conclusion when conflict exists.

Guidelines of Communication with your Faculty Member are presented here so that you understand the timeframe and turnaround time that you may expect a response.

It is important to remember that when you are communicating with your instructor regardless of the format used, that you do so in a respectful manner with a mature and appropriate tone. When communicating by email, do not use CAPS only as this is recognized as an angry and antagonistic tone. State your issue/question succinctly and indicate what guidance you are requesting. Please note that a reasonable response time to requests is 48 – 72 hours, so patience is expected to be exhibited during this time-period. If the issue is of a pressing or urgent matter, please label this as such in the subject line of your email. Do not request your faculty member to be your friend on Facebook or other social media. It is important to keep the professional boundary of faculty member and student intact.

Following the Chain of Command is expected of all students with all issues of concern. If an issue exists within the classroom situation, the student is expected to approach the instructor with whom the issue lies first. If the situation is in the lab, clinical or simulation the student is expected to approach the instructor for that event, and then in not resolved go to the lab/simulation director before making a formal complaint. Should the student feel that the issue has not been addressed fairly, nor abiding by policy, the next appropriate communication is a Formal Complaint which will be reviewed and investigated by the Program Director. The Formal Complaint form must be submitted with applicable and supportive evidence within 90 days of the incident in which the complaint situation has occurred.

Complaints and Grievances

Complaints and Grievances must be filed according to the Complaints and Grievance Policies in the Academic

Catalog.

Course-Faculty Evaluation

As part of Aspen's continued effort to offer courses of the highest quality and effectiveness, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the courses, clinical site as well as provide feedback on course faculty. Evaluations will be distributed to students prior to the end of the session. All evaluations are completely confidential and anonymous.

Lab-Simulation-Clinical Experiences

All clinical requirements must be completed one week prior to the start of the clinical course. All clinical dates and times are subject to the availability of our clinical partners. Students are required to attend clinical dates as scheduled.

Explanation of Lab-Simulation and Clinical Experiences

Lab, Simulation, and Clinical preparation is an expectation of every student. The amount of time required for preparation varies according to course requirements and the setting. The lab component of each nursing core course is determined using a 1:2 ratio; two hours of lab practice is required for each credit hour. The clinical component of each nursing core course is determined using a 1:3 ratio; three hours of clinical practice is required for each credit hour.

- Assignments:
 - All lab and simulation experiences will be located on Campus.
 - The BSN Pre-Licensure Program is fortunate to offer clinical opportunities at healthcare facilities located in Maricopa County and surrounding counties.
 - Clinical placements in close proximity to the Campus or to a student's home address are not guaranteed.
 - While it is desirable to minimize duplication of clinical sites for each student, duplication of placement may be unavoidable as program progression occurs.
 - Students will be assigned to healthcare facilities by the Clinical Practice Manager or Clinical Coordinator.
 - Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the clinical facilities.
- Expectations:
 - Since nursing is also a practice profession, nursing students are required to be prepared, attend, and actively participate in all lab, simulation, and clinical experiences.

- Complete preparation for lab, simulation, or clinical experiences, identified by the requirements and/or guidelines in each nursing core course, is an act that acknowledges and affirms professionalism and is required of all students. Students are expected to arrive wearing the appropriate uniform and by bringing all required equipment, learning materials, and paperwork as required. Please see Uniform Requirements section.
- Successful completion of the lab, simulation, and clinical experience requires attending and actively participating in all required hours. Please see Attendance and Punctuality section for more information.
- Promptness is required and is absolutely necessary in the healthcare profession. Please see Attendance and Punctuality section for more information.
- Students in need of first aid or treatment due to illness, injury, or exposure while in the lab, simulation, or clinical setting should immediately consult with the faculty.
- Students should not use cell phones, pagers, smart watches, tablets, or computers for non-class activities during lab or simulation time. Students are to follow the clinical agency policy regarding any electronic device at the clinical agency. Violation of the clinical agency's policy may result in expulsion from the clinical agency and a course failure.
- Students may not receive personal phone calls or visitors while participating in lab, simulation, or clinical experiences. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the faculty.

Orientation for Clinical Experiences

Students are required to complete facility specific orientation for each clinical placement within an academic year. Students must submit required documents per instruction from the Clinical Placement Manager. Participation in clinical is only allowed with completion of the required paperwork. Each facility has the right to request a specific onsite clinical orientation prior to any

clinical experience. Attendance is mandatory for all clinical orientations. Failure to attend will result in a course failure.

Clinical Requirements

The following are specific to students enrolled in the BSN Pre-Licensure Nursing Core Courses with a lab, simulation, or clinical component. All students must provide documentation to the SONHS for the health status requirements listed below. All health status requirements must be uploaded into Project Concert by the end of the first week following the start of a Nursing Core Course.

Students who do not show proof of completed health status requirements or fail to upload the documents into Project Concert will not be allowed to continue in their lab, simulation, or clinical experiences. Any student who falls out of compliance due to expired documentation will immediately be restricted from lab, simulation, or clinical participation and receive failing grades on those assignments until renewed documentation is provided. Being restricted from lab, simulation, or clinical participation places the student in jeopardy of not meeting the course objectives and could result in a course failure. Faculty view maintenance of health as the responsibility of a student aspiring to be a nurse.

Note: Students are responsible for all costs associated with meeting these requirements.

Background Check

Students must submit to a criminal background check conducted by the University's approved vendor. Students assume the cost for completing the background check. Background can only be completed after the student has been accepted to the BSN Pre-Licensure Program and must be completed at least 2 weeks before students begin their first nursing core course. Backgrounds completed while enrolled at other Colleges/Universities are not acceptable. The vendor will provide the SONHS with a statement of a clear background check. Any student with a felony conviction that precludes them from earning an RN license will have their admission revoked from the program. Any student with a misdemeanor conviction will be subject to review by the Program Director in consultation with the TN BON. Any student not receiving a clear background check may be denied access to the clinical agencies thus preventing progression in the BSN Pre-Licensure program. A student who is denied ongoing participation in clinical learning experiences at any clinical agency and by the clinical agency will be subject to the Code of Conduct policy. Students must report, within 10 days, any legal violation such as a DUI, misdemeanor, or felony if occurrence is during the program. Students will not be permitted to continue in the program without a disposition date. Students may not be allowed to continue in the program depending on the offense. Failure to accurately report misdemeanor or felony convictions to the Director of the BSN Pre-Licensure Program is a Code of Conduct violation. Students may have offenses in their past that is not flagged by the University's approved vendor, it may be flagged upon graduation when the State Board of Nursing conducts a more extensive background check. Depending on the offense, the State Board of Nursing may refuse to grant permission for the student to take the NCLEX-RN even though the student has graduated from the BSN Pre-Licensure Program. In the event a student

is involved in an offense during tenure in the program that was not reported or went undetected by the SONHS, this could also result in the State Board of Nursing refusing to grant permission to take the NCLEX-RN. Additional background checks may be required by clinical facilities, and if so, the SONHS must comply with these facility requirements and the student would incur the cost of the additional required screening.

Drug Screen

Students are required to have a negative drug screen prior to beginning first lab, simulation, or clinical experience. Students who do not meet this requirement will be reported for Code of Conduct. Students may remain enrolled while going through the Code of Conduct process, but cannot participate in the course without a clear drug screening. Students assume the cost for completing the drug screen and must use the University’s approved vendor. The drug screen can only be completed after the student has been accepted to the BSN Pre-Licensure Program. Drug screens completed while enrolled at other Colleges/Universities are not acceptable. Students will assume the cost of all additional testing, if required, due to a positive drug screen. Clinical facilities have the right to and may require annual drug screening. All students should refer to the detailed Policy for Student Drug, Nicotine & Alcohol Screening

Health Insurance

Verification of the student’s current health insurance coverage. (e.g., copy of insurance card reflecting the student’s name and dates of coverage). Military may obtain proof of insurance through DEERS. This information will be required at the start of each semester you are enrolled. Students are required to maintain health insurance as long as they are enrolled in the BSN Pre-Licensure Program. Students who do not maintain health insurance will be withdrawn from their courses. Students are responsible for all costs and expenses they incur for

medical treatment which results from their participation in the program.

Basic Life Support (BLS) card

BLS certification for the Healthcare Professionals through the American Heart Association is required. Information as to the availability of courses may be obtained online by visiting the American Heart Association . Training may be completed using the blended learning or classroom training method. This certification is valid for a two-year period and must be renewed prior to the expiration. If students do not meet this requirement, they will be withdrawn from their courses. ***Other BLS courses will NOT fulfill this requirement. Online-only courses are not acceptable.***

Health Clearance Form

A healthcare provider completes this form following a physical exam of the student. If the physical was performed within the last three (3) months, the form may be completed based off of that exam. The healthcare provider must indicate if the student has any limitations for clinical practice. See Forms

Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)

The TST is one method of determining whether a person is infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The TST is performed by injecting 0.1 mL of tuberculin purified protein derivative (PPD) into the inner surface of the forearm. Initial TST must be completed using the two-step testing. If the first TST is negative, a second TST will be performed within 7 – 21 days.

Subsequent single TST will be required annually. The skin test reaction should be read between 48 and 72 hours after administration by a health care worker trained to read TST results. A student who does not return within 72 hours will need to be rescheduled for another skin test. A TST is valid for one year. TST records must be current and on file. If the student has a history of a positive reading or PPD tests positive the student is required to submit a current CXR and

clearance from their medical provider to participate in nursing school activities. A chest x-ray is valid for 5 years. The QuantiFERON®-TB Gold blood test may be accepted in lieu of the TST. TST is contraindicated only for persons who have had a severe reaction (e.g., necrosis, blistering, anaphylactic shock, or ulcerations) to a previous TST. It is not contraindicated for any other persons, including pregnant women, or persons living with HIV. However, TB blood tests are the preferred method of testing for people who have received the BCG TB vaccine. Students who choose not to complete this testing/screening may not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression.

Tetanus-Diphtheria (TD/Tdap)

Documentation of Tetanus/Tetanus-Diphtheria/Tetanus-Diphtheria with Acellular Pertussis vaccination administered within the past 10 years (Tdap vaccines are preferred). If you have a medical condition which does not allow current immunization, then you may sign a waiver and send to the Clinical Practice Manager to document your medical exception. Students who choose not to or are unable to take these vaccines due to medical reasons may not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B vaccine (3 doses), or Hepatitis B Waiver, are required. A waiver is required if vaccine not administered. See Forms . If you have a medical condition which does not allow current immunization, then you may sign a waiver and send to the Clinical Practice Manager to document your medical exception. Evaluation will be made on an individual basis. Students who choose not to or are unable to take this vaccine due to medical reasons may not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression.

Influenza (Flu)

Flu vaccines are available from late September through early May. Students are required to have a current flu vaccine

on file to enter the lab, simulation, or clinical setting. Influenza vaccine is required annually. If you have a medical condition which does not allow current immunization, then your Physician may sign a waiver and send to the Clinical Practice Manager to document your medical exception. Students who are unable due to medical reasons to take this vaccine may not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression.

COVID Vaccine

Students must submit evidence of full COVID-19 vaccination. The definition of fully vaccinated is having the entire series of shots completed. Exceptions for medical reasons will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Requests for exemption should be submitted via email to the respective Program Director for review. Students who choose not to or are unable to take these vaccines due to medical reasons will not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression and result in dismissal from the program.

Varicella (Chicken Pox)

Students must show proof of immunity (lab evidence indicating positive varicella titers within 5 years). Because of recent changes in policies, documentation of history of chicken pox or varicella vaccinations are not sufficient. If not immune (negative titer results), then student must be vaccinated and be re-tested at least 30 days after receiving the vaccination. If, after the second blood test, the student is still showing “negative” or “non-reactive” for immunity, no further vaccines/titer requests will be required. If you have a medical condition which does not allow current immunization, then you may sign a waiver and send to the Clinical Practice Manager to document your medical exception. Evaluation will be made on an individual basis. Students who choose not to or are unable to take this vaccine due to medical reasons may not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression.

MMR:

Students must show proof of immunity

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (lab evidence indicating positive MMR titers within 5 years). It is not sufficient to report having had any of these illnesses or vaccinations as a child. Titers must indicate adequate protection. Equivocal results are considered negative, and the student is required to get a booster for the MMR vaccine. If not immune (negative titer results), then student must be vaccinated and be re-tested at least 30 days after receiving the vaccination. If, after the second blood test, the student is still showing “negative” or “non-reactive” for immunity, no further vaccines/titer requests then you may sign a waiver for this disease. If you have a medical condition which does not allow current immunization, then you may sign a waiver and send to the Clinical Practice Manager to document your medical exception. Evaluation will be made on an individual basis. Students who choose not to or are unable to take these vaccines due to medical reasons may not be guaranteed clinical placement which may impede program progression.

Hepatitis A Recommended but not required.

HIPAA Form Students must sign and upload this form to Project Concert. See Forms .

Note: Individual clinical agencies may have additional requirements.

At any time, a student may be required to receive a medical examination if deemed necessary by the faculty and/or Clinical Practice Manager for the wellbeing of the student and/or clients. The medical examination will be at the student’s expense.

Clinical Restrictions

Clinical restriction is the official means of restricting the student from any clinical experience when students have missing, expired, or insufficient immunizations or documentation requirements on file with the Clinical Coordination Office. You will be notified by the CCO four weeks before documentation is set to expire. Once documentation has expired, the CCO will notify your

course faculty of your restriction status. **At all times, it is your responsibility to ensure that your health and safety documentation is up to date and current, and that all other program requirements have been met.** Health and safety requirements are mandatory for all students where indicated in this manual.

Clinical Incident

If the student’s performance is unsatisfactory on any given day, the Clinical Faculty will initiate an informal conference with the student. This informal conference will provide the student with constructive feedback to assist them in ongoing improvement in clinical practice. The conference is documented using the Student Communication form.

Should the student’s performance continue to be unsatisfactory, the clinical faculty will notify the Clinical Practice Manager who will assist in formulating a written plan explaining area of concern and behaviors necessary to correct these deficiencies. This process will be completed by mid-course whenever possible, so the student has time to improve. The clinical faculty will issue an Early Alert after communicating with the clinical coordinator to acknowledge the clinical faculty concerns and develop a written remediation plan.

If the conditions of the remediation plan are not met by the student by the last clinical day, the student’s clinical performance will be unsatisfactory on the final CET and the student will receive a failing grade. At any time if a student’s clinical performance in a clinical course indicates an inability to perform at a safe and/or professional level of practice, the clinical faculty, in consultation with the Clinical Practice Manager, will report the student to the Code of Conduct Committee. In such case, the student will be ineligible to continue in the course.

Clinical Violations

Clinical violations may occur prior to beginning clinicals. Clinical violations are determined at the discretion of the course/clinical faculty in collaboration with the Clinical Practice Manager and Program Director for any unsafe, unacceptable, unethical, or unprofessional behaviors or performance. Clinical violations can affect the overall clinical grade.

The following are examples of behaviors or performance

that will lead to clinical violations. This list is non-exhaustive:

- Pre-clinical requirements not completed by deadline
- Exercising poor clinical judgment
- Exercising poor ethical judgement
- Practicing skills without faculty or assigned preceptor oversight
- Sleeping during the clinical/lab/seminar
- Unexcused absences
- Tardiness, failure to notify faculty/staff of tardiness in clinical
- Insufficient preparation for the clinical experience
- Failure to follow clinical faculty or clinical nurse guidance
- Causing a client unnecessary suffering or harm
- Failure to report abnormal data in a timely manner to the appropriate persons
- Conduct inappropriate to the role of the student as outlined in this manual
- Failure to dress in approved program attire
- HIPAA violations
- FERPA violations
- Performing skills/interventions which have not been signed off by the clinical faculty and/or acting outside of a student scope of practice

letter will also be sent to the Code of Conduct Committee for investigation.

- Clinical violations will be tracked by the Clinical Coordination Office
- Clinical violations investigated by the Code of Conduct Committee may result in failure of the course or dismissal from the program.

Clinical Violation Procedure

- All clinical violations will result in Clinical Probation.
- First occurrence: The clinical violation is reported to the Program Director who will send a letter of clinical probation to you, outlining the violation. Based on the severity of the violation, the Program Director will determine whether to submit the violation to the Code of Conduct Committee for review.
- Second occurrence: The Program Director will send a second letter of clinical probation to you, outlining both the first and second violation. A copy of this

Safety Guidelines

In healthcare settings students will have some level of risk of exposure to communicable diseases or injury. Students are expected to adhere to all guidelines for Standard and Enhanced Precautions within the clinical agencies.

Bodily Fluids Exposure and-or Injury During Lab or Clinical Experiences

Aspen University acknowledges the inherent risks associated with working around or with patients and health care organizations, including a potential exposure to blood and body fluids. Once in a patient care setting, you will have access to and are expected to utilize appropriate blood borne pathogen barriers, proper sanitary precautions, and appropriate biohazard disposal equipment and procedures at each clinical site. The following policy outlines your responsibilities in this area:

- You must have and maintain current health insurance and show verification of coverage each year while matriculated in the program.
- Aspen University and the clinical agencies that provide practical experiences for students are not responsible or liable for the costs of medical follow-up or expenses incurred.
- If evaluation and treatment is required by the facility where you are completing clinical experiences, the student is responsible for all costs and associated follow up.
- In the event that you are injured or exposed to blood and body fluids, you will:
 - Immediately notify your clinical instructor or site supervisor.
 - Wash the area immediately and thoroughly with soap and water.
 - Within 24 hours, follow-up with your own Primary Care Provider who will decide of immunization status and give appropriate prophylaxis or referral for appropriate prophylaxis.
 - Assume full responsibility for disease sequelae.
- Follow the policies of the agency (if any).
- Complete an incident report with the clinical faculty who was present during incident. A copy of this report will be given to the Clinical Practice Manager and Clinical Coordination Office.

Protocol for Puncture Wounds and Exposure to Blood or Bodily Fluids

- Incidents involving any type of needle stick or body-fluid exposure must be reported to the Clinical Faculty/Facility immediately! The clinical faculty will then notify the Clinical Practice Manager and/or Clinical Coordination Office.
- All faculty and students should observe the protocol for safe needle usage when practicing or performing parental injections, IV starts, blood draws, or using syringes, or performing any invasive procedure as part of a skills check off, or in a clinical setting. The faculty/student should follow the protocol for needle usage at the agency where clinicals are being held.

Uncontaminated Needle Stick or Intact Skin Exposure

A student who accidentally punctures him/herself with an uncontaminated needle or is exposed to blood or bodily fluid that is an intact skin exposure should:

- Wash the area immediately and thoroughly with soap and water
- Follow-up with their own Primary Care Provider or other facilities listed on the resource page who will make a determination of Tetanus immunization status and give appropriate prophylaxis or referral for appropriate prophylaxis.
- Complete an incident report with the clinical faculty who was present during the incident. A copy of this report will be given to the Clinical Coordination Office.
- Counseling referral and other referrals can be arranged through the student's personal Primary Care Provider.

Contaminated Needle Stick or Non-Intact Skin or Mucous Membrane Exposure

If the exposure is via a contaminated needle or if a bodily fluid exposure to non-intact skin, or to mucous membranes the student should continue with the following:

- Wash the skin area immediately with soap and water. If exposure is to mucous membranes, flush area with water immediately.
- Report the incident to your clinical faculty.
- Immediately seek medical attention. If in an acute care setting, always follow agency guidelines. This may include reporting to either Occupational Health or the agency Emergency Department.

Tuberculosis Exposure Plan

According to the CDC, "It is important to know that a person who is exposed to TB bacteria is not able to spread the bacteria to other people right away. Only persons with active TB disease can spread TB bacteria to others.... Some people develop TB disease soon (within weeks) after becoming infected before their immune system can fight the TB bacteria. Other people may get sick years later when their immune system becomes weak for another reason. Many people with TB infection never develop TB disease."

Students will not be held from clinical experiences unless they have an active TB infection, not TB disease. Active TB is determined using TB screening and confirmation by qualified health care providers/professionals based on symptoms of active TB.

Tuberculosis (TB) exposure potential is defined as any exposure to the exhaled or expired air of a person with suspected or confirmed TB disease. A high hazard procedure involving an individual with suspected or confirmed TB disease is one that has the potential to generate potentially infectious airborne respiratory secretions such as aerosolized medication treatment, bronchoscopy, sputum induction, endotracheal intubation, and suctioning. Workplaces with inherent exposure potential to TB disease:

- Health care facilities
- Corrections facilities
- Homeless shelters/clinics for homeless
- Long term health facilities
- Drug treatment centers
- Post-exposure Procedure

Exposure Procedure

- When a Tuberculosis (TB) exposure occurs, the involved student will report the incident to the clinical instructor and the appropriate administrative staff at the involved institution or agency.
- The student will be counseled immediately and referred to his or her personal health care provider, or local Health Department.
- A baseline Tuberculosis Skin Test (TST) should be administered as soon as possible after the exposure.
- Frequency of follow-up TSTs will be performed per provider protocol. A TST performed 12 weeks after the last exposure will indicate whether infection has occurred.
- A student with evidence of new infection, (TST conversions) needs to be evaluated for active TB. Even if active TB is not diagnosed, prophylactic therapy for latent TB is recommended.
- A student with a previously documented reactive TST need not be retested but should have a baseline symptom screen performed following the exposure and repeated 12 weeks after the exposure. If the symptom screen is positive a chest x-ray is required.
- Any active case of TB must be reported to local Health Department.

Return to Class for Active TB

A student diagnosed with active pulmonary or laryngeal TB may be highly infectious; and will not be able to attend class or clinical experiences until he/she is noninfectious. In order to return to school the student will need to provide documentation from the health care provider that he/she is

noninfectious. The documentation needs to include evidence that:

- The student has received adequate therapy for a minimum of 2 weeks.
- The cough has resolved, and the student is not experiencing chest pain, hemoptysis, fever or chills.
- The results of three consecutive sputum acid-fast bacilli (AFB) smears collected on different days are negative

Documentation and Financial Responsibility

- After the student returns to school and remains on anti-TB therapy, periodic documentation from their health care provider is needed to show that effective drug therapy is being maintained for the recommended period and that the sputum AFB smear results remain negative.
- The student is responsible for all costs related to the exposure incident.
- The student's health records will be maintained in a confidential file.

In the event this incident occurs in the community setting when the agency Occupational Health Center or Emergency Department are not available Aspen University recommends that you seek immediate treatment at an Urgent Care or Physician's Office equipped to treat contaminated needle stick injuries.

An incident report will be completed by the student and the clinical faculty who was present during incident. A copy of this report will be given to the Clinical Coordination Office. Financial responsibility for testing and recommended care following an exposure rests solely with the student. This could include testing, evaluation, treatment, and counseling.

If you have questions about the appropriate medical treatment, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that you call a 24-hour assistance line at 1.888.448.4911 (Clinicians' Post Exposure Prophylaxis Hotline).

Communicable Disease

You may not participate in classroom or field experiences during the time you are affected by or suspect you have a communicable disease. A communicable disease is a health disorder that can be passed from one person to another. If suspected of communicable disease, you must immediately visit your personal physician for evaluation. If the evaluation shows possible communicable disease, you must remain out of contact with patients for the duration suggested by the physician and report this to the course faculty and program director. You may not return to participation in clinicals until you have been re-evaluated by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant and released with written verification from the medical provider. You must contact the clinical faculty and Clinical Practice Manager upon suspicion and verification of the disease. No exceptions to other university policies will be made based on contracting a communicable disease. If you are unable to meet the requirements of the course, you will receive a failing grade.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

As health care providers, and as one of its covered entities, nurses must be knowledgeable about the various aspects of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Aspen University SONHS offers the guidance below for those persons to ensure compliance with those requirements and asks that all students sign the HIPAA Confidentiality Agreement.

Students and faculty are required to do the following:

- Sign the SONHS Faculty/Staff/Student HIPAA Confidentiality Agreement before any involvement in a clinical agency.
- Attend HIPAA training or in-classroom clinical instruction on requirements relating to patient privacy.
- Know and adhere to a clinical site's privacy and procedures before undertaking any activities at the site.
- Maintain the confidentiality of any patient information at all times.
- Promptly report any violation of those procedures, applicable law, or SONHS's HIPAA confidentiality agreement by a SONHS student, faculty or staff

member to the appropriate SONHS clinical coordinator or clinical faculty member.

- Understand that a violation of the clinical site's policies and procedures, of applicable law, or SONHS's HIPAA confidentiality agreement will subject the student to disciplinary action. Students and faculty are not to do the following:
 - Discussing of patients in common areas, cafeteria, etc. Post conference will be held in a secluded area to prevent overhearing by patients and visitors.
 - Remove any record from the clinical site without the prior written authorization of that site.
 - Disclose any information about a patient during the clinical assignment to anyone other than the health-care staff of the clinical site.
 - Use patient information in the context of a learning experience, classroom case presentation, class assignment, or research without attempting to exclude as much of the following information as possible:
 - Names
 - Geographical subdivisions smaller than a state
 - Dates of birth, admission, discharge, death
 - Telephone and fax numbers
 - E-mail addresses
 - Social security numbers
 - Medical records or account numbers
 - Certificate/license numbers
 - Vehicle or device numbers
 - Web locators/Internet protocols
 - Biometric identifiers
 - Full face identifiers
 - Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code
 - All ages over 89
- Post any photos or patient information on social media sites.
- Access any patient information unless patient is

clinical assignment.

- Disclose any personal health information to any entity not requiring PHI for health care purposes without their consent.

It is important for students who use social media for conversations for school-related purposes or school-related activities such as interactions in or about clinical course activities to understand confidentiality and privacy in the health care setting. When utilizing social media, students must be aware that the information posted may be public for others to see. Do not post confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information about students, clinical facilities, patients, or others you may come in to contact with in your student role. Distribution of sensitive and confidential information is protected under HIPAA and FERPA whether discussed through traditional communication channels or through social media.

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing has developed a guide for further clarification regarding the use of social media and its boundaries. For more information, review White Paper: A Nurse's Guide to Use of Social Media

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Students are responsible to review OSHA training for Healthcare training at this [OSHA site](#). You should review all topics across the ribbon including: Culture of Safety, Infectious Disease, Safe Patient Handling, Workplace Violence, Other Hazards, and Standards/Enforcement.

Unfavorable Weather Conditions

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for faculty and students participating in lab, simulation, or clinical experiences and to assure their safety in the event of unfavorable weather conditions.

General Guideline

- The decision to close the Campus or open on a delayed schedule rests with the Program Director.
- Should an emergency or weather-related event occur that would dictate the Campus to close for all or part of the day, the closure or delayed start will be

communicated to students via email and on local television as soon as possible/practical.

- Any seminar, lab, or simulation affected by the delayed opening will begin at the hour the Campus opens and end at its regularly scheduled time. Any missed hours of the seminar, lab, simulation, or clinical component require a make-up session in compliance with course outcomes.
- If the Campus is closed, faculty will notify students of any changes in assignment due dates. Didactic courses are not affected by campus closures.

Specific Guidelines for Off-Campus Clinical Nursing Experiences

- If the Campus is officially closed all clinical experiences are cancelled.
- If the Campus opens on a delayed schedule, clinical faculty will make the decision to either proceed with clinical experiences or cancel them.

- Depending on when decisions to close the Campus are announced, designated clinical faculty will serve as the point of first contact concerning the application of these specific guidelines to clinical experiences either to cancel the experiences or to proceed with clinical experiences should students have arrived in the clinical setting before official announcements are made.
- Students who arrive at their clinical assignments before an official announcement to close Campus or delay opening has been made should participate in their assignments only if the assigned faculty member is present.
- Clinical cancellation/delay will result in the need to make up required clinical hours.
- The Clinical Practice Manager will communicate this information in a timely manner to clinical facilities and clinical faculty.