



**Traditional Track
Policy and Procedure Manual
2026-2027**

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Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity, defined as respect for one's own work and the work of others, is the guiding principle for all aspects of the educational process. All USC Aiken students are expected to conform to the [Academic Code of Conduct](#) for all assignments, exams, and any other academic work awarded a score or grade. All nursing students are expected to read and electronically sign the Academic Code of Conduct upon entry into the School of Nursing. Nursing students who violate the Academic Code of Conduct will be subject to consequences such as failing grades for associated assignments, exams, or courses, and possibly dismissal from the nursing program. Nursing students who witness or become aware of violations are expected to report these to the associated course faculty and/or the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, the use of another's intellectual property, ideas, and words without attribution, is a form of violation of the Academic Code of Conduct. In accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.), appropriate attribution and style is required for assignments in all courses.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students in the School of Nursing regularly examine complex aspects of nursing care using evidence obtained from a variety of sources. The synthesis of evidence and development of solutions or ideas is challenging, requiring students to rely on course resources and professional literature or websites, all of which are acceptable practices when proper attribution is provided. The subsequent output of student work allows students and faculty alike to assess mastery of concepts. When students use generative artificial intelligence (AI) to synthesize information, they misrepresent their mastery of material and concepts. In addition, due to the nature of generative AI, some information provided may be incorrect or lack context. Generative AI typically does not provide sources or in-text citations or, when sources are identified, they may not be legitimate. For that reason, students should exercise extreme caution when using generative AI. **Inappropriate use of this technology will be treated as a violation of the Academic Code of Conduct.** If generative AI is used, students are required to provide appropriate attribution for any content derived from AI.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT®, Grammarly®, DALL·E®) are increasingly integrated into academic and professional environments and, when used appropriately, may support learning. Some course instructors may allow use of generative AI tools as a supplemental resource to assist with idea development, organization, and clarification of concepts; however, all submitted work must reflect the student's own understanding, critical thinking, and original effort. Generative AI may not be used to complete assignments on a student's behalf, generate entire responses, or replace independent analysis. When AI is used, students must clearly disclose and appropriately attribute its use in accordance with University and School of Nursing academic integrity expectations. Course instructors reserve the right to review work for

consistency with this policy. Inappropriate use of AI or failure to disclose its use will be addressed in accordance with School of Nursing and USCA academic integrity policies. Students are encouraged to seek clarification if they are unsure whether AI use is appropriate for a specific assignment.

Instructional Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Instructional AI does not generate ideas or content on behalf of the user. Instead, it identifies aspects of one's writing that can be corrected or strengthened. Instructional AI is available in Microsoft products, where it identifies syntax, spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors and often offers suggestions to correct the issue. Students also have free access to Blackboard® Packback®, a more sophisticated instructional AI tool that can be used to develop writing skills. Students are encouraged to use instructional AI tools to improve the quality of their writing.

Though not exhaustive, examples of appropriate and inappropriate use of AI are provided below:

Appropriate Use	Inappropriate Use
Using Chat GPT® for step-by-step instructions to solve a math problem	Using Copilot® to re-write a classmate's paper so it can be submitted by another student
Using OpenAI® to provide a summary or overview of a topic	Using Bard® to generate three solutions to a patient care problem, then copying Bard's output into a student assignment without appropriate attribution
Using Copilot® to make an email to a professor sound more professional	Using Gemini® to compare and contrast two ideas with output generated at a college reading level for use in a paper for a writing intensive course
Using instructional AI in Microsoft® Word®, Grammarly®, or PackBack® to review a paper for grammatical errors and use of passive voice	Using Gamma® to generate a PowerPoint presentation and not providing appropriate attribution
Using Microsoft® PowerPoint's design suggestions when developing a presentation	Using AI of any sort on clinical paperwork
	Using AI-generated output from a search engine (Google®, Edge®)

USCA Honor Code

The USCA Honor Code, displayed below, is to be included on the title page of all formal papers and projects. The student, by inserting a digital signature, asserts that the statement is true.

On my honor as a University of South Carolina Aiken student, I have completed my work according to the principle of Academic Integrity. I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment/examination.

Signature

AI Attestation

The AI Attestation, displayed below, is to be included on all formal papers and projects in its entirety. Consult with the instructor about where the attestation should be displayed within the assignment. The student, by inserting a digital signature, asserts that the selected option is true.

- ☐ I did not use generative AI on this assignment. I acknowledge that failure to disclose use of generative AI is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy of the SoN and is a critical incident.
- ☐ I acknowledge the use of **click to enter AI tool name** to generate **click to insert reason for using AI tool**.

I entered the following prompts: **Click or tap here to enter text**.

I used/modified the output to accomplish **Click or tap here to enter text**.

I have cited my use of generative AI in this assignment.

Signature

Faculty Use of AI

Faculty may use select AI tools to assist with grading or to provide formative feedback. These tools comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by protecting students' personally identifiable information through industry-level encryption and deletion processes.

Accidental Injury Policy

Accidents and injuries in the clinical setting are uncommon; however, they do occur. Depending on the severity of the injury** and the time of day the injury is sustained, the student should go to:

- **For life-threatening injuries:** Students with severe injuries should go to the nearest emergency department.
- ****For bloodborne pathogen exposure:** Students with bloodborne pathogen exposure should go to the nearest emergency department.

As soon as possible, the student and faculty member must contact CompEndium to report the event as a worker's compensation claim. If care for a non-life-threatening injury is needed, CompEndium will direct the student and/or faculty member where to receive treatment.

1. For non-emergency injuries, the supervisor (faculty member) and the injured worker (student) together should call CompEndium Services immediately at 877-709-2667.
2. If no medical treatment is needed, the employee will complete the USC Workers' Comp Employee Injury Report and check the report only box at the top of the form.
3. The supervisor (faculty) is required to complete the USC Supervisor Report of Injury Form.
4. Both the Workers' Comp Employee Injury Report and the Worker's Comp Supervisory Report must be faxed to CompEndium at 877-710-2667. Copies of both forms must be sent to the USC Aiken human Resources Office by the Supervisor (faculty member or SON Administrative Assistant).

The injured student should notify the emergency department at time of check-in that the injury was sustained on-the-job. This ensures that insurance claims are properly filed as a **worker's compensation claim**.

Appeals Policy

Students who face dismissal from the program or who wish to challenge decisions that affect standing in the program may request an opportunity to present their cases before the School of Nursing Admissions, Progression, and Graduation (APG) Committee. Students have the right to appeal decisions or policies that affect progression in the program. To begin the appeal process, students should expect to take these actions in sequence.

1. Students should consult with their faculty mentors to identify objective goals of the petition.
2. Students should complete an APG Appeals Form. The form may be attained from any nursing faculty and should be submitted in digital format to the Chair of the School of Nursing APG Committee (SON1@usca.edu).
3. The Chair of the APG Committee will communicate via USC Aiken email with students to determine their availability to present their cases before the APG Committee.
4. The Chair of the APG Committee will email students with the date, time, and location of the meeting where students will present their cases.
5. Students will appear before the APG Committee at the appointed time. There, they are provided an opportunity to justify their request for the Committee to overrule decisions or policies.
6. The APG Committee will consider students' cases after meeting with them. Students are not present during this time.
7. The Chair of the APG Committee will notify students via USC Aiken email of the APG Committee's decision.

ATI® Assessments

ATI® assessments are used in many courses throughout the traditional BSN program.

NURS A301 Pharmacology: Students in this course should refer to the syllabus for information about how ATI® assessments contribute to the final course grade.

All other courses using ATI® assessments: Students in these courses are required to take all assigned ATI® Assessment tests and complete hand-written remediation on the appropriate templates. Testing consists of two practice assessments and one proctored assessment. These ATI® activities account for 10% of the total course grade.

- **Practice Tests with Remediation**

Practice tests are an individual learning assessment for students and should be utilized to identify gaps in knowledge and opportunities for personal improvement. Two practice tests (A and B) are administered during this semester. Practice tests may be taken in any location and are not proctored. They are to be taken without any collaboration with another person and without using books or online resources. Rationales are not visible during the first attempt on each practice test. After remediation assignments are submitted, the instructor will make the practice test with rationales available.

- **Practice Test A Remediation**

- No handwritten remediation is required after taking Practice Test A.
 - Depending on the student's score, remediation may be assigned by ATI®. Remediation consists of 2 hours of online focused review and completion of the post-review quiz. If no remediation is required, students will automatically receive course credit after submitting their individual reports to the assigned location. To verify completion of the focused review and post-review quiz, students must submit their individual reports to the assigned location in Blackboard.
 - Completion of the Practice Test A, associated remediation activities, and post-review quiz constitutes 1% of the final course grade. To receive credit, all testing and remediation must be completed on time. No partial credit will be awarded.

- **Practice Test B Remediation**

- Students will complete hand-written Active Learning Templates for the areas identified within the focused review. Students are required to submit one template for each topic requiring additional study. In addition, the ATI® individual student report must be submitted with the remediation to the assigned location in Blackboard.
 - Completion of the Practice Test B and associated remediation activities constitute 1% of the final course grade. To receive full credit, all testing and remediation must be completed on time. No partial credit will be awarded.

- **Proctored Test with Remediation**

- A proctored ATI® exam is administered to assess comprehensive understanding of course content and concepts. This exam, because it is proctored, is administered during class time.
- The proctored exam comprises 7% of the final course grade. Grades are calculated based on these criteria:
 - ATI® Level 3 = 100
 - ATI® Level 2 = 90
 - ATI® Level 1 = 80
 - Below ATI® Level 1 = 75
- Upon completion of the proctored exam, students will complete hand-written Active Learning Templates for the areas identified within the focused review. Students are required to submit one template for each topic requiring additional study. This remediation activity constitutes 1% of the final course grade. To receive credit, all testing and submission of remediation and ATI® individual student report must be completed on time. No partial credit will be awarded.

NOTE: To satisfy all course requirements, the three ATI® assessments and accompanying remediation must be submitted with ATI® individual student reports before the assigned deadline. Students who do not satisfy these requirements will earn a final course grade no higher than **C**.

Basic Life Support Certification Policy

All students are required to maintain Healthcare Provider Basic Life Support from the American Heart Association throughout their time in the nursing program.

1. The certification should remain current throughout the academic year.
2. Certification through the American Red Cross is not accepted.
3. Students must provide a copy of the actual certification card. Rosters or letters from the instructor are not accepted.
4. Students may not attend clinical if certification has lapsed.
5. Students are responsible for maintaining certification status.

The School of Nursing offers several American Heart Association BLS courses each year. Information about upcoming courses is available in the School of Nursing office.

Bloodborne Pathogen (HBV, HIV) Exposure Prevention and Exposure Incident Policy

Prevention Policy

The School of Nursing provides comprehensive and mandatory education regarding personal safety to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens. In accordance with recommendations from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing:

1. All students must receive vaccination against hepatitis B virus (HBV).
2. All students receive education to minimize risk of exposure to HBV and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to include, but not limited to
 - a. Universal precautions
 - b. Personal protective equipment use
 - c. Safe handling of needles
 - d. Safe handling of contaminated equipment

Exposure Incident

This policy contains procedures for receiving, managing, and counseling for persons who may have been exposed to HIV. All exposure incidents in the clinical agencies and the skills laboratory must be reported, investigated, and documented.

1. If a student is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen, the exposure must be reported immediately by the student to the clinical faculty and/or preceptor.
2. The clinical faculty member and/or preceptor must report the incident to clinical placement agency officials and ensure that the agency protocol for bloodborne pathogens is followed.
3. The clinical faculty and/or preceptor must notify the Dean of the School of Nursing as soon as possible after the incident.
4. The clinical faculty/preceptor must inform the Emergency Department that the bills will be covered by Workmen's Compensation through USC Aiken.

Procedure After Exposure

1. If skin is punctured by a contaminated sharp object or if broken skin or mucous membranes are splashed with blood or bodily fluids, immediate personal action is required. **Do not delay treatment for any reason.**
2. If possible, wash or flush the exposed area with soap and/or water immediately.
3. The student must report the exposure to the clinical faculty member and/or preceptor **IMMEDIATELY** and then follow the agency protocol for blood borne pathogen exposure.
4. The student should inform medical personnel that the injury is an exposure to bloodborne pathogens and describe the mechanism of exposure.
5. For students working in clinics or home health situations, the student must report the incident to the preceptor and/or faculty as soon as possible and **must go immediately to the nearest Emergency Department.**
6. Once treatment has been received, the clinical faculty member/preceptor and student must complete the HR Documentation Reporting forms. Should the

blood exposure occur on a Friday afternoon, the documentation may wait until Monday following the exposure.

Worker's Compensation Claim

As soon as possible, the student and faculty member must contact CompEndium to report the event. If care is needed, they will direct the student and/or faculty member where to receive treatment.

1. For non-emergency injuries, the supervisor (faculty member) and the injured worker (student) together should call CompEndium Services immediately at 877-709-2667.
2. If no medical treatment is needed, the employee will complete the USC Workers' Comp Employee Injury Report and check the report only box at the top of the form.
3. The supervisor (faculty) is required to complete the USC Supervisor Report of Injury Form.
4. Both the Workers' Comp Employee Injury Report and the Worker's Comp Supervisory Report must be faxed to Compendium at 877-710-2667. Copies of both forms must be sent to the USC Aiken human Resources Office by the Supervisor (faculty member or SON Administrative Assistant).

The injured student should notify the emergency department at time of check-in that the injury was sustained on-the-job. This ensures that insurance claims are properly filed as a **worker's compensation claim**.

Clinical Experience Attendance

Clinical experiences contribute to the development of necessary competencies for nursing practice. The South Carolina Board of Nursing requires students to engage in a minimum number of hours in clinical settings to be eligible for licensure. Therefore, attendance at all assigned clinical experiences (e.g., direct patient care, observation, and simulation) is required for successful completion of courses with clinical experiences.

Clinical Compliance Policy

Students are responsible for meeting all required clinical compliance elements for the University of South Carolina Aiken School of Nursing and any assigned clinical agency. All required documentation of compliance must be submitted by the deadlines established by the School of Nursing Clinical Placement Coordinator.

Students who fail to meet clinical compliance requirements by the published deadline will not be eligible to attend clinical and will be placed on a clinical contract by the Associate Dean of Nursing for failure to complete the required clinical compliance requirements. Students will have until the end of the first week of classes (Friday by 1230) to complete all outstanding clinical requirements. If all clinical requirements are not completed by the end of the first week of classes, noncompliant students will be required to withdraw from the course. This withdrawal will count toward the maximum number of withdrawals permitted in the nursing program (two total).

Certain clinical agencies require that all students assigned to a clinical group be fully compliant before approving the group to begin the clinical experience. In these situations, one student's failure to meet clinical compliance requirements may delay or prevent the entire clinical group from beginning clinical, thereby adversely affecting the educational experiences of other students. If a student's noncompliance prevents a clinical agency from approving the assigned clinical group, the student must immediately withdraw from all clinical course(s) if the deficiency cannot be resolved before the first scheduled clinical experience and the University's withdrawal deadline has not passed.

If clinical compliance lapses during the semester, students may not attend clinical and will be placed on a clinical contract by the Associate Dean of Nursing. Any missed clinical time resulting from clinical noncompliance will be considered a clinical noncompliance violation. Students who have a clinical compliance violation during the semester must withdraw from all clinical courses immediately. If the withdrawal deadline has passed, the student will receive a final course grade of C or, if the student's earned course average is below a C, the grade earned based on the course average. The student will not be eligible to progress to the next level of the nursing program.

Excused Absences

Because access to clinical sites is limited, students should make every effort to attend all clinical experiences as scheduled. In the event of illness or another unexpected situation that precludes attendance, students should notify the clinical faculty member and the course coordinator prior to the start time of the experience. Students are required to provide appropriate documentation (ex: doctor's note, funeral program, USC Aiken-sponsored event with advanced approval from the course faculty) to support the excused absence. If the course faculty accepts the excuse for the absence, students will be assigned a make-up experience. At the discretion of the course faculty, the make-up experience may occur in the assigned clinical setting, a different clinical setting, or in the simulation lab.

Students with more than one excused absence from clinical may not be able to obtain all required clinical hours prior to the end of the semester. In this event, affected students will receive a grade of Incomplete and will not progress to the next level. Arrangements will be made in the upcoming semester for the student to complete the necessary clinical hours.

Unexcused Absences

Students with unexcused absences (ex: a planned or unplanned personal trip, a USC Aiken-sponsored event without prior permission from the course coordinator, or an illness without a physician's excuse) cannot pass the clinical portion of the course because of not obtaining the required clinical hours. These students will receive a final course grade of **C**, or, if the weighted grade for other course assessments is lower than **C**, the equivalent letter grade for the weighted numeric grade. Because of the failing grade, these students cannot progress to the next level.

Tardiness

Students are required to arrive at the clinical site at or before the appointed time for all clinical experiences. In the event of tardiness, students are required to

1. Call the clinical instructor prior to arrival, provide the reason for tardiness, and identify the anticipated time of arrival at the clinical site.
2. Arrange with the course coordinator and clinical instructor for makeup of lost clinical time.
3. Make-up the missed clinical time. At the discretion of the course coordinator, the make-up experience may occur at a different site or time than the original experience.
4. For NURS 315 Community Health experiences only: In addition to the above, students must notify the site supervisor of tardiness and indicate the anticipated time of arrival at the clinical site.

Depending on the extent of tardiness, late students may not be allowed to participate in the clinical experience. In this event, students will not have the option to make-up the

clinical experience and will count as an unexcused absence. This places students at risk for not reaching the standard required to pass the course.

In the event of chronic tardiness (more than one event), a clinical behaviors contract will be initiated by the course coordinator.

Criminal Background Check Policy

To maintain public trust and respect afforded to the profession of nursing, all students in the School of Nursing are required to submit to a criminal background check prior to beginning the program of study. The criminal background check is equivalent to what is required for licensure as a professional nurse and what is required by law for employment in healthcare settings. Databases are reviewed for evidence of violation of the Patriot Act, Social Security alerts, criminal activity (including sex offender registries), residence history, and healthcare fraud and abuse (including scams).

The School agrees to use student information solely for admission screening and to obtain clinical education placements.

The School of Nursing, through student fees, pays for the criminal background check.

Students must report any felony or misdemeanor charges (excluding minor traffic-related violations) occurring while enrolled in the School of Nursing. If nursing students are charged with and/or convicted of felony or misdemeanor crimes, students are required to report these to the Dean of the School of Nursing and the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Life within five (5) business days. Failure to report these in the requisite manner is a violation of [USC Aiken's Non-Academic Code of Conduct](#). Students may be subject to Judiciary Board Hearing and subsequent penalties.

Students who are denied access to clinical sites due to results of criminal background checks will not be able to obtain the necessary clinical hours required by the South Carolina Board of Nursing for licensure. Therefore, these students will be dismissed from the School of Nursing.

Procedure:

1. Students will make arrangements to undergo criminal background checks. Results will be released to the School of Nursing.
2. Students will sign the Consent to Release Background Check and Drug Screen Results. This release allows the School of Nursing to provide information about the criminal background check to clinical facilities.
3. Anonymous results of the background checks are sent to the clinical agencies where students are assigned for clinical experiences. Based on the agencies' assessment, students may be denied access to the clinical site.
4. Students who are denied access to clinical experiences are dismissed from the nursing program.

Critical Incidents Policy

Critical incidents are events resulting from behaviors that are unprofessional, compromise patient safety, demonstrate lack of integrity, and/or violate the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics. These incidents, because of the egregious nature of the behavior, will result in failure to pass the course(s) in which they are associated and could result in dismissal from the nursing program.

Situation	Behavior
Creates a threat to patient safety	- Physical or verbal abuse of a patient - Medications administered in an unsafe manner - Provides patient care while intoxicated
Creates a breach in patient confidentiality	- Includes patient identifiers on clinical paperwork - Discusses patients in public settings - Shares patient information with persons outside of the healthcare team - Fails to notify instructor/preceptor if assigned to care for a patient known to the student - Contacts a patient or facilitates a patient's contact with another student outside of the clinical site (i.e., provides contact information) - Posts information about a patient on social media
Acts outside of the scope of practice or role boundaries	- Makes independent clinical decisions not within a student's domain that result in potential or actual patient endangerment - Returning to a clinical site outside of the scheduled clinical experience with instructor permission - Does not notify clinical faculty when attending a preceptorship site or shadowing experience - Refuses to follow appropriate chain-of-command
Falsifies, misrepresents, or engages in deceitful behavior**	- Violates the Academic Code of Conduct - Falsifies patient or academic records - Lies, cheats, or steals - Uses generative artificial intelligence without proper attribution
Engages in incivility**	- Engages in rude or unkind behavior that has a detrimental effect on peers, faculty, and/or patients - Engages in bullying behaviors that humiliate, intimidate, or isolate peers - Engages in passive-aggressive behaviors such as eye-rolling or sighing - Engages in covert behaviors such as gossip that undermines or is disrespectful to others
Clinical Compliance Violation	Students must remain compliant with all clinical requirements for the USCA School of Nursing and their assigned clinical facility by the deadlines provided by the clinical placement

	coordinator. Failure to meet compliance requirements by the assigned due dates will result in a clinical compliance violation.
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**Results in dismissal from the School of Nursing.

Dress Code

Personal appearance is an important factor in the effective delivery of health care. Students are expected to wear the approved student nursing uniform in all clinical areas, including the simulation lab. Students who are not attired appropriately may be dismissed from the clinical site and/or receive an unsatisfactory score for the clinical experience. Those dismissed from the clinical site will be required to schedule an alternative day for the experience.

The approved nursing uniform (male and female) consists of the following:

1. A choice of three styles of uniform pants and tops are offered. Scrubs should fit so that the student is able to bend, squat, and raise arms comfortably. Pants, worn at the natural waist, should be hemmed to the top of the sole of the nursing shoe at the back of the heel. Female students: Under certain circumstances, arrangements may be made for students to wear specified uniform skirts instead of scrub pants. In these circumstances, white hosiery and white shoes must be worn with the skirt. Under no circumstances are socks to be worn with a skirt.
2. White scrub jacket (optional, but recommended)
3. Shoes and socks: White stockings (with skirt) or white socks (with pants) and white, solid leather professional shoes. Shoes must be clean and comfortable, have closed toes and heels, and be free of designs or patterns.
4. USC Aiken name badge is worn on the right upper side of the scrub top or jacket. In the event that the uniform is not required at a clinical site, students should continue to wear the name badge.
5. Pregnant students must continue to comply with the dress code policy. Any adaptations or deviations must be approved by the course coordinator.

The USC Aiken SoN uniform should be worn to all clinical experiences unless instructed otherwise. Students are required to wear the full student uniform to clinical institutions when pre-planning for an upcoming clinical experience. Under no circumstances may students wear student uniforms to their place of employment. On all occasions where students represent the USC Aiken School of Nursing (SNA or other school-related activities), professional dress is required.

Note: Individual clinical agency dress code policies supersede the School of Nursing policy. Students will be notified of these policies in advance of the clinical experience.

While in uniform, students should adhere to these standards:

	Standard	Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Uniform	• Canary red scrubs with USC Aiken logo • White shoes, undershirt (optional), socks/ stockings, and shoes • Name badge is secured to upper right side of uniform or scrub jacket. If a badge reel is used, the reel must be solid color with no logo, image, or text.	• Standard red scrubs • Solid white short or long-sleeved crew neck • White lab coat • White socks/stockings • White, solid leather professional shoes • Solid color scrub cap (optional): black or navy	• Any color other than canary red for scrubs • Any color other than white for crew-necked shirt, scrub jacket, socks/stockings, and/or shoes • Wrinkled or soiled uniform • Missing name badge • Exposed undergarments • Sweatshirts or jackets, including those with USCA logos
Hair	Hair must be styled in a manner that will permit students to work without violating aseptic principles. Bangs are acceptable provided they do not obscure vision. Longer hair must be secured away from the face. Hair must be a naturally occurring hair color. False eyelashes are not permitted.	• Barrettes, headbands, and claw clips • Solid color: black, brown, or white • No ornamentation or decorations • If fabric-covered, must be washable • Ponytails • Bun • Hair color: black, brown, red, blond, gray	• Bows • Color other than those specified for barrettes, headbands, or claw clips • Patterns on barrettes, headbands, or claw clips • Ponytail falls over shoulder onto front of uniform • Pink, blue, purple or other unnaturally occurring hair color • False eyelashes
Jewelry	Students should avoid wearing jewelry such as rings, necklaces, or bracelets due to difficulty performing hand hygiene and/or maintaining personal safety. Liability for lost or damaged jewelry is assumed only by the wearer.	• Plain metal wedding band • Solid color, plain silicon wedding band • Wristwatch (waterproof) with second hand • Metal medical alert jewelry • SNA pin (optional)	• Engagement rings • Chain necklaces • Bracelets
Smart Glasses & Other Recording Devices	Students should avoid wearing capable of recording, photographing, transmitting, or accessing information, are prohibited in all	• Eyewear that does not have any recording, photographing, transmitting, or information accessible capabilities.	•

	educational settings including clinical.		
Body Piercing	Students with pierced ears may wear a maximum of 2 studs per ear. Facial piercings are not permitted due to the risk of infection.	• Earring studs of solid metal, size < 5mm • Face mask covering nose piercings	• Dangling earrings • Nose, eyebrow, or any other facial piercing • No plastic or silicone ornamentation for earrings or other exposed piercings
Body Art / Tattoos	All body art must be covered. because some people encountered while in the professional role may find these offensive.	• Long-sleeved white shirt • Opaque dressing	• Exposed body art
Personal Hygiene	Good personal hygiene is essential to health promotion. Students should avoid strong scents because these may trigger allergic responses or be offensive to people encountered while in the professional role.	• Lightly-scented or unscented deodorant, shampoo, and soap	• Cigarette smoke • Perfume or other scented hygiene products
Fingernails	Fingernails must be short to facilitate effective hand hygiene. Clear, colorless nail polish is optional.	• Fingernails < 5mm beyond tip of fingers • Colorless nail polish	• Artificial nails of any type (ex: acrylic, plastic, lacquer) • Nail polish with any tint
Men: Facial Hair	Men should be clean-shaven or with neatly trimmed beard and/or mustache. In some clinical settings, facial hair may not be acceptable (ex: N-95 respirator must be worn).	• Established beard and/or mustache	• Beard and/or mustache not yet established
Personal Habits	Chewing gum in the clinical setting is not permitted. Smoking or vaping while in uniform is not permitted.		• Chewing gum • Smoking • Vaping
Cultural or Religious Attire	Seek approval from the Dean of the School of Nursing.		

Smart Glasses/Recording Devices

Smart glasses, or any similar wearable device capable of recording, photographing, transmitting, or accessing information, are prohibited in all educational settings, including clinical. Students may not wear or use these devices in clinical settings due to patient privacy, confidentiality, and HIPAA requirements. They are also prohibited during class and examinations to maintain academic integrity and testing security. Failure to comply will result in removal from the classroom, lab, or clinical environment and will be addressed according to applicable School of Nursing policies

Drug and Intoxicant Use Policy

Annual Drug Screening

The USC Aiken School of Nursing adheres to strict standards of professional conduct mandated by the South Carolina Board of Nursing and by those required of area healthcare agencies. To ensure patient safety and maintain the trust of the public, the USC Aiken School of Nursing requires all students to submit to annual drug screening tests. Screening must be completed prior to starting in the nursing program and annually until all clinical coursework is completed. Students are responsible for making any appointments necessary to complete the drug screening and for the cost of the screening.

Impaired Practice

If any clinical agency affiliated with the USC Aiken School of Nursing prohibits practice as a student nurse because of a positive (failed) drug screening, students with a positive drug test cannot attend clinical experiences at any institution and will be dismissed from the nursing program at USC Aiken.

Clinical Definitions of Intoxication or Impairment

Alcohol: Breathalyzer or blood measurement greater than or equal to 50mg/dL.

Non-prescribed controlled or illicit substances: Any detectable amount in blood or urine constitutes a positive (failed) test.

Prohibited Behaviors

If a student buys, manufactures, possesses, distributes, or sells non-prescribed controlled or illicit substances or intoxicants and/or if a student reports to classroom, clinical, or volunteer experiences after using non-prescribed controlled or illicit substances or intoxicants, the student is subject to consequences including delay in progression in the nursing program, dismissal from the program, and/or report to law enforcement.

Suspect Behaviors

At the discretion of a classroom or clinical instructor, students may be required to submit to drug screening (blood, urine, and/or other as appropriate), including when:

1. A USC Aiken School of Nursing instructor has reason to believe a student is impaired and/or has detectable quantities of non-prescribed controlled or illicit substances and intoxicants while in class, clinical, or volunteer sites.
2. Controlled substances are discovered missing from a clinical environment.
3. Controlled substances are mishandled.

Voluntary Disclosure of a Drug or Alcohol Problem

A student who voluntarily discloses a drug or alcohol problem and seeks assistance will not be penalized. The School of Nursing understands that this student will require a period of medical leave for treatment of the addiction. Prior to returning to the nursing program, a physician must attest to the student's readiness to return. Random drug screening may be required for up to 12 months after returning to the School of Nursing.

Prohibited Behavior	Examples (not an exhaustive list)	Penalty
Failure to endorse the School of Nursing's Drug and Alcohol Policy	• Refuses to sign statement expressing willingness to comply with the policy	Dismissal from program
Falsification of or failure to complete medical questionnaire and consent form prior to drug testing	• Intentionally omits information • Does not consent to testing	Dismissal from program
Failure to complete initial drug screening prior to beginning the nursing program	• Makes appointments but screening is not performed • Does not make appointment	Failure of course
Failure to complete annual drug screening before the start of clinical experiences	• Forgets to schedule screening • Screening scheduled after one calendar year has passed	Failure of course
Positive (failed) drug screening test (initial or annual screening, or warranted circumstance) for any non-prescribed controlled substance	• Drug screening positive for opioids • Drug screening positive for benzodiazepines • Drug screening positive for marijuana/THC • Drug screening positive for non-prescribed medication for ADD	Dismissal from program
Altered or switched urine samples submitted for drug or illicit substance testing	• Intentionally tampers with sample to lower chance of detecting non-prescribed controlled and/or illicit substances or intoxicants • Substitutes another's sample to prevent detection of non-prescribed controlled and/or illicit substances or intoxicants	Dismissal from program
Purchase, use, possession, production, distribution, or sales of prescribed and/or non-prescribed controlled or illicit substances and intoxicants and/or paraphernalia	• Shares or sells with or receives medications for ADD from others • Buys non-prescribed opioids from an individual • Diverts prescribed controlled substances from patients for personal use or gain	Dismissal Report to University and/or other local law enforcement agency
Presence at USC Aiken, clinical sites, or volunteer sites while under the effect of non-prescribed controlled or illicit substances and intoxicants	• Reports to clinical site with a Breathalyzer reading of 50mg/dL or greater • Reports to volunteer experience with any detectable level (blood, urine, Breathalyzer) of a non-prescribed controlled or illicit substance or intoxicant	Dismissal
Refusal to submit to drug screening test when requested by instructor	• Refuses blood or urine screening test despite instructor's request	Dismissal
Conviction within the previous seven years under any criminal drug or intoxicant statute	• Convicted of driving while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other intoxicant • Convicted of distributing or selling controlled substances	Dismissal

Electronic Devices Policy

Students and faculty alike engage with electronic devices throughout the day for a variety of reasons. To maintain classroom settings that are conducive learning environments for all students, electronic devices are to be used only for scholarly activities. Examples of both acceptable and unacceptable activities include, but are not limited to:

Acceptable Activities	Unacceptable Activities
Completing internet searches as part of class activities	Making video recordings of class or clinical activities
Accessing Lippincott Advisor app on phone	Engaging in verbal telephone conversations
Working within cloud-based sharing sites	Conducting internet shopping activities
Accessing e-textbooks for reference	Viewing social media
Taking notes during lectures	Texting during non-emergency situation
Making audio recordings of lectures or presentations (with faculty permission)	Making personal phone calls or texting in patient care settings

Students should silence all devices designed to receive incoming phone calls during class periods. Initiating and receiving voice calls during class periods is prohibited. In the event a personal emergency or crisis, students should leave the room without disrupting class activities.

Occasionally, accommodations authorized by the Disability Services Office may permit students to wear headphones to provide white noise during exams. Students who have received this accommodation are required to provide notice of this accommodation from the Disability Services Office and present devices for inspection as requested.

The USC Aiken School of Nursing follows guidelines from the [National Council of State Boards of Nursing](#) regarding the use of social media. Students should refrain from posting information that could identify patients, clinical agencies, and faculty in all circumstances.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in subsequent disciplinary action which could include dismissal from the program.

Environmental Risks Associated with Patient Care Policy

Nursing students encounter the same risks in nursing school that they will encounter in their future careers as professional nurses. The School of Nursing provides evidence-based, comprehensive education regarding personal safety to prevent exposure to pathogens and reduce the risk for physical injuries in the first semester in the program. Students are tested on bloodborne pathogens and the pathogen-based precautions in addition to proper use of personal protective equipment.

Nursing students may not refuse to provide care for patients because of fear of exposure to pathogens. Refusal to provide care to assigned patients after receiving appropriate education and when personal protective equipment is available may prevent students from progressing in the nursing program and could result in dismissal from the program.

In documented cases when a student is immunocompromised (e.g., HIV infection, receiving chemotherapy), reasonable accommodations will be made to support student health and safety. In the event of pregnancy, students should avoid caring for patients with certain conditions as well as those who have radioactive implants or were injected recently with a radioactive isotope. Students bear the responsibility of notifying the clinical faculty of pregnancy so that appropriate patient care assignments can be made. All health information provided by students is treated in a confidential manner by faculty.

Clinical faculty are responsible for monitoring the practice of students and enforcing infection control policies and procedures as defined by the clinical agency. Clinical faculty are also responsible for ensuring that students follow best practices for equipment use and safe patient handling techniques.

General Exam and Testing Policy

The School of Nursing is committed to ensuring the integrity of testing environments and the security of exams. Exams are encrypted and require passwords to open, and other restrictions are in place to ensure exam security. In addition, all exams are proctored.

Attendance for exams is mandatory. Exams are administered during class time unless otherwise announced. Exams will be rescheduled only in the event of documented student incapacity and at faculty discretion. Students who are unable to take an exam on the scheduled day and time must notify the professor PRIOR to the exam start time and provide appropriate documentation (ex: doctor's note, funeral program) to the course faculty. If excused for the absence and/or tardiness, students must schedule to make-up the test within two days of returning to class. Failure to do so will automatically result in a zero for that test. At the discretion of course faculty, make-up exam format may differ from that of the original exam, including the number and type of questions and the time allotted.

Procedural Requirements

1. Prior to beginning the exam, all students must comply with these requirements:
 - a. Remove and silence all smart watches and phones
 - b. Remove all hats, heavy coats, and blankets
 - c. Dispose of or store all food
 - d. Place all belongings (including cell phones) at the front of the classroom
 - e. Obtain scratch paper from course faculty, if permitted
2. Bathroom breaks may be allowed at faculty discretion
3. Student Preference
 - a. Students may keep a drink in a clear container
 - b. Students may wear noise-reducing ear plugs (after inspection)

Computer Requirements (all computer-administered assessments)

Computers should be fully charged before beginning an exam. For devices with short battery life, extension cords may be available, though students are required to provide chargers. To ensure the best testing experience for all, students need to prepare their computers with the following:

1. Preferred browsers: Google® Chrome™, Apple® Safari™
2. Privacy screens: Used for the duration of the exam period
3. ExamSoft® application (Exemplify®)
4. Blackboard® Respondus Monitor and Lockdown browser (remote learning situations only): This should be downloaded before beginning the exam.

Partial Credit Scoring Policy for Alternate Item Types

For multiple-response and alternate-format exam items, partial credit (+/– scoring) may be used. Under this scoring method, students earn credit for each correct response selected and lose credit for incorrect responses selected. The lowest possible score for any question is zero; scores will not be reduced below zero. This approach recognizes partial knowledge while maintaining accountability for incorrect selections.

This scoring method may be applied to multiple-response (SATA), fill-in-the-blank with multiple blanks, matching, ordering, hotspot, cloze, matrix, drag-and-drop, and bowtie item types, as determined by course faculty to align with NCLEX testing standards and support evaluation of clinical judgment and decision-making.

Grievance Policy

The SoN follows the Student Grievance Procedure outlined in the [USC Aiken Student Handbook](#) (located under Student Services; updated annually). The purpose of the SoN student Grievance Policy is to provide each student enrolled in the nursing program with a standardized, formal process for seeking a resolution when, in the student's judgment, they have been treated unfairly or improperly. Any student may pursue grievance resolution without fear of retaliation.

Student grievances fall into one of two categories: academic/final grade or non-academic.

Academic/Final Course Grade Grievance: limited to violations of Instructional Responsibilities outlined in the USC Aiken Faculty Manual or a violation of University policy on Student Rights and Freedoms.

- Academic Grievance:
 - An instructor's prejudiced or capricious evaluation practices resulted course grade(s) based on factors other than the student's performance on coursework.
 - *Note:* This procedure does not apply to situations when a student disagrees with the grade assigned in partial or complete fulfillment of the course. These issues should be addressed through discussion between the student and the faculty member. Ultimately, the final decision regarding grade assignment rests solely with the faculty member.
- Final Course Grade Grievance:
 - The basis for this grievance is a complaint regarding an academic action taken by a faculty/staff member in assigning a final grade for a course, or for a qualifying or comprehensive exam. Students may not file a grade grievance until a final course grade is received.
 - Examples of qualifying Final Course Grade Grievances include calculation of final grade or clerical error, arbitrary or capricious evaluation of a final product (exam, paper, etc.) by the instructor, substantial failure by the instructor to follow the syllabus or announced grading practices, or other extraordinary mitigating circumstances.
 - *Note:* This procedure may not be used to complain about a faculty member's grading policy, assignments, difficulty or rigor of a course, or other comparable matters.

Non-Academic Grievances: limited to violations of University policies, discrimination, or improper personal or professional behavior as outlined below.

- An instructor's or staff member's failure to abide by stated university policies (including policies related to the adverse effects on a student's academic standing due to problems in the instructor's ability to write or speak English) or

state law; or an instructor's failure to abide by written or stated course requirements.

- Discrimination against students by faculty or staff in academic or non-academic matters for reasons of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or veteran's status.
- Improper personal or professional behavior involving faculty, staff, or administrators, excluding charges of sexual misconduct according to the USC System Sexual Harassment Policy. In addition to sexual harassment, the following issues cannot be addressed using this grievance procedure: disciplinary decisions, housing appeals decisions, residency classification decisions, traffic appeals decisions, or any other type of decision where a clearly defined appeal process exists.

Grievance Process: All student grievances must follow the steps outlined in the SoN and USC Aiken Student Handbook and meet all time requirements. Please refer to the table located after this policy for a summary of these steps. Except for cases involving discrimination, harassment or retaliation, students are required to attempt resolution of the issue informally. A student may request the judicial officer to appoint a judicial procedures advisor to assist with the process at any time during the grievance process.

- **Judicial Officer:** The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will serve as the judicial officer for grievances against faculty or staff members in the offices of Academic Affairs, Center for Student Achievement, Institutional Effectiveness, Instructional Services, or any academic department or school. The Director of Student Leadership and Engagement will serve as the judicial officer for grievances against any other staff member.
- **Judicial Procedures Advisor:** A faculty member who serves as an advisor to a student or student organization. The judicial procedures advisor is an ex-officio participant in any student grievance procedure who maintains an objective position in advising the student or student organization. They are not an advocate who sides with either principal party involved in the grievance procedure. Instead, they serve as an advisor to guide the student in the process and in the unbiased collection of evidence to be used at a hearing, if such is necessary.

For all grievances falling within the SoN Student Grievance Policy, the first action must include the student scheduling a conference with the faculty or staff member to discuss the matter. The purpose of this initial conference is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding and to resolve all differences in an informal, cooperative manner. If this conference does not yield a resolution that is satisfactory to the student, subsequent steps outlined in the USCA Student Handbook (summarized in the table below) should be followed.

Procedural Order for Academic/Final Grade & Non-Academic Grievances

Academic/Final Grade Grievances	Non-Academic Grievances
1. Event 2. Complaint: Faculty/staff member 3. Complaint: SON Dean 4. USCA Judicial Officer 5. USCA Judicial Procedures Advisor 6. Student Grievance Committee 7. Appeal to EVCAA (terminal step)	1. Event 2. Complaint: faculty/staff member 3. Complaint: SON Dean 4. USCA Judicial Officer 5. USCA Judicial Procedures Advisor 6. Student Grievance Committee 7. Appeal to EVCAA 8. Appeal to USCA Chancellor (terminal step)

Timelines for each step of the Procedural Order are provided below and also in the USC Aiken Student Handbook.

Timelines for Academic/Final Grade and Non-Academic Grievances

Academic Grievances	Final Grade Grievances	Non-Academic Grievances
Within 10 business days, the student must schedule a conference with the faculty/staff member to discuss the matter. The faculty/staff member must agree to meet with the student within five business days of receiving the request.	Within 10 business days, the student must schedule a conference with the faculty/staff member to discuss the matter. The faculty/staff member must agree to meet with the student within five business days of receiving the request.	Within 10 business days, the student must schedule a conference with the faculty/staff member to discuss the incident/situation in question. The faculty/staff member must agree to meet with the student within five business days of the request.
If the student is unsatisfied with the outcome of the conference with the faculty or staff member, they must submit a written request for a formal meeting to the faculty or staff member's immediate supervisor within five business days of the meeting.	If the student is not satisfied with the result of this informal meeting, the student must submit a written request for a formal meeting to the faculty/staff member's immediate supervisor to discuss the student's complaint within five business days of the meeting.	If the student is not satisfied with the result of this informal meeting, the student must submit a written request for a formal meeting to the faculty/staff member's immediate supervisor to discuss the student's complaint within five business days of the meeting.
The immediate supervisor must meet with the student, interview the individual against whom the complaint is being made, and deliver a written response as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to both parties within 10 business days of receipt of the student's request.	The supervisor must meet with the student, interview the individual against whom the complaint is being made, and deliver a written response as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to both parties within 10 business days of receipt of the student's request.	The supervisor must meet with the student, interview the individual against whom the complaint is being made, and deliver a written response as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to both parties within 10 business days of receipt of the student's request.
If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the immediate supervisor, the student must submit a written request to the appropriate judicial officer within five business days for a formal meeting with a judicial procedures advisor.	If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the immediate supervisor, the student must submit a written request to the appropriate judicial officer within five business days for a formal meeting with a judicial procedures advisor.	If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the immediate supervisor, the student must submit a written request to the appropriate judicial officer within five business days for a formal meeting with a judicial procedures advisor.
The judicial officer will appoint a judicial procedures advisor and inform the student of the appointment within five business days of receiving the written request. The student will meet with the judicial procedures advisor within five business days of the appointment. Within five business days of	The judicial officer will appoint a judicial procedures advisor and inform the student of the appointment within five business days of receiving the written request. The student will meet with the judicial procedures advisor within five business days of the appointment. Within five business days of	The judicial officer will appoint a judicial procedures advisor and inform the student of the appointment within five business days of receiving the written request. The student will meet with the judicial procedures advisor within five business days of the appointment. Within five business days of

student meeting with the judicial procedures advisor, the judicial procedures officer will convene the student grievance committee. The committee will hold a hearing within 10 business days of the appointment with the judicial procedures advisor.	student meeting with the judicial procedures advisor, the judicial procedures officer will convene the student grievance committee. The committee will hold a hearing within 10 business days of the appointment with the judicial procedures advisor.	student meeting with the judicial procedures advisor, the judicial procedures officer will convene the student grievance committee. The committee will hold a hearing within 10 business days of the appointment with the judicial procedures advisor.
If the student is not satisfied with the result of the student grievance committee, the student can file a written appeal to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA) within 10 days of the decision.	If the student is not satisfied with the result of the student grievance committee, the student can file a written appeal to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA) within 10 days of the decision.	If the student is not satisfied with the result of the student grievance committee, the student can file a written appeal within ten days of the decision. Non-academic grievances against administrators reporting directly to the Chancellor will be sent to the Chancellor, who will assign another senior administrator to conduct the grievance hearing and make a recommendation to the Chancellor. Nonacademic grievances against all other faculty or staff should be sent to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA).
Within five business days, the EVCAA will schedule a grievance hearing that must include all parties directly involved with the grievance. The EVCAA will render a final decision and notify the parties involved and the immediate supervisor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within 10 business days of the hearing.	Within five business days, the EVCAA will schedule a grievance hearing that must include all parties directly involved with the grievance. The EVCAA will render a final decision and notify the parties involved and the immediate supervisor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within 10 business days of the hearing.	Within five business days, the EVCAA or other appropriate senior administrator will schedule a grievance committee hearing that must include all parties directly involved with the grievance. The EVCAA or other appropriate senior administrator must render a final decision and notify the parties involved and the immediate supervisor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within 10 business days of the hearing.

Health and Wellness Policy

Students are required to meet health requirements of the USC Aiken (see USC Aiken Bulletin). In addition, by the announced deadline:

1. All students are required to submit to a physical exam from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant prior to beginning the program. Students are responsible for the cost of the physical exam. Before beginning nursing courses, students must submit a completed Initial Health Examination form.
2. After the first year, students will submit a self-reported Updated Health Examination form annually.
3. When entering the program, students must complete an initial 2-step PPD test. A 1-step PPD test is required annually after the initial testing series. Results of annual tests should be submitted on the School of Nursing Annual Update PPD form.
4. Students are required to submit proof of all required immunizations and/or titers. These include:
 - a. Rubella
 - b. Rubeola
 - c. Mumps
 - d. Tdap within the past 10 years
 - e. Hepatitis B
 - f. Varicella (statement of disease is not accepted)
 - g. Seasonal influenza vaccine (Note: For students stating in the fall semester, documentation of the flu vaccine is due by October 1st)
 - h. COVID-19 vaccine (or declination form)

To comply with requirements established by affiliated clinical sites, healthcare information must cover the entire academic year and be updated by June each year. Students who fail to provide the necessary information by the announced deadline are not permitted to attend class or clinical sites until the requirement is met.

Medication Calculation Proficiency Testing

To ensure safety and readiness for medication administration in the clinical environment, all students must demonstrate mastery of medication calculations in each level of the program. The required degree of accuracy in calculations is dependent on the level in which students are enrolled:

Level 4: grade of $\geq 90\%$ is required

Levels 5 and 6: grade of $\geq 95\%$ is required

Levels 7 and 8: grade of 100% is required

Students are allowed a maximum of three attempts to meet the required level of proficiency. When students are unable to demonstrate the required level of proficiency, these are the consequences:

- **Failure #1:** Students are prohibited from administering medications during all clinical experiences in any clinical course until the proficiency testing is successfully completed. Students should consult with course faculty about remediation and available resources.
- **Failure #2:** Students are prohibited from attending all clinical experiences in any clinical course until proficiency testing is successfully completed.
- **Failure #3:** Students remain unable to attend clinical experiences and therefore are unable to develop the competencies necessary to pass clinical courses. After three failures, students have the option of withdrawing from both clinical courses or receiving a final grade of F in both clinical courses.

Part-Time Schedule Policy

The School of Nursing does not offer a part-time option for students except under extenuating circumstances. If a student needs to complete the program on a part-time basis, these guidelines must be followed:

1. The duration of time in the program extends to no more than 3.5 calendar years or 42 months (normal is 2.5 years).
2. The student must petition the School of Nursing APG Committee for approval of the plan.
3. The sequence in which courses are taken after approved for a part-time schedule in a single semester must follow this order:
 - a. If part-time in Level 4: NURS 312 and NURS 307 are taken before NURS 201 and NURS 202.
 - b. If part-time in Level 5: NURS 301 is a pre- or co-requisite for NURS 309 and is taken before NURS 323.
 - c. If part-time in Level 6:
 - i. NURS 413 and NURS 417 are taken first, followed by NURS 310 and NURS 322; *or*
 - ii. NURS 322 and either NURS 413 or NURS 417, followed by NURS 310 and either NURS 413 or NURS 417.
 - d. If part-time in Level 7: NURS 324 with or without NURS 414, followed by NURS 315 with or without NURS 414.
 - e. If part-time in Level 8: NURS 418 and NURS 425 must be taken in the final semester in the program.

Progression and Retention Policies

Progression Policy

Student records are regularly audited by School of Nursing staff and faculty. Students are encouraged to meet with faculty mentors and a Financial Aid counselor if they are considering withdrawal from courses to ensure understanding of the repercussions of withdrawals.

In the event of withdrawal or failure of a course, students in the School of Nursing must abide by these policies.

1. Students must complete all nursing courses in 3.5 calendar years or 42 months (normal is 2.5).
2. A minimum final course grade of C+ (80%) is required to pass all School of Nursing courses and to progress in the program.
3. Students who earn a final grade of C (< 80%) or lower in the same nursing course will be dismissed from the School of Nursing.
4. Students who earn a final grade of C (< 80%) or lower in two different nursing courses will be dismissed from the School of Nursing.
5. Students who are not successful in a nursing course at USC Aiken must retake the failed course at USC Aiken.
6. Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) withdrawals over the span of the nursing program.
7. Students may register for a single course in the nursing program a maximum of two (2) times.
8. Students may withdraw from a maximum of 2 courses in Level 4 of the nursing program.
9. Students who drop all four (4) courses in Level 4 are required to reapply to the nursing program with the understanding that readmission is not a guarantee.

Students must take NURS A418, NURS A419, NURS A421, and NURS A425 during the final semester of work toward the BSN degree.

Grade Forgiveness: Students may request grade forgiveness for only one nursing course. The purpose of grade forgiveness is to protect grade point averages from the results of poor performance in a single course. Grade forgiveness does not affect other requirements in the progression policy.

Retention Policy

A nursing major in good standing may have a one-semester absence from clinical courses for any reason. In the interest of patient safety, following an absence of more than one semester from clinical courses, regardless of reason, the returning student must demonstrate readiness to resume studies by meeting these requirements immediately prior to the re-entry semester:

1. Satisfactory completion of the final exam or the ATI Proctored Examination from the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses
2. Satisfactory completion of a head-to-toe assessment

3. Satisfactory demonstration of critical clinical skills as defined by course coordinators of the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses
4. Evidence of medication calculation proficiency equivalent to that from the most recent, successfully completed level (maximum of 3 attempts prior to the first clinical)
5. Satisfactory completion of the pharmacology test from the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses.

If the student is unsuccessful in meeting these requirements, the student will need to repeat the most recent, successfully completed clinical courses before moving forward in the program.

Unusual circumstances, such as partial completion of the most recent semester prior to the absence (e.g. only 1 of 2 clinical courses successfully completed) will be evaluated by the School of Nursing's APG Committee on an individual basis.

Social Media Policy

Based on recommendations from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the School of Nursing

1. All nursing students are required to sign a consent to photography and videography due to use of video equipment during their simulation lab experiences.
2. Nursing students are prohibited from disclosing these types of information on any social media platform:
 - a. Photographs of or references to patients, their families and/or friends
 - b. Photographs of or references to clinical agencies or staff at these agencies
 - c. Information about or references to the School of Nursing, its employees, and/or students
 - d. Information that expresses or implies sponsorship or endorsement by the School of Nursing or USC Aiken unless authorized to act in this capacity by the School of Nursing or USC Aiken.
3. Students who wish to show affiliation with the School of Nursing on personal social media accounts (e.g., listing affiliation on a Facebook profile) are required to add a disclaimer: *Opinions or views expressed do not represent the opinions of the School of Nursing or USC Aiken.*

Students in violation of this policy may face disciplinary action, including dismissal from the nursing program.

Reference: National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2024). *Social media guidelines for nurses*. <https://www.ncsbn.org/video/social-media-guidelines-for-nurses>