

TCNJ Department of Nursing

Academic Policies and Program Requirements

Effective Matriculation Date – May 2025 Traditional BSN

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I. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

This document outlines the policies and requirements for students enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). These policies are also available online on the Nursing website under Resources > Students > Department & School Resources > Undergraduate programs > Academic Policies – Undergraduate.

The academic policies and program requirements contained in this document apply to students enrolled in the traditional program. Knowledge of and compliance with these policies and requirements is the responsibility of the student. Students must attest through signature that they have received a copy of these policies upon matriculation. Students are specifically responsible for:

- monitoring their own grades for minimal standards.
- obtaining permission from the Chairperson of the Department of Nursing (Department Chair) prior to taking courses at another institution to ensure credit will be awarded.
- meeting routinely (2 times/year minimum) with their faculty advisor.

Policy and Program Requirement Changes

The faculty reviews these policies annually. If there are revisions/updates to the policies that affect current students, they are required to attest through signature that they have received the updates. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to change policy and/or program requirements without prior notice in order to reflect changes in the professional field.

II. PROGRAM ENTRY, RETENTION, AND EXIT/GRADUATION STANDARDS

A. Background Check Prior Notification

New Jersey Board of Nursing rules, N.J.A.C. 13:37-1.8(h) stipulate that: “Before an individual is admitted to a nursing education program, the program shall inform the individual that a criminal history background check is a prerequisite for licensure as a registered professional nurse or a licensed practical nurse.” Every student has the responsibility to self-report past violations while enrolled in the nursing program. These violations must be reported to the Department Chair and Assistant Dean, School of Nursing and Health Sciences for review. Inability to obtain a clear background check can affect progression into clinical courses and future licensure.

B. Criteria for Transfer into the Nursing Major

- a. Overall GPA of 3.0 at the time of request for transfer into Nursing.
- b. Science GPA of 3.0 (must have at least one science course at TCNJ).
- c. Must complete one of the foundation courses (explained later) and achieve a minimum grade of B.

Internal transfer students are admitted into the Nursing major, depending on available space, once a year following the end of the spring semester for entry the following fall semester. Internal transfer students will follow the Academic Policies and Program Requirements of the Department of Nursing effective for the fall of their entry into the major.

C. BSN Course Categories

Given the nature of the nursing curriculum, course sequence is particularly important. Matriculated students are expected to follow the recommended curriculum plan to avoid delays in entering nursing courses and graduation. Students need to work closely in consultation with faculty advisors to progress toward their expected graduation date.

To delineate these standards, coursework for the BSN is divided into three categories.

1. Foundation Courses – set the standards for students currently at TCNJ in the nursing major and for those who wish to transfer into the program (if available). These courses are foundations for study in the major and are predictive of success in the program.
2. Degree Specific/Support Science Courses – include science and math courses required for the BSN.
3. Critical Content Courses – set the standard for students' retention in the program. These courses represent the essential nature of the discipline or are ones upon which advanced courses are based.

D. Support Science Courses

- The non-nursing courses identified in the previous table (e.g., BIO 141, 142, 144, CHE 111, PSY 101, STA 115) are considered supportive to the nursing major.
- Once students are matriculated into the nursing major, three of the four support science courses (BIO 141, 142, CHE 111) must be taken at TCNJ. Principles of Microbiology (BIO 144) may be taken at another institution but only with prior approval from the Department of Nursing and completion of the [Course Authorization Form](#). Microbiology courses that are taught entirely online are not considered equivalent and will not be accepted for transfer credit by the Department of Nursing. Courses that combine online coursework with supervised on-site lab instruction are permissible with prior approval. Students who fail to earn the minimum grade in BIO 144 and/or who take this course elsewhere may risk not earning enough credits for graduation.
- If a student wishes to take permitted support science courses at an institution other than TCNJ, written permission must be obtained from the Department Chair. It is the student's responsibility to have an official transcript of the completed course grade sent to the Office of Records and Registration to receive transfer credit. Transfer credit must be received before the start of the semester in which the nursing course, for which it is a prerequisite, is to be taken.

E. Nursing Courses, Prerequisites, and Corequisites

- Once a student is matriculated, all nursing courses (NUR) must be taken at TCNJ.
- Foundation, support science, and critical content courses are prerequisites or corequisites to specific nursing courses. Students may not enroll in a specific nursing course for which there is a prerequisite unless they have achieved the required minimum grade in the prerequisite course. Students will be required to withdraw from the nursing sequence if the required grade is not achieved. (Refer to "Procedure After Unsatisfactory Performance in a Required Course" later in this document.)
- Students enrolled in a corequisite support course along with identified nursing courses may not drop or withdraw from the corequisite course without specific permission to do so from the Department Chair. This permission will be documented on the student's advisement log. Students who drop a corequisite support course without permission will be required to withdraw from the nursing course or will incur an unsatisfactory grade in the nursing course.

The identified support courses are prerequisites or corequisites to specific nursing courses as indicated below.

Prerequisite Foundation & Support Science Courses	Nursing Courses
CHE 111, BIO 141, BIO 142, BIO 144 (prerequisites)	NUR 200 - Pharmacology NUR 230 - Holistic Health Assessment
PSY 101 (pre- or corequisite)	NUR 225 - Pathophysiology NUR 240 – Holistic Science NUR 244 – Holistic Practice
STA 115 (pre- or corequisite)	NUR 328 - Research

The nursing courses identified on the left are prerequisites or corequisites for the nursing courses listed on the right.

Prerequisite Nursing Courses	Nursing Courses
NUR 140 – Health Promotion Across the Life Span (prerequisite)	NUR 215 - Professional Role 1 NUR 230 - Holistic Health Assessment
NUR 200 – Pharmacology (pre- or corequisite) NUR 202 - Nutrition (pre- or corequisite) NUR 215 – Professional Role 1 NUR 225 - Pathophysiology NUR 230 - Holistic Health Assessment (Prerequisites: NUR 215, NUR 225, and NUR 230 shall be taken and successfully passed only in the fall semester immediately preceding anticipated entry into NUR 240.)	NUR 240 – Holistic Science NUR 244 – Holistic Practice
All NUR 100 and NUR 200 nursing courses (prerequisites)	NUR 320 – Childbearing Family NUR 340 – Psychosocial Health NUR 344 - Child Health
NUR 320 – Childbearing Family (prerequisite)	NUR 330 – Adult/Elder Health I: Science NUR 334 - Adult/Elder Health I: Practice
NUR 320 – Childbearing Family NUR 330 – Adult/Elder Health I: Science NUR 334 - Adult/Elder Health I: Practice NUR 340 – Psychosocial Health NUR 344 - Child Health (prerequisites)	NUR 420 – Adult/Elder Health II: Science NUR 424 - Adult/Elder Health II: Practice
NUR 328 – Research NUR 420 – Adult/Elder Health II: Science NUR 424 - Adult/Elder Health II: Practice (prerequisites)	NUR 440 – Community Public Health NUR 435 – Informatics/ Systems Thinking NUR 460 - Professional Role 2/ Leadership/Capstone

F. Minimum Grade Requirements

The established minimum grade requirements stipulated below must be met in foundation courses, degree specific/support science courses, critical content courses, and all other required nursing courses. Students are strongly advised to review their Academic Requirements Report in PAWS, review the Curriculum Plan for their program provided upon entrance, and see their advisor for clarification. Students are reminded of the TCNJ academic policy that requires the “attainment of a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 overall and within the major.” The charts below detail the required grades in each course.

Foundation Courses	Degree Specific/Support Science Courses	Critical Content Courses
PSY 101 – Psychology I (B)	BIO 141 – Principles of Human Anatomy and Physiology I BIO 142 – Principles of Human Anatomy and Physiology II (C+)	NUR 200 – Pharmacology NUR 202 - Nutrition NUR 215 – Professional Role 1 NUR 225 - Pathophysiology (C)
NUR 140 – Health Promotion Across the Life Span (C)	BIO 144 – Principles of Microbiology CHE 111 – Biochemistry and the Human Body STAT 115 – Statistics (C-)	NUR 230 - Holistic Health Assessment NUR 240 – Holistic Science NUR 244 – Holistic Practice (C)

All Other Nursing Courses		
NUR 260 – Inclusivity, Culture and Health Equity (C)	NUR 320 – Childbearing Family NUR 328 – Research NUR 330 – Adult/Elder Health I: Science NUR 334 - Adult/Elder Health I: Practice NUR 340 – Psychosocial Health NUR 344 - Child Health (C)	NUR 420 – Adult/Elder Health II: Science NUR 424 - Adult/Elder Health II: Practice NUR 440 – Community Public Health NUR 435 – Informatics/ Systems Thinking NUR 460 - Professional Role 2/ Leadership/Capstone (C)

G. Grading Policies for the Department of Nursing

The numerical range for each letter grade in NUR courses was approved by the nursing faculty:

Letter Grade	Percent	GPA
A	100-95	4.00
A-	94-90	3.67
B+	89-87	3.33
B	86-83	3.00
B-	82-80	2.67
C+	79-78	2.33
C	77-76	2.00
C-	75	1.67
D+	74-70	1.33
D	69-65	1.00
F	64 and below	0.00

- Upon the first instance of a grade less than the established minimum in any of the support science courses (CHE 111, BIO 141, BIO 142, BIO 144), the student will be placed on Department of Nursing probation. Probationary status will not be removed.
- Upon the second instance of a grade below the established minimum in any of the support science courses (CHE 111, BIO 141, BIO 142, BIO 144), the student will be dismissed from the Nursing Major. Matriculation status will be changed to “Open Option - Undesignated Transitional” and the student will be assigned an interim advisor in the Center for Student Success.
- Students must earn a **WEIGHTED** average grade of “76” on examinations in all NUR courses. If a student does not earn a weighted average exam grade of 76 in an NUR course, the student will be required to repeat the course before progressing in the program. The student must repeat the course even if their overall average in the course meets the minimum required grade of a ‘C’. A weighted exam average of less than 76 constitutes a failure to earn the minimum required exam grade, and the student will be placed on probation with a retroactive ‘W’ assigned for the course until it is repeated. If this is the student's second failure to earn an adequate grade in a nursing or required science course, the student will be dismissed from the program.
- When a nursing course includes a college laboratory and/or clinical practice experience, the classroom and the college laboratory and/or clinical practice experience must be passed.

- If a student fails to achieve the minimum required academic performance in either the practice (clinical component) or the science (classroom theory) in a DYAD course (for example NUR 330/334), the student is immediately prohibited from further attendance in both courses in the DYAD. If the failure occurs before the college's deadline for course withdrawal, the student must immediately withdraw from both courses and will receive a "W" grade in both courses. If the failure occurs after the college's course withdrawal deadline, the student will be permitted to retroactively withdraw from the other course with assistance from the Assistant Dean, School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Regardless, the student must repeat both courses in the DYAD together in the same semester and achieve the required minimum grade in both to progress in the major.
- If a "nursing practice" course or the nursing practice component of a "mixed" course (e.g., NUR 320, NUR 340, or NUR 344), is not passed with the required minimum grade or better, the student may not take any further nursing courses that are part of a DYAD or have a practice component until the failed practice or mixed course is repeated with the required minimum grade or better.
- With the first instance of a grade of less than the minimum required in a nursing course or withdrawal from a nursing course as per nursing academic policy, the student is placed on Department of Nursing probation. **Only one nursing (NUR) course may be repeated.**
- If a student receives an unsatisfactory grade in any nursing (NUR) course and is carrying a previous failure in any one support science course (BIO 141, BIO 142, BIO 144, or CHE111) the student will be dismissed from nursing.
- If a student receives unsatisfactory grades in two or more nursing courses at any time, the student will be dismissed from the nursing major. Matriculation status will be changed to "Open Option - Undesignated Transitional" and the student will be assigned an interim advisor in the Center for Student Success.
- THERE IS NO READMISSION TO THE NURSING PROGRAM AFTER BEING DISMISSED.

H. Procedure after Unsatisfactory Performance in a Required Course

If a student has not achieved the required grade in any supportive course, or if a student has not achieved the required minimum grade or above in a nursing course, the student must initiate the following process:

1. Withdraw from the nursing course if the student has failed to meet prerequisites for that course and the dyad.
2. Meet with the advisor to discuss a plan to remedy the course failure.
3. Repeat the required course, if permitted. Only one physical science or one NUR course may be repeated before the student is dismissed from the major. By TCNJ policy, courses may be repeated only once.
4. When the required grade is achieved, make an appointment to discuss their progress with their advisor and/or the Department Chair.
5. Complete remediation prior to the start of the next nursing course. Any student who takes a leave of absence, gap year, or fails a course must schedule time to attend Open Lab to maintain nursing clinical proficiency. The Department Chair and the Simulation Coordinator determine the required amount and duration. If this remediation is not completed successfully the student will be unable to continue in the course, and the student must withdraw from the course. This will constitute a second nursing course failure and thus dismissal from the nursing program.

6. When a course is repeated, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Records and Registration to request that the original grade be removed from the calculation of the student's Grade Point Average and the more recent grade included. Note: The student must initiate this; it is not done automatically.

I. Requirements for Graduation

In addition to the requirements for the nursing major, all students in the college follow the "pattern of degree requirements" set out in the *TCNJ Undergraduate Bulletin*. The minimum requirement for graduation is 31 course units. Satisfactory performance on comprehensive achievement assessments or examinations is required for progression and for graduation. Based on scores achieved, students may be required to complete designated review activities and retesting.

III. ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC POLICIES

A. Writing Assignment Citation Requirements

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition) is the required professional format for papers written for nursing courses. This manual is a required textbook, available in the library and in the college bookstore.

B. Electronic Devices

Cell phones must be turned either to "off" or to "vibrate" during class and in the laboratory and clinical settings unless specifically permitted by the faculty member. Restricted cell phone activities include (but are not limited to) making calls, receiving calls, text messaging, checking voice mail, taking pictures, and audio/video recording of instructors. Violating this procedure may result in the student being permanently dismissed from the program. If a student must answer an emergency message, they must leave the classroom, lab, or patient care areas, and respond as necessary. Some clinical sites may forbid any cell phone use. Some clinical sites may require verification via text messages to access electronic health care records.

C. Standardized Assessments

Throughout the program, students are required to take the standardized assessments offered by Assessment Technologies Institute LLC (ATI). Each student must achieve the criterion score (Competency Level II) established on the ATI Content Mastery Assessments. The secure assessments are designed to identify strengths in specific areas of content as well as knowledge deficits for the individual student and for the entire class. Students who do not meet the criterion score on the secure assessment are required to complete remedial work on a non-secured assessment until a minimum score of 90 percent is achieved. Deadlines for completion of remedial work will be established by the course faculty, however, in all cases, remedial work must be completed before the start of the next semester. There are additional student fees associated with these standardized assessments and examinations.

IV. CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

A. Professional Risks

Interactions with patients in the healthcare system have inherent risks to both the patient and the caregiver, including but not limited to, exposure to infectious diseases. Nursing care requires handling of and/or contact with human bodily fluids and tissues. During clinical experiences, the student may be exposed to diseases carried by viruses, bacteria, and other microorganisms. The nursing program provides information regarding known risks for various diseases and training to appropriately address those risks. It is the responsibility of the student to implement appropriate precautions in the care of all assigned patients. Students are also required to obtain and maintain compliance with required vaccinations and health screenings. Neither the College nor the nursing program is liable for healthcare costs associated with students' illness or injury resulting from clinical participation.

B. Lab/Clinical Placements

Clinical placements are selected to offer experiences congruent with theoretical course content. A variety of agencies and settings including hospitals, community health entities, and schools are used throughout the program to provide a range of experiences and exposure to a variety of professional nursing roles to meet end of program competencies. Students may be scheduled for clinical experiences from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM Sunday through Saturday. Clinical placements may be up to 60 miles away from the College campus. Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation to clinical sites.

Students are enrolled in their clinical sections by department staff. Students may submit special requests related to sports or military obligations for consideration PRIOR to registration. Requests will be reviewed and may be honored based on the nature of the request. Not all special requests can be honored. Due to the complexity of scheduling students, NO CHANGES CAN BE MADE to clinical sections after students are registered.

Lab and clinical sites/days/times may change after registration and/or site onboarding due to circumstances beyond the control of the Department of Nursing. The department reserves the right to change any clinical or lab sections assigned without prior notice to students. Students will be notified of changes through their official TCNJ email address.

C. Clinical Dress Code

Students are representatives of TCNJ Department of Nursing and are expected to present a professional and positive image whenever involved in off-campus study or clinical experiences. Each nursing student is required to wear a TCNJ Department of Nursing uniform for clinical experiences, unless otherwise instructed by course faculty. Students must purchase the required uniform prior to entry into NUR 240/244 (Holistic Science/Practice). Details about the purchase of uniforms are communicated by the Nursing Office. The standard uniform and clinical dress code are outlined below.

- Uniform/clothing must be loose enough to provide ease of movement in clinical activities.
- Name badges must be worn when in healthcare agencies.
- The standard uniform consists of a white top and blue pants with a name badge on the chest. A short- or long-sleeved shirt may be worn under the uniform scrub top and can only be blue or white.
- A navy uniform scrub jacket or white lab coat with school name badge on the chest may be worn.

- Students must wear an analog watch with second hand, starting in lab during NUR 230: Holistic Health Assessment. No smart watches are allowed.
- White, black, or natural socks or hose are required.
- Shoes must be all white or all black, professional, and made of leather with a closed toe and heel. No canvas shoes, canvas sneakers, slingbacks, or clogs may be worn.
- Hair must be neatly combed, clean, and styled/contained/pulled back/secured with bobby pins or elastic hair bands, in such a manner that it will not come in contact with the patient or the care field. Style and length of hair should minimize touching/adjusting or handling of hair during patient care. Hair of unnatural color i.e., blue, purple, pink, etc. is inappropriate and not acceptable in the clinical area.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, scarves, or other head coverings, unless for safety purposes or established religious customs or medical reasons, are inappropriate and not acceptable in clinical areas, lab settings, and during course exams. Medical head coverings or scrub caps are permitted.
- Facial hair must be clean and dry, controlled, and trimmed, and not interfere with patient care responsibilities and within OSHA standards.
- Students must be mindful of good personal hygiene. Unclean, unkempt appearance, unpleasant body or breath odors, including smoke odors and perfume/cologne, which may be offensive to patients, families, and other healthcare providers and are not acceptable.
- Headphones and earbuds are inappropriate and unacceptable in the clinical area.
- No facial jewelry or facial acne patches or accessories are permitted. The only jewelry permitted in the clinical practice setting is a plain wedding band and single post earrings worn on the ear lobe. No neck chains, bracelets, or any other pieces of jewelry may be worn in the clinical practice areas. No tongue jewelry may be worn.
- No heavy and/or excessive facial makeup is acceptable in the clinical area. No fake eyelashes may be worn.
- Nails must be clean and well-manicured, no longer than the tip of the finger. Only clear nail polish may be worn. For patient safety reasons, no chipped polish, acrylic nails, or gel polish are permitted as outlined by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control).
- Tattoos on the arms or neck may not be visible when in the clinical practice areas.
- Student dress in clinical practice areas outside of the hospital setting must be professional. No jeans, leggings, spandex, halter/tube tops, flip-flops, sandals, etc. Name badges must be worn.

D. Clinical Attendance Requirements

Attendance is mandatory for all clinical dates. A student who is going to be absent due to illness must notify their clinical faculty prior to the start of the clinical and relate the reason for the absence using the faculty's preferred method of communication. Students should not ask another student to tell the clinical faculty they will be absent from a clinical session.

One excused clinical absence (as determined by the course leader/clinical faculty) will require a makeup session by the end of the semester. Students who miss two (2) or more clinical days in one course will not have the opportunity to make up clinical. The student will receive a grade of "F" for the clinical course

and will be required to repeat the clinical and theory course the following semester, if eligible. This may result in failure to progress in the nursing program and/or dismissal from the nursing program.

Students who miss a clinical day may be responsible for covering the cost of faculty time and facility use required for clinical makeup. The acceptance of absence excuses and any related arrangements will be determined at the discretion of the course lead faculty. Students giving presentations at a conference will not require a clinical makeup fee.

Students are permitted one unexcused tardiness of no more than 5 minutes. Upon the second instance of tardiness of any length of time to the same clinical experience, the student will be dismissed from clinical for the day. This instance will count as a clinical absence and may result in a clinical failure.

E. Guidelines Concerning Behavior in Practice Settings

Students are expected to demonstrate patterns of behavior consistent with safe and ethical professional nursing practice. This includes following the legal and ethical codes of nursing; promoting the actual or potential well-being of clients, healthcare workers, and self; demonstrating accountability in preparation, documentation, and continuity of care; and showing respect for the human rights of individuals. These guidelines are congruent with the American Nurses Association's *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* (2025) and *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2021).

Students who do not demonstrate such behavior and standards, as determined by the course faculty, will receive an immediate grade of 'F' and will be dismissed from the clinical course and any relevant dyad course. Further, for egregious violations, faculty may submit a case through the TCNJ student conduct policy. Safe/unsafe, satisfactory/unsatisfactory, or acceptable/unacceptable performance is defined by the following indicators:

1. Regulatory:

The student practices within the boundaries, guidelines, and objectives of the Department of Nursing, and follows the rules and regulations of the healthcare agency. Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to promptly notify the agency, clinical faculty, and course leader of a clinical absence, as outlined in course syllabi;
- Presenting for clinical practicum under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Failure to report abuse or neglect.

2. Ethical:

The student practices according to the American Nurses Association *Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice*, and The Nurse Practice Act governs practice in the state where the clinical learning experience occurs. Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- Refusing an assignment based on client's race, culture, lifestyle, religious preference, diagnosis, or condition;
- Inappropriate behavior in any assigned activity related to clinical practice such as not reporting known errors in practice or falsifying documents, signatures, or assignments;
- Ignoring unethical behavior(s) of other healthcare persons which affects clients' welfare.

3. Promote the Well-being of Clients, Other Healthcare Workers, and Self:

The student's practice strives to meet the needs of the client considering biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural perspectives. Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to recognize and seek treatment for mental, physical, or emotional behavior(s) which may affect the well-being of others;
- Failure to follow through on suggested referrals or interventions to correct deficit areas which may result in harm to others;
- Omission of appropriate care, such as, but not limited to, medication errors;
- Abuse of clients, such as, but not limited to physical, mental, or emotional abuse; failing to recognize, or correct or contributing to hazardous conditions or circumstances;
- Exhibiting ineffective interpersonal relationships with agency staff, co-workers, peers, and faculty resulting in miscommunications and disruptions of client care and/or functioning.

4. Accountability:

The student's practice demonstrates the expected level of responsibility in the preparation, implementation, documentation, and promotion of continuity in the care of clients. Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to provide concise, inclusive, written, and verbal communication;
- Failure to accurately record comprehensive client behaviors;
- Failure to report to clinical faculty questionable nursing practice(s) which affect client welfare;
- Dishonesty.

5. Human Rights:

The student's conduct shows respect for the individual client, health team member, faculty, and self. Examples of unsafe, unsatisfactory, or unacceptable performance include but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to maintain confidentiality of interactions;
- Failure to maintain confidentiality of records;
- Dishonesty in relationships;
- Utilization of stereotypical judgments that are detrimental to patient care;
- Failure to recognize and promote every patient's rights.

V. NURSING SIMULATION LAB

A. Lab Dress Code and Etiquette

Students should arrive at the lab dressed appropriately for a learning environment, ensuring their attire is comfortable, modest, and allows for full participation in lab activities. Clothing should provide adequate

coverage and not be overly revealing. Full TCNJ uniforms are required for all simulations. TCNJ lab coat with their name tag is required for open lab and lab classes.

Maintaining professionalism and upholding academic integrity within the laboratory setting is required. All individuals are expected to conduct themselves with the highest level of ethical standards, demonstrating respect for themselves, colleagues, mentors, and staff. Any form of plagiarism, falsification, or inappropriate behavior is prohibited and will be submitted through the Academic Integrity Violation process. The lab aims to foster an environment of intellectual honesty, accountability, and mutual respect to provide a positive, safe space to learn and practice. There will be zero tolerance for violations of this policy, and appropriate disciplinary measures will be enforced.

B. Lab Kits

The lab kit is essential for participation in the clinical portion of the nursing program. Students are responsible for maintaining their lab kits throughout the clinical portion of their program. Students receive these kits at the beginning of NUR 240/244: Holistic Science/Practice from lab staff. In the event the lab kit is lost, damaged, or otherwise rendered unusable, students will be required to purchase a replacement at their own expense. The estimated cost is \$200.

C. Open Lab

All students must participate in lab practice throughout the semester during Open Lab hours as part of various courses in the curriculum. The required number of Open Lab hours varies by course. Refer to course syllabi for specific details. Completing all Open Lab hour requirements is a mandatory aspect of the course, and the percentage of the final grade attributed to these hours can be found in the course syllabus. Open Lab hours play a vital role in reinforcing nursing concepts and skills through hands-on practice.

Expectations during Open Lab:

- Students should arrive dressed appropriately as outlined above. They should also be prepared with their lab kit, stethoscope, and any necessary supplies for practicing nursing skills. Failure to bring the required items may result in being asked to leave by lab assistants, and students will not be able to complete their Open Lab hours for that day.
- To ensure accurate attendance records, students are required to scan in and out. Additionally, they must retain their email verifications for the entire semester.
- Students are expected to demonstrate kindness, respect, and professionalism when interacting with their peers. A supportive and collaborative learning environment is essential for success, and all students should communicate in a courteous and considerate manner. Treating others with respect fosters a positive atmosphere where everyone can learn and grow together.
- Absolutely NO eating, drinking, or gum chewing at bedside or near mannequins.
- Equipment is not to be removed from the lab without permission.

D. Simulation Experiences

Students will have multiple opportunities to participate in formal simulations in the simulation lab from 200- to 400- level courses. Punctuality is essential, and students must arrive on time, dress appropriately as outlined above, and bring necessary items such as a stethoscope, penlight, and writing materials. If prework is assigned, it must be submitted on the Simulation Lab Canvas page by 0600 on the day of the

simulation. Failure to complete prework may result in the inability to participate, requiring either attendance at a clinical makeup day at the end of the semester or completion of an alternative assignment. If the simulation replaces a clinical day, students must wear their uniform and adhere to the clinical dress code guidelines. Additionally, all simulation and lab experiences are designed to be safe and confidential environments where mistakes are part of the learning process. A debriefing session will follow each simulation to enhance learning and reflection.

For additional information, refer to the [TCNJ Policy and Procedure Manual for Clinical Skills and Simulation Laboratories](#).

E. Accident/Injury in the Lab

The student is responsible for informing the faculty/staff member as soon as possible after any accident or injury in the lab. In the event of a life-threatening emergency in a nursing lab, an ambulance will be summoned immediately. Any faculty member or student can dial 2345 from a campus phone or (609) 771-2345 to alert campus police to activate emergency response services. Faculty or staff complete the [TCNJ Nursing Lab Incident Report](#) in response to any event that occurs during any nursing lab. This includes accidental exposure to blood and body fluids. The lead staff/faculty member must also inform the Simulation Coordinator who will inform the Department Chair.

F. Latex Sensitivity/Allergy

When working in the clinical setting or nursing skills lab, students may be exposed to latex and other allergens. For students with known sensitivity/allergy to latex or any other environmental/chemical agents that they may be exposed to in the lab or clinical environment, it is recommended that they:

- Consult with their healthcare provider about risks and treatment.
- Provide a written plan, signed by an MD/DO, APN, or PA detailing how to handle their reaction, i.e., Epi-pen, Benadryl etc.
- Inform the Skills Lab Coordinator, course faculty, and clinical faculty about the sensitivity/allergy.
- Latex-free gloves will be provided. However, the lab and clinical environment are not latex free.

G. Lab Absences and Lab Makeup

In NUR 230: Holistic Health Assessment, NUR 330: Adult/Elder Health I: Science, and NUR 420: Adult/Elder Health II: Science, the lab component is a mandatory part of the course. Students must notify both the Simulation Coordinator and lab instructor of any absences. Missed lab content must be made up with either the Simulation Coordinator or Lab Instructor as soon as possible and at a mutually agreed upon time. More than one (1) lab absence may incur a cost.

In NUR 240/244: Holistic Science/Practice, the lab class is considered a clinical component. Students must notify the Simulation Coordinator and Lab Instructor of any absences. The missed lab must be made up before the first clinical day. A lab absence in this course counts as the student's one allowable clinical absence. Refer to *Clinical Attendance Requirements* above.

VI. Clinical Compliance Requirements

Clinical compliance requirements protect students and promote patient safety. As healthcare workers, nursing students must meet requirements, beyond those mandated by the College, before enrolling in nursing courses with a clinical practicum component. According to HIPAA regulations, health information cannot be shared between the College's Student Health Services and the Department of Nursing. Therefore, students must submit certain health records to both departments to remain in compliance. Clinical compliance requirements conform to current New Jersey Department of Health requirements, New Jersey law, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations relevant to healthcare workers as interpreted in clinical affiliation agreements. As such, these requirements are not open to negotiations. These requirements are also subject to change without prior notice based on the needs of the Department or clinical affiliates. Please note, some clinical sites have additional requirements. You will be notified separately if additional requirements need to be completed. There are costs associated with required screenings, lab tests, and document tracking services. Payment of fees is the sole responsibility of the student.

A. Site Onboarding

Clinical agencies have site-specific training and onboarding requirements. Students must complete the required training and submit required forms on or before established deadlines or they are subject to noncompliance penalties described below.

B. Noncompliance

Students are responsible for establishing and maintaining compliance with clinical compliance and site onboarding requirements throughout their nursing clinical practicum and lab/simulation experiences. Students are strongly encouraged to start the process when directed to ensure that requirements are met by established deadlines.

Students who submit clinical compliance documents after the established deadline for their class year/program will be subject to a 5% deduction in their grade for the clinical evaluation in all 300- and 400- level clinical nursing courses in which they are enrolled. The 5% grade deduction penalty also affects students who submit site onboarding after the deadline. In this case, the penalty will only apply to the course for which site onboarding is late. If students have both a clinical compliance and site onboarding deficiency, the total penalty per course is 5%.

Students who fail to submit documents OR for whom required screenings reveal prohibited behavior OR who do not have requirements completed by the week before clinical starts will be subject to registration holds or de-registration from clinical courses. Students who submit false or altered documents can be reported to the Academic Integrity Officer.

Students who are not "cleared" are not permitted to participate in clinical practice experiences, including simulation and on and off campus lab experiences. Missed labs/clinical due to non-compliance may result in course failure.

C. Screenings and Document Tracking

Rising sophomore students will be enrolled in the Clinical Placement Center course on Canvas in the spring of their freshman year. There is no fee for this course. This course provides specific instructions for completing and submitting requirements for clinical placements.

The Department of Nursing uses an external approved vendor to provide background screening, urine drug screening, and document tracking services. The external vendor provides a secure platform that is compliant with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Traditional BSN students submit requirements annually during summer months. Submitted documents must be valid for the entire upcoming clinical cycle, whenever possible. All students are responsible for updating documents on or before the expiration date of the document. Current requirements are detailed below.

D. Requirements

Health Clearance – Annual

A history and physical examination are required within 12 months prior to entering the first clinical course (NUR 244: Holistic Practice) and annually thereafter. The *Nursing Student Health Clearance Form* must be completed by a licensed physician (MD/DO), advanced practice nurse (APN), or physician assistant (PA). This document verifies that students can meet the demands of the program without restrictions and without compromising patients or themselves. No other forms will be accepted.

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening – Initial & Annual

Initial Screening

Within 12 months before entering the end of the first clinical course, students must have a 2-step Tuberculin Skin Test (TST), (also called a Mantoux test or PPD). The 2-step TST requires one test with results read in 48-72 hours and then a second test performed in 7-21 days with results read in 48-72 hours (**a total of 4 visits to the healthcare provider**). An IGRA blood test (QuantiFERON®-TB Gold or T-Spot) can be obtained as an alternative to the TST. Students must submit documentation of a negative 2-step TST or negative IGRA blood test.

If students receive an equivocal or positive result after the initial TST or are known to have false positive reactions to TB testing or have received BCG vaccine in the past, then ALL of the following are required to be completed and submitted within 12 months prior to entering the first clinical course:

- A. An evaluation by an MD/DO, APN, or PA that rules out active contagious TB infection that is documented on the *TB Screening Questionnaire/Physician's Evaluation for Tuberculosis*,
- B. A QuantiFERON®-TB Gold blood test,
- C. A baseline chest x-ray that is "Negative" for active/contagious TB within 12 months, and
- D. Documentation of any treatment for the positive tuberculosis testing.

If students have a positive IGRA blood test, a chest x-ray is required.

Annual Screening

Students with a negative result after the initial TB screening must submit documentation of a negative single TST or IGRA blood test (QuantiFERON®-TB Gold or T-Spot) annually thereafter.

Students with past positive TB screening or BCG vaccine, must submit an evaluation by an MD/DO, APN, or PA annually thereafter that rules out active contagious TB infection. This is documented on the *TB Screening Questionnaire/Physician's Evaluation for Tuberculosis*.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella Titers – Once

Students must submit documentation of positive IgG titers for Rubeola (Measles), Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), and Varicella (Chicken Pox) prior to entering the first clinical course. If titers are negative or equivocal, students must be re-immunized and submit documentation of booster vaccine. Verbal history of disease is not accepted.

Hepatitis B Vaccination Records and Hepatitis B Surface Antibody Titer – Once

Students must submit vaccination records demonstrating completion of the primary Hepatitis B vaccine series (2, 3, or 4 doses depending on the manufacturer) AND positive post primary vaccine series Hepatitis B surface antibody titer before entering the first clinical course. Students are also required to report past infections or carrier state for Hepatitis B.

If a student has completed the primary vaccine series but has a non-immune Hepatitis B surface antibody titer, the student must follow these steps:

- A. Discuss results with a healthcare provider and determine treatment/testing options.
- B. Submit documentation of the treatment plan on the *Hepatitis B Treatment Plan form*.
- C. Submit documentation of any vaccines received as part of the treatment plan.
- D. Submit documentation of positive Hepatitis B surface antibody titer on or before the beginning of the next compliance cycle.
- E. If the second titer is non-immune, the student must submit a note from their healthcare provider written on a prescription or letterhead stating that the student continues to have a non-immune titer after receiving additional vaccines. The note should also state that the student has been counseled regarding how to prevent a hepatitis B infection and to seek immediate medical care to receive a dose of hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) if they are exposed to potentially infected blood.

Tetanus Vaccination – Initial & When Expires

Students must submit a vaccination record for Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) received within the 10 years before entering the first clinical course and when the vaccine expires. DTAP and Td are NOT acceptable substitutions.

Influenza Vaccination – Annual

Students must submit a vaccination record for seasonal influenza (flu) that is valid between September 1st and April 30th prior to entering the first clinical course and annually thereafter. Students should not obtain the influenza vaccine in July or August unless there is a concern that vaccination might not be possible at a later date. Vaccination records must include the vaccine lot number and expiration date.

COVID-19 Vaccination – Initial & As Required

Students must submit documentation that they have received the COVID-19 primary vaccine series. All COVID vaccine manufacturers are accepted for primary and/or booster vaccines. Verbal history of disease is not accepted.

Vaccination records must include:

- Student's first and last name,
- Student's date of birth,
- Agency name or healthcare provider giving the vaccine,
- Vaccine manufacturer.

Urine Drug Screen – Variable

Clinical agencies require evidence of negative drug screening before the start of clinical experiences. A negative 10-panel urine drug screen (marijuana, cocaine, opioids, benzodiazepines, amphetamines, barbiturates, phencyclidine [PCP], methadone, methaqualone, propoxyphene) is required for traditional BSN students within 60 days before entering the first clinical course and then prior to each fall semester. Students are required to obtain urine drug screening through the external approved vendor. No other results will be accepted. Results are sent to the College and may be shared with clinical agencies. Dilute negative results do not meet the requirement for a negative drug screen result. Students will be notified if this type of result is received and given the information to obtain another drug screen at the student's expense.

Positive drug screens go through the medical review process of the external vendor. If a student is on a prescribed medication that may cause a positive urine drug screen, they are required to submit documentation explaining the positive drug screen results. Situations that do not pass the medical review process will be reviewed by the Department Chair to determine if they will be accepted.

If a positive drug screen result is received without an acceptable explanation, the student will not be allowed into the clinical or lab setting and will be required to meet with the Department Chair. Students who are licensed registered nurses may be reported to the professional licensing agency in the state(s) where they hold a license, when necessary. College personnel will evaluate the information they receive and, in their sole discretion, make the final determination as to each student's ability to engage in clinical practice. Students may be referred to CAPS for drug support services. If a student is denied clinical placement due to positive drug screening results, the student will be dismissed from the program.

The Department of Nursing is aware that in many states, including New Jersey, medical marijuana is now legal. The department also understands that marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 drug under federal law. The department will not accept a positive drug screen result for marijuana even if a medical marijuana card is presented.

Respirator Medical Clearance Form – First Two Years & When Indicated

This form is required prior to fit testing for students entering 200- level clinical nursing courses, for traditional BSN students entering 300- level clinical nursing courses, and whenever students experience a medical status change. Students complete the *Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire, Part A*. A healthcare provider reviews the form and completes the *Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire Reviewer Clearance Report*. The student submits the clearance report. The form must be signed, dated, and include the healthcare provider's credentials.

Fit Testing – Annual

Students must participate in annual fit testing when it is offered by the College in the fall. Communication about dates will be posted in the Clinical Placement Center. Students are required to submit their *Fit Test*

Record on the day fit testing is completed. Some clinical agencies may require additional fit testing at the student's expense.

American Heart Association Basic Life Support CPR Certification – Initial & Every 2 Years

Students must obtain and maintain American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) certification while enrolled in the nursing program. Students must submit a current AHA Basic Life Support e-card or certificate prior to entering the first clinical course and on or before the expiration of the certification thereafter. The Department of Nursing only accepts certification through the American Heart Association.

Individual Student Liability Insurance – Annual

In keeping with the New Jersey Board of Nursing regulation N.J.A.C. 13:37-1.11, all nursing students must carry their own student liability (malpractice) insurance prior to entering the first clinical course and renew their coverage annually thereafter. Liability insurance can be obtained through the carrier of the student's choice. Students must submit the Certificate of Insurance page to document that insurance coverage is current.

Proof of Health Insurance – Annual

Students must submit proof that they have health insurance coverage prior to entering the first clinical course and annually thereafter. If the student's name is not on the health insurance card, the student must submit documentation from the health insurance company stating that they are covered under the policy.

Personal Information Changes

Students must notify the Clinical Site Coordinator by email when changes occur to personal information such as name, cell phone number, or employer. Students must also update information in CastleBranch, if they are using the compliance tracker. In addition, the student should file appropriate forms with Records and Registration.

Background Checks

Several accrediting bodies have established a mandate that clinical agencies include nursing students in criminal background checks and clearances. Therefore, all students must undergo criminal history background checks and have negative results reported before participating in clinical experiences. Results must be made available to the College and may be shared with clinical agencies. Students who need to repeat clinical courses may be required to repeat background checks at the student's expense.

Every student has the responsibility to self-report past violations and any subsequent violations while enrolled in the nursing program. Students must report any legal issues that may or will affect their background check within 72 business hours AND before any clinical encounter. These violations must be reported to the Department Chair and Assistant Dean, School of Nursing and Health Sciences for review. Students with prohibited behavior or self-reported disclosures on their background checks will be evaluated individually by the Department Chair and Assistant Dean, in consultation with the Dean, and legal counsel, when necessary, to determine whether they will be allowed continued progression in the nursing program. If a student is denied clinical placement by any clinical agency due to criminal history information, and an alternative placement cannot be secured, that student will be dismissed from the program.

Background Check Package - Once

Traditional BSN students are required to obtain a background check through the approved external vendor once prior to the first clinical course. This check includes New Jersey Statewide Criminal Search (sourced by the New Jersey court system); Nationwide Healthcare Fraud and Abuse Scan (includes OIG, SAM, GSA, OFAC); Nationwide Record Indicator with Sex Offender Index, Social Security Alert, and Residency History.

New Jersey Fingerprint-Based Criminal History Record Check - Once

Traditional BSN students are required to obtain a New Jersey fingerprint-based criminal record check before the first clinical course. Students must follow all procedures, submit all forms, and pay fees to ensure that valid documentation of a clear criminal history records check is received by established deadlines. Results must come directly to the Department of Nursing.

Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance – Once

Students must submit documentation of a negative Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance prior to starting NUR 344: Child Health. This clearance is free the first time it is obtained and can be obtained online.

New Jersey Department of Education Background Check

Students are required to complete a background check through the New Jersey Department of Education prior to participating in school-based clinical experiences. Students must follow all procedures, submit all forms, and pay fees to ensure that valid documentation of a clear background is received by established deadlines.

Other Background Checks

Additional background checks including but not limited to healthcare sanctions and OIG/GSA reports will be performed periodically as required by affiliation agreements.

E. Vaccine Medical Exemption Requests

The nursing program requires completion of clinical rotations at clinical, educational, and other sites that are operated by outside agencies. These agencies may have requirements that are beyond those required by the College. Failure to comply with agency requirements means that the student cannot be placed. This will impact the progress of students' studies, prevent the student from completing the program, and/or prevent the student from graduating. Therefore, **religious, personal, and age-related exemptions will not be considered for students who are participating in nursing clinical courses.**

However, per N.J.A.C. 8:57-6.14, students are not required to have any vaccinations that are contraindicated based upon valid medical reasons as enumerated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). For current ACIP immunization schedules and recommendations, including contraindications, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/general-recs/contraindications.html>. Requests for medical exemption from all vaccinations, EXCEPT influenza (flu), COVID-19, and post primary Hepatitis B vaccinations are handled through the College's Student Health Services. Refer to Student Health's Pre-Entrance Health Requirements for Undergraduate Students found at <https://health.tcnj.edu/new-students/pre-entrance-health-requirements-undergrads/>. If Student Health approves a request, the student is responsible for submitting the approval via email to the Clinical Site Coordinator by the clinical compliance deadline for their class year/program.

Requests for medical exemption from influenza (flu), COVID-19, or post primary Hepatitis B vaccinations, are handled within the Department of Nursing. A licensed healthcare provider (MD, DO, APN, PA) must complete the appropriate standardized form which can be requested from the Clinical Site Coordinator. The student submits the forms to the Clinical Site Coordinator by the clinical compliance deadline for their class year/program. The information on the form assists the Clinical Site Coordinator and Department Chair in considering whether the request for exemption should be accepted or rejected. Supporting medical documentation may be requested by the Department. An email will be sent to the student's TCNJ email address informing them of the status of their request. If approved, the student will be exempted from the specific vaccination permanently (in the case of a permanent medical condition) or temporarily until such time that the student's medical condition permits vaccination.

Clinical facilities may also require students to request vaccine medical exemptions through the agency's process. The Clinical Site Coordinator will assist students in navigating this process. However, there is no guarantee that clinical agencies will accept requests for vaccine medical exemptions. Clinical facilities may require students with vaccine medical exemptions to take additional precautions in the clinical setting. Clinical facilities may temporarily exclude a student with an exemption from participating in clinical experiences during a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak or threatened outbreak. These situations may affect academic progression and successful completion of the course. If no alternative clinical site is possible, the only available accommodation(s) may be deferral, or temporary or permanent withdrawal from the program.

VII. HEALTH STATUS CHANGES

A. Illness or Injury in the Clinical Setting

If a student becomes ill in the clinical setting, the student will be examined and if indicated, treated at the student's expense. If a student is injured in the clinical setting, clinical faculty follow the incident reporting procedures of the clinical agency. The student will be examined and if indicated, treated at the student's expense. In either case, the clinical faculty notifies the course leader who informs the Department Chair. The Department Chair will follow up with the College to report the incident, if indicated.

B. Change in Health Status

When students experience a change in their health status during the semester (due to sickness, pregnancy, hospitalization, surgery etc.) or any change in functional status that may affect performance in the clinical or lab setting, they must submit the *Medical Release to Return to Clinical Form*. This form verifies that the student may return to nursing program activities without restriction and must be signed and dated by an MD/DO, APN, or PA. The student submits the form to the Department Chair to obtain clearance to return to clinical activities. The presentation of the form does not assure access to the clinical area. If nursing program faculty or staff have concerns about a student's ability to safely participate in clinical activities, a student may be requested to obtain additional clinical clearance.

To provide safe patient care, students may not have casts, orthopedic braces, or assistive devices in the clinical practice areas. In the event of a temporary condition which may limit mobility and/or dexterity (e.g., cast, crutches, wheelchair), the student may be asked to withdraw from the program until such condition is corrected. If students have a documented differing ability or think that they may have a differing ability that is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or college policy, they are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Resource Center

(ARC) to discuss any accommodations that may be available. While every effort will be made to support reasonable requests for accommodation, clinical agencies typically cannot provide accommodation while providing a safe experience for the student and patients. Unless full clearance to participate in clinical/lab activities is obtained from a healthcare provider, students will not be permitted to participate in clinical/lab activities. As stated under *Clinical Attendance Requirements*, clinical absences may result in the inability to successfully meet course objectives, thus resulting in failure of the clinical course.

VIII. LICENSURE

Completion of all program requirements and attainment of the BSN qualifies graduates to take the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX-RN) for licensure as registered nurses. Application for licensure, in accordance with regulations of the New Jersey Board of Nursing, also requires the submission of an affidavit that the applicant “has never been convicted or has not pleaded *nolo contendere*, *non vult contendere* or *non vult* to an indictment, information, or complaint alleging a violation of any federal or state law involving moral turpitude or relating adversely to the nursing profession.” Boards of nursing in other states have similar requirements.

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